**Hillside UMC Sermon Prep Sheet**

***Pastor Chris Neikirk***

**Date: Sunday, August 13, 2017 – Holy Communion**

**Sermon Title: Practically Christian: What Matters?**

**Doing Good Matters**

**Scripture: James 2:14-26 (NIV)** 14What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? 15Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. 16If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? 17In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. 18But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. 19You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder. 20You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? 21Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? 22You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. 23And the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,” and he was called God’s friend. 24You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone. 25In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? 26As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

**Call to Worship: (8:30 only)**

**Almighty God,**

**to you all hearts are open, all desires known.**

 **and from you no secrets are hidden.**

**Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts**

 **by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,**

**that we may perfectly love you,**

 **and worthily magnify your holy name,**

**through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**Basic Theme: *John Wesley and early Methodists were particularly concerned about inviting people to experience God’s grace and to grow in their knowledge and love of God through disciplined Christian living. They placed primary emphasis on Christian living, on putting faith and love into action. This emphasis on what Wesley referred to as “practical divinity” has continued to be a hallmark of United Methodism today. (umc.org – Our Wesleyan Heritage) How we practically live out our Christian faith is dictated, in part, by identifying what matters? What matters to God should influence both our beliefs and our actions.***

**Sermon Snapshot (Key Points): Good works are an expression of our faith in God. The church often places a high value on worship, prayer and Bible study. While those practices are all necessary components to developing our faith, James is clear that faith without works is dead. A practical divinity is expressed by what we do. Doing good matters.**

**So What? Is your faith an active faith or a passive faith? Are you living your life as the hands and feet of Jesus Christ by serving others? What will you do this week to live out your faith?**