CHRISTIAN SPEECH

FOR

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Hello everyone! It is so heartwarming to see all of you here today. I know that each one of you has somewhere else to be, something else to do, someone else to answer to or to answer for, some crisis to avert and some opportunity to explore, and yet you took this precious time to explore our mutual connection. You took the time to find the places in your hearts and souls where faith lies and inner strength thrives. Being here and being present shows all of us that you have the willingness and the capacity to be a Godly Man. It may not come easy to you. It may not always feel comfortable, but your faith and consciousness have called you forth and here you are. Here **WE** are.

We often use the phrase “Godly Man” but what does it really mean to you? What does it means to you as a person, a father, a son, a brother, a friend, or a colleague? What does it mean to us individually and as a congregation? How do we go from being a skeptic to becoming an explorer, and then growing into a believer and mentor? Make no mistake about it, our congregation, our families, our communities all need Godly Men. Nope. We **CANNOT GET ENOUGH**!! We **CANNOT HAVE ENOUGH** Godly Men! Now Godly Men are not perfect. We make mistakes. We fall but we get up because we have faith in ourselves and in God. Godly Men have patience and strength, honesty and foresight, power and compassion.

How do we define a Godly Man? Besides the obvious truth that he looks just like us and **you** and **you** and **you** (**You can point to members of the congregation as you say that**), there are some characteristics we can use as guidelines and as a checklist.

Some may say there are five characteristics of a Godly Man. There are probably more and we can add to the list later as we choose. All of these traits should be present but let’s remember that each one of us is a **work in progress**. We are blessed with this life to learn and to serve, so let’s take a look at the traits we would aspire to as Godly Men:

* **Put God first in your life, your heart, and your faith**. Understanding and honoring the blessings of your Christian faith is at the very foundation of accepting a Godly life. Finding it within you to appreciate all of the challenges and blessing of a life filled with faith teaches us to appreciate the wonder and the miracle of all life around us. Connecting with the strength and will of God will be your greatest guide throughout your life (**If you want to make a little comment you can add**) … and I would like to believe our glory and commitment goes **even beyond** this plane and onto the next, and the one after that, and so on…. When we put God first, it frees us from jealousy and supports us through the trials and tests of life. Our relationship with God comes first and even if our wives or girlfriends or kids may feel they don’t get enough attention, remind them of the **quality** of your love and commitment to them thanks to your faith in God.
* **The Godly Man is humble**. Lately we have seen “examples” of brazen self-promotion in the media and beyond. That’s not us. Remember the passage in Luke 14:11…”Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” There’s no need to boast. Who we are as human beings speaks for us. Every day we have the opportunity to practice humility. Every day we are reminded that we are part of a larger community, congregation, and purposeful plan in life. As the apostle Paul teaches us in Phil 2:3, “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.” (**If you want to make a little joke you can say**) … Of course some of us may have a longer journey than others… (**And wait for the laugh**)… But it’s all good news!! Willingness to examine your life and your relationships while finding ways to place your faith as a priority in your life is a tremendous step towards a Godly existence.
* **Generosity Defines the Godly Man**. The Godly man gives of himself over and over again. We don’t give with terms and conditions. That’s reserved for commerce! To be a truly Godly Man, we live and die to give to others. We have been given the greatest gift of all and that is our lives. As we search for the depth of our faith, we give to others while expecting nothing in return. There is joy and fulfillment and the chance to get that much closer to God as we learn to share and be generous. No matter what you do or don’t have in this life…. and think you might need…. there is always someone and something that needs your generosity and support. It doesn’t have to take too much to share your life and spirit and riches with a fellow human being.
* **A Godly Man Knows the Power of Prayer**. Prayer serves us in so many ways. It is a chance for meditation and a moment of inner reflection. It is our opportunity to stop the chaos that surrounds us and to focus on what really matters- our connection to God. After all, we wouldn’t be here without HIM. Prayer gives us the opportunity to search our souls and listen for the answers. It’s the time in which we allow silence to resonate within us and to guide us in considering our true purpose as God’s witness on this earth. The Godly Man knows that prayer cleanses and through prayer we find the strength to answer the tough questions that keep us from moving forward in life. Prayer also provides us the opportunity for acknowledgement as we recognize the blessings we have before us. Prayer allows us to turn challenges into precious lessons. It invites us to reflect and reconsider hardship and strife. It guides us to reveal the bigger issues in life and the more profound responses we need to discover. Prayer brings us together for the greater good of all of us.
* **A Godly Man Hears the Word and Heeds it**. A Godly Man is one who reads the Book and heeds the call. He knows when his inner voice beckons and he feels his conscience stirring. The Godly Man does not just listen to the words within earshot. He knows his purpose in life is to react and respond to do what is needed and wanted for the greater good of those in need. The Godly Man knows that life is short and every day is precious. He knows that the measure of his self worth is to bring his talents and goodness and faith to those around him.

A Godly Man is a true friend; one who operates with respect and integrity. He is a man who responds to need, putting aside his consideration in the service of God and man. He is responsible for his actions and is willing to learn his lessons.

We can wonder, “Are Godly Men born or made?” I think to a great extent we are all born with godly principles but as we get older we are subjected to more and more tests that try our faith and challenge the purity of our commitment to God. We may be led by temptation or coaxed down “other” paths, but the willingness to live life as a Godly Man protects us. Within the church community there is a support system of true friendship and brotherhood and with one another we all have what it takes to be Godly Men.

To be a Godly Man means to know and respect our own power. It means we honor our integrity and use it to integrate the fundamentals of living a life of faith. It includes having Patience like Job, Faith like Abraham, foresight to anticipate what is needed and the ability to change and adapt like Paul.

In James 5: 10-11, we learn of Job’s unwavering commitment: “As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.” Job faced overwhelming challenges yet his faith and patience gave him strength.

Abraham proved his power of purpose with his unwavering faith. In Romans 4: 18-21, “Who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken… He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.”

Within each one of us lie the seeds that formed the patience of Job and the faith of Abraham. Now it’s time to connect with (**Name some of the parishioners as examples of the characteristics that live within each one of them**) the generosity of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, the integrity of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, the dedication of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, the respect of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, the generosity of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, the compassion of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_... you get the picture.

I am honored to be a part of this congregation and I am humbled to be associated with so many men of faith and purpose. It may not be easy to be a Godly Man but it is noble and we all know that nothing worthwhile comes easy. Our greatest lessons and gifts stand before us waiting to be accessed as we work to forge and maintain a brotherhood filled with Godly meaning and faith.

I welcome all of you to join me in finding our individual and collective strength.

Thank you all!