

Rev. Dr. Gary Shahinian
Sermon
September 20, 2009
Park Congregational Church
Worcester, Massachusetts

“Spending Life for Something that Outlasts It”

Scripture Text: Wisdom of Solomon 1:12-2:5

Dear people of God, the famous philosopher William James said, “The great use of a life is to spend it for something that outlasts it.” Many of us remember the eloquent call to service by President John F. Kennedy, who asked us unselfishly to consider what we could do for our country rather than what our country could do for us. Kennedy, among other things, created the Peace Corps as an alternative to military service for young people to go abroad to help those less fortunate than themselves. What has happened to our country, where now so many are asking what their country can do for them rather than what they can do for their country?

Do we really believe that it’s necessary to live a good life? Or have we accepted the view of our secularistic society which tries to make any excuse to receive government assistance? Do we believe that God calls us to a life of service on behalf of a troubled world? Or have we bought into the lie that the world owes us a living and we don’t owe the world anything?

“The great use of a life is to spend it for something that outlasts it.” Why have we in this generation begun to lose this sense of calling to a life of service? We seem to be so busy acquiring the latest gadgets and indulging ourselves with all kinds of pleasures that there is little or no time left to spend on helping our fellow human beings or trying to correct injustice. And of course our churches suffer as well. And that’s too bad for us who are a community of faith, who are the hands and feet of Jesus Christ in the world. We can see where this destructive influence has taken a toll on our families and our churches, but can we see what it has done to ourselves?