

Dear Friends,

God brings people together! We often have differences, and we're not always highly compatible for friendship other than our connection through the Body of Christ. It's amazing how we come into relationship with God and each other in the life of faith, and in the context of these relationships we grow and flourish personally as we also find ways to generously serve and encourage one another.

Two men from history who might seem unlikely to forge a relationship are George Whitefield, the powerful evangelist of the Great Awakening and Ben Franklin. They seem like an odd couple: one a sinner and one a saint. But something connected these two men.

In his autobiography, Benjamin Franklin devotes a number of pages to his friendship with George Whitefield. They didn't agree theologically as Ben Franklin identified as both (theological terms) an "Arian" and an "Arminian." He was not too keen on Whitefield's "Calvinism."

Franklin was impressed by the way Whitefield powerfully communicated Christ's Gospel with the crowds. He also knew Whitefield to be a man of integrity.

Franklin wrote about his experience of going to hear his friend speak. Even though he questioned some of his theology, he was deeply moved by his preaching of the Word. Franklin tells the story: *"I happened to attend one of his sermons in the course of which I perceived he intended to finish with the collection. And I silently resolved, 'He should get nothing from me.' I had in my pocket a handful of copper money, 3 or 4 silver dollars, and 5 Spanish gold coins. As he proceeded I began to soften, and concluded to give the coppers. Another stroke of his oratory made me ashamed of that and determined me to give the silver. And he finished so admirably that I emptied my pocket wholly into the collector's dish. Coppers, silver, gold, and all."*

May we notice when the Spirit is alive and active in the life of one of our faith friends! Let us affirm, encourage, and support the work of God in and through each other. Let us hold high our church in love and prayers! Always remembering Paul's reminder: *"Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things"* (Phil. 4:8).

I love to celebrate God's work in each of our lives!

With love,

Duff