

Scriptures:

Psalm 8

2 Corinthians 13:11-13

Matthew 28:16-20

Commissioned

Ever so often I have people ask me questions like What does it all mean? How do we know God cares? What is it to be human?

You know those easy sorts of questions.

I admit there are times when I ask some of them myself. To be honest I wandered around these questions when I sat in despair watching the news last Wednesday night and when I attempted to sit down and write this sermon on Thursday morning.

And then I read the Scriptures for today again and I was reminded that we are all here to participate in God's great mission of love and grace. It's when we fail to live into who we were created to be that we fall into crisis and corruption.

How do I know that? I know that because in each of the texts we read today we were reminded that God has given us great things. And God has trusted us to care for those things - the earth, it's people and all living creatures. The prophet Micah spell's it out quite simply. "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. It seems so simple but in when we in our humanity, live into pride, and greed and loose our God given centering evil overtakes.

The fourth scripture for today which we did not read simply because it was too long is the creation story from Genesis 1 and 2. From the beginning of creation, through the Psalms right through the gospels and epistles God loves human kind. And at the same time gives us the opportunity and responsibility to participate in that love and goodness. It is we not God who chooses not to participate in wholeness.

Today is Trinity Sunday and rather than get into a variety of sample explanations about what the Trinity means (because frankly I think they all fall short). I would like to offer a conclusion I have come to. The trinity for me is about complete

relationship. It is about wholeness, God touching all sources in all ways. Creation and humanity remain good when they remain in God the source of grace and love. Creation is good when we remain in right relationship with God and one another. Made in the image of God we are to be in full relationship with all of creation.

Perhaps it's my background in Systems that draws me to this conclusion but I do believe that if we all strove to be in right relationship with God, one another and creation we would live into the Kingdom. I believe that is what we are called and commissioned to. That is who and what we are created to be.

As I was writing this sermon on Thursday morning. Feeling rather disheartened by the state of our city of Vancouver I pondered how humanity would have responded to that world class sporting event if we all lived the verses from 2 Corinthians “listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. ¹²Greet one another with a holy kiss.” or if more of us would “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” I just wonder how our world would be different.

You see I know that every person I talked to was devastated by the tragedy of Wednesday night - and I am not talking about Boston winning the cup. I know that each of us wishes the tragedy of the riots would never have happened. Most of us spent Thursday in a fog at times, embarrassed, angered, dismayed - my word of the day was disheartened. People came to me asking how did this happen? What's wrong with us. I don't know that I will ever have answers that I am happy with.

So what do we do. Along with the majority we change our focus. We give thanks for those folks who banded together to clean up the city. We give thanks for those who posted support and justice filled anger on media sites. And perhaps it would be wise to even go as far as to pray for those hearts that took part in such destruction that they might be softened, that they might look at their lives and how people have responded to their behavior and see the need for transformation. And as we wonder in the midst where is God?

I believe God is found in our response. It is okay to be angry and dismayed but let it change how we live, in a positive way. Let our justice seeking be active. We have been called and commissioned to blanket the world in God's love. God has called us to live in such a way that others want to participate in the mission.

Now this great commission to go out and make disciples well... let's be honest it's not the first thing on our priority list as United Church folks. We pride ourselves in accepting others, and so we rarely speak to what we believe - at least faith wise. I imagine that when many of us hear this "Great Commission" we feel anything but inspired. We would rather hide our head under the pillow - wondering why we got out of bed to come to church in the first place. Or perhaps we feel a twinge of guilt because we just don't have the courage to be that kind of disciple.

Perhaps you do not perceive yourself as one of those who is called to bear witness to faith, and you might feel quite comfortable saying I'm simply not equipped to do so. That there is the minister's job. But what about being an under qualified disciple? Have we ever heard about any of those before? What about Moses, or David, or Rahab, or Jonah, or Jeremiah, or...slip in your favorite disciple.

You see we may not perceive ourselves as qualified or called but the reality is we are not the first flawed individuals to be called or used by God. It is not about guilt it is about living into who we were made to be. It is about refusing to respond in darkness and choosing to live into light. It is about sharing that love and goodness with others.

I want to invite you to take a moment to share with some people next to you "Where you see God in your everyday life?" When at school, at work, at a sporting event? In what ways do you see God?

Now I want to challenge us a little in the light of recent events in the world and in our city. I want to know how is it that you respond when people ask "Where is God in this?" In this flood, earthquake, downtown riot? I want you to talk to the folks around you for a moment and answer that question with one another.

I've asked us these questions because I realize that if we never have opportunity or time to stop and think about them or to hear others responses we likely won't know how to respond ourselves. I have decided I want to give us some opportunities to assist us in connecting Sunday with our everyday lives and thoughts. Because in all honestly even when I hear Jesus' instructions I get a little freaked out, or perhaps feel a little guilty. I find myself asking would my everyday life look different if I took Jesus more seriously? I'm not convinced it would look a whole lot different but then again it might. I might be more intentional and less apologetic about responding to peoples questions. I want us to gain a sense of competence and confidence in sharing our faith - in a way that offers grace and love.

Because in us God lives - and we are holy

In us God cries - In us God loves - and we are holy
baptized, blessed and commissioned - we go out to live holy and whole lives.
May it be so.

Amen