

It's time to let your light shine!

Exodus 20:1-17; Luke 18:9-14

It is time to let your light shine. Part of being a disciple is to be in relationship with and add our light to the world. It is said in one of our hymns entitled *I am the light of the world* that “if you follow and love, you’ll learn the mystery of what you were meant to do and be.” On this Stewardship Sunday the stewardship committee reminds us of God’s call to be stewards in the world. We are called to give of our time our talents and our treasure. We are called to invest and make a covenant commitment of living out our mission here at Robertson-Wesley United Church. Our mission here is to worship God. To share each other’s joys and sorrows, to learn and grow in faith and to use God’s gifts wisely and to lead active Christian lives of service among our neighbours here and in the global world. We do so because we are both broken and blessed.

We come here, not because we are perfect like that pharisee. Sometimes we come because we are hurt, we are lonely, we have felt abandoned, we are seeking something beyond ourselves; and when we come we are delighted to see people who are seeking the same thing, who value similar things, who long to be connected in a bigger way in this world. We are also called here and have come because we are willing to risk as well as honour tradition. This congregation is not one to rest on its laurels. This is a place where we seek to change and truly discern how to be good stewards in this world. We face things, awkward conversations and we do it together, while holding on to the beauty of this space, the investments, the people and ancestors have left us to use for the greater good in this world. And we are also encouraged; encouraged to seek, to quest, to ask hard questions, to learn together and deepen our faith. Through that we come to see that we are all equally valuable here in this space.

We heard from Moses today. He was a reluctant soul; he doubted himself. He did not believe that he had anything to offer. He did not feel worthy of God’s call. He tried to get out of telling the Pharaoh to release the Hebrew people from slavery and he didn’t believe he could even speak in front of people. He didn’t think he would have the right words to say. How many of you have felt this way before? How many of us have thought I don’t know enough about religion to help or I am not faithful enough or God has never spoken to me directly so I wouldn’t have a clue what to do. Maybe you have thought to yourself, God doesn’t really need me, because there are already people doing that task. We need to remember that we are all children of God. We are beloved by God and God has given each of us gifts as we heard in the life passages this morning.

Some of us are given gifts to use within the church. Some of us have gifts to use out in the world and in this community and all that is required of us is that we trust in God.

The parable that Jesus told is a reminder that all we need to do is trust in God, and specifically in God's mercy. Being the perfect Christian or doing everything right or perfectly does not give us status. Being humble and truthful is what brings us to the love of God. "Jesus challenges believers to avoid trusting in their own efforts to fulfill the law, but instead we are to humble ourselves before a merciful and loving God."¹ Being humble does not mean we need to be asked before we do something, being humble is a reminder to listen to God. Listen to the Spirit of God in our community. Sometimes we get these messages through other people. True discernment means we listen, not for what we want to hear, but for God's gentle nudges to help where help is needed and to use our gifts for the greater good. We are being called to stop our futile efforts at making our own happiness and security and instead we are called to turn around, join our friends and neighbours in loving and serving others.

The commandments we heard today give us a path. They speak to how people are to live before God and how we are to live with one another. These commandments were given to God's people as a gift, as a means of protecting the community. We are called to live humbly, not covet what someone has and not hide our gifts from other. One theologian said, 'the way we attend to God shapes the way we attend to our neighbour. In other words, faithful worship to God leads to proper love of neighbour and proper praise of God shapes our social responsibility. Keeping the Sabbath is a reminder that all of Creation is a gift and we have a responsibility to be wise stewards of it.'² God doesn't want us coming to worship as a means of checking off a box on a list of things that make us a good Christian. God wants us to be authentic to who we are; to strive to be compassionate of others, loving of strangers, willing to forgive and willing to give in abundance without expectation of reward or stature.

How will you pledge your heart to the mission of this church? How will you keep the promises we made to each other in our life passages today where we promised to support and walk with each other while growing in faith together? Over coffee today how are you going to talk about your faith and not the weather. We promised also to nurture one another in faith., to uphold one another in prayer and encourage one another in God's work. When we get to our pastoral prayers today, pray for the person sitting next to you; pray that together we can answer God's call. It's simple really, the commandments give a path for us, Jesus gives us a light. It's our turn to walk that path, to turn on our light and be a light in this world to others through your gift of love, your gift of compassion, your gift of presence, time, money and talent. How will you pledge to be part of God's covenant this day?

¹ Laura S. Sugg, *Feasting on the Word*, Year C, Volume 4 (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), p. 214.

² Marva J. Dawn, *The Sense of the Call; A Sabbath Way of Life for those who serve God, the church, and the world*. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006), p. 76.