

Sunday October 31, 2021

First Lesson: Psalm 146

Gospel Lesson: Mark 12: 28-34

Sermon Series: Holy Spectrum Purple

Preacher: Kirstie J. Engel

We are concluding our Holy Spectrum sermon series; a series designed to explore the isms, social concerns and spiritual growth opportunities in the rainbow on our lawn that has the words, “All Are Welcome Here.”

- And so the final color that we will look at **is the color Purple.**
- And before diving into the significance of this color as it pertains to the rainbow, I want to first take the opportunity to celebrate once again how attentive you all have been in this sermon series.
- I was speaking with Mike Coffey the other day, who now serves on our staffing team in doing some of the Church’s financial roles as it pertains to our budget,

staffing salaries and more; in addition to his many musical talents as well; a long way of naming that our Church is very blessed to have Mike along with all of our staff; we are truly blessed!

- Anyhow, Mike was informing me how much he has enjoyed wearing the color emphasized each week.
- A number of you have also expressed the same sentiment, so much so that we will be sure to keep doing interactive sermon series such as these.
- So alas we have come to our final color of observation...
purple;
- And before revealing the potential that comes from us living out our purple potential; it is first necessary for me to review the other 5 colors that we have studied thus far and their rainbow potential.
- My rationale in doing so will hopefully become clearer before this sermon is finished;
- So if you remember **the red potential** of our rainbow is Stamina, Physical Energy, Vibrancy, Determination, Passion.

- **The orange potential** is Confidence, Success, Healing, Creativity.
- **The Yellow potential** is enthusiasm, optimism, joy, laughter, clarity of thought, wisdom, orderliness and energy.
- **The Green potential** is nature, communication, balanced emotions, harmony, love, vitality, growth, safety.
- **The Blue potential** is Courage to speak up; to speak out, to communicate with purity.
- Leaving the **purple potential**; which in order to make purple; requires a mixture of red and blue; **purple represents** the access to the imagination and Divine inspiration.
- **Purple Represents** Wisdom, Bravery, and Spirituality
- Some would even suggest that the color purple or violet **represents simply....** the spirit.
- Which is very fitting for this day, as we acknowledge our Saints and loved ones who have transitioned on into their spiritual bodies;

- For as the Word tells us in 2 Corinthians 5; *For we know that when this earthly tent we live in is taken down (that is, when we die and leave this earthly body), we will have a house in heaven, an eternal body made for us by God; God's self and not by human hands. 2 For as we grow weary in our present bodies, and we long to put on our heavenly bodies like new clothing. Verse 3 declares that we will put on heavenly bodies; we will not be spirits without bodies.*
- So for me church, the color purple of our rainbow reflects this process;
- A process that informs us that **after it is all said and done; after you and I do all the work that needs to be done** in the areas of justice, mercy and love; with the spiritual gifts and fortitude we each were given by way of the Holy Spirit through our prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness;
- We too will be reunited with the great cloud of witnesses who has gone on before us;
- Which is furthermore why I wanted to review the first five colors beforehand;

- **Because the aha moment has hit me; the very existential question that I tend to think about a lot in my own life and perhaps you may as well on your own;**
- This question of, “Why are we really here?”
- What is our life purpose?
- You see because of this Holy Spectrum sermon series we are in, I feel like I am that much closer to discovering the answers to these questions I have just posed.
- Because for some, **our life purpose** may consist of going to work or school, spending time with our families, taking a yearly vacation if we are so blessed to do so, preparing for the holidays that are coming ever so quickly; (can you believe it?) and more.
- For me, there is another layer to our life purpose that I feel called to name as your spiritual leader;
- For part of my leadership role, is getting people to consider that life is more than what may occur within the confines of our intimate silos that represents our everyday lives;

- For if you listen to these words of Scripture from Luke 9 starting at verse 57; it paints a picture of a very different life purpose than many of us might have considered ;
- For it says; *As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.”*

58 Jesus replied, “Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.”

59 He said to another man, “Follow me.”

But he replied, “Lord, first let me go and bury my father.”

60 Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.”

- So by this scripture, it is clear to at least me, that **there is a greater purpose** of why we are all here;
- **There is a greater purpose** that will take us out of our intimate cocoons of comfortability;
- **There is a greater purpose**; to rise up to this invitation of entering into what it means to be holy;
- For we have done an extensive word study on the Hebrew definition of Holy which is translated to be Qadash; which means **to be set apart to do a job**;

- And so when Jesus is asking us to follow Him; He is asking us to be willing **to be set apart to do a job**;
- And my aha moment is that the job that we are invited to do is contained within this very rainbow on our lawn;
- **The job is for each of us** in our own unique calling; to be able to identify the isms and trials that are affecting the rainbow from shining in its full glory;
- **The job is for each of us** in our own unique calling; to be able to use our prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness; to be able to address the roadblocks that is keeping this rainbow from shining in its full potential.
- For there was a time back in the story of Noah, where in Genesis Chapter 9; God made a covenant with the people to never destroy humanity again.
- Scripture captures the voice of God by saying *"I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you*

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and with every living creature that was with you--the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you--every living creature on earth.

11

I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth."

12

And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come:

13

I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth.

14

Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds,

15

I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life.

16

Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth."

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- So the voice of God says never again....**Never again** will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood; **never again** will there be a flood to destroy the earth.
- But the question I have after reading all of this is, "Who is going to protect this rainbow when it is the people who are destroying the Earth?"
- Who is going to protect this rainbow when it is the people who are not allowing it to shine in all of its brilliance?
- You see Church...God did all that God said God would do.
- The way I see it, the onus is on us, in keeping this rainbow covenant intact;
- For **we all have** a role on how we choose to contribute to this kingdom that we all inhabit.
- **We all have** a choice on what our impact is going to be in our communities and beyond.

- We can choose to invest our energy and efforts on doing good; or we can choose the alternative.
- This is the essence of what free will is all about;
- You see the Bible views all humanity as naturally possessing the "free choice of the will."
- If "free will" is taken to mean unconstrained and voluntary choice, **the Bible assumes that all people, unregenerate and regenerate, possess it.**
- Furthermore, this is why the Church keeps planting seeds that might regenerate the very love that our gospel in this week's lectionary is naming in Mark 12; of what it means to love God and love our neighbor;
- Mainly because **in our free will**, sometimes we may not choose to love;
- **In our free will**, sometimes we may not choose to consider our neighbor;
- And there are a myriad of reasons why we may not choose love;
- For like Paul said in Romans 7:15; *For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.*

- For me, this is one of the most honest and realest statements I ever came across in the Bible;
- Because the reality for me is that like in Matthew 25 starting at around verse 34 as I paraphrase it; **I am not always thinking about** feeding the hungry;
- **I am not always thinking about** clothing the naked;
- In fact if I am super honest; I very well could have been in the group of righteous folks who said; *'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'*
- So you see this is why the role of the Church is crucial; to equip all of us to become more intentional about seeing the hungry;
- To help us become more skilled, at naming the oppression and all of the isms that are contained in this rainbow;
- To empower us to use our gifts to change some of these awful dynamics that are threatening the vitality of

this rainbow; because if we really think hard enough about it; hopefully by now; we each can see our own selves in this rainbow.

- **By now**, each one of us if we think hard enough, can probably attest to how we too have experienced the racism and discrimination of red;
- **By now** some of us can relate to the marginalization of our orange experiences;
- **By now**, some of us can relate to the stigmas that came from some of our yellow experiences;
- **By now**, some of us can name and relate to the loneliness and alienation of our green encounters;
- **By now**, some of us can identify with the trials that have come from our blue experiences;
- **By now some of us** can name, witness and relate to these isms and trials that I have only scraped the surface of over these past 5 weeks so much so; that the hope is that now we feel empowered to organize our efforts in such a way to do something about it.....
- For the onus is now on us; God has a role that God has already fulfilled;

- Now it is up to us to live our dash;
- **You see, the phrase “live your dash” comes from one of the most popular poems in the world – The Dash, by Linda Ellis.**

I read of a man who stood to speak at the funeral of a friend. He referred to the dates on the tombstone from the beginning... to the end.

He noted that first came the date of birth and spoke of the following date with tears, but he said what mattered most of all was the dash between those years.

For that dash represents all the time they spent alive on earth and now only those who loved them know what that little line is worth.

For it matters not, how much we own, the cars... the house... the cash. What matters is how we live and love and how we spend our dash.

So think about this long and hard; are there things you'd like to change? For you never know how much time is left that still can be rearranged.

To be less quick to anger and show appreciation more and love the people in our lives like we've never loved before. If we treat each other with respect and more often wear a smile... remembering that this special dash might only last a little while.

So when your eulogy is being read, with your life's actions to rehash, would you be proud of the things they say about how you lived your dash?

- So you see **living our dash** means to be mindful that we're only on this earth a little while.
- **Living our dash** means to spend each day with passion and purpose... and to inspire others by living a life of joy, compassion, and kindness.
- **Living our dash** is tending to the rainbow and working through all of the isms and issues that keeps it from shining in all its full glory;
- Until that one glad morning, where the Lord sees it fit for us to join all of our loved ones who have tended to this very same rainbow;
- Dean & Donna Barnell who were always open to greeting and helping serve communion. They also

helped greatly with the BackPack Program. Always smiling!

- Lucy Munden the stylish help mate to Pastor Ebb who once served this Church community; both who helped set the foundation for social justice within this community.
- Lynn Nickol who was on the Winona Peterson Committee. She and Brent also helped greet and serve communion. They were very generous givers, and nearly always volunteered to help with the Newsletter until Lynn's health started giving out.
- Ed Schneider who was the leader of CrossTalk Class, did greeting and communion. He loved to joke around! He was responsible for getting the defibrillator for the church. He and Zita were also generous givers.
- Howard Wieggers , father of JoAnn Bair and father -in-law to Gordon Bair grandpa to Mandy Bair and so on and so on; a longtime member of First Church, and an avid storyteller. He always wanted to outlive his older brother and managed that. His brother died at age 104 and Howard was 105.

- Phyllis Vculek who always joined the choir for the Alleluia Chorus! Other than the fact she loved to help with Mission Christmas, she loved her shitzu's.
- Gordon Yocum, Edythe Cascini, my grandmother Sue Jean Brooks and LaRue Jacobson; all who greatly contributed to tending to this rainbow in their own special way;
- This is our life purpose; to keep this rainbow shining in all of its infinite brilliance and potential;
- Living out our dash until we too enter into the full glory of our purple potential;
- With the psalm of 146 on our lips;

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul!

2 I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God all my life long.

3 Do not put your trust in princes, in mortals, in whom there is no help.

4 When their breath departs, they return to the earth; on that very day their plans perish.

5 Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God,

6 who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; who keeps faith forever;

7 who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free;

8 the Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous.

9 The Lord watches over the strangers; God upholds the orphan and the widow, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

10 The Lord will reign forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations.

Praise the Lord!

- Let the Church Say Amen and Hallelujah!

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