

Message from the Minister. May 17, 2020

Greetings one and all!

In the midst of great suffering and sadness as we live through this pandemic, I know in my heart that one should not complain about trivial things. However, boy I'm tired of this cold, blah weather!

This too of course will pass as will the pandemic. I think that when it does, we will be living in a very different world. Washing our hands regularly will, I think, become a normal habit and perhaps provide us with great benefit. The value of social contact will become almost sacred for those of us who have lived through "social distancing". How we value our health care system in this country will also receive a boost. Perhaps we will also become more thankful for the care givers in our lives that we see in grocery stores, hospitals, first responders, kind and thoughtful neighbours and many others.

So here's a thought.

Pandemic

What if you thought of it as the Jews consider Sabbath-the most sacred of times?

Cease from travel.

Cease from buying and selling.

Give up, just for now,

on trying to make the world different than it is.

Sing. Pray. Touch only those to who you commit your life.

Centre down.

And when your body has become still, reach out with your heart.

Know that you are connected in ways that are terrifying and beautiful.

(You could hardly deny it now,)

Know that our lives are in one another's hands.

(Surely that has become clear.)

Do not reach out your hands.

Reach out your heart.

Reach out your words.

Reach out your tendrils of compassion that move invisibly where we cannot touch.

Promise this world your love - for better or worse, in sickness and in health, as long as we all shall live.

(Lynn Unger, posted with permission of author)

The scripture for today is John 14: 15-21

If you love me, show it by doing what I told you. I will talk to the Father and he will provide another Friend so that you will always have someone with you. This Friend is the spirit of truth. The godless world cannot take him in because it doesn't have eyes to see him, doesn't know what to look for. But you know him already because he has been staying with you and will even be living in you.

I will not leave you orphaned. I am coming back. In just a little while, the world will no longer see me, but you're going to see me because I am alive and you are about to

come alive. At that moment you will know absolutely that I am in my Father and you are in me and I am in you.

The person who knows my commandments and keeps them, that's who loves me. And the person who loves me will be loved by my Father and I will love him/her and make myself known to him/her. (The Message)

Message

Some of you will know that Jesus favourite way of communicating was by parable or story. The following is a modern-day parable. It was written by Paul Matthews and has it times, been used as a children's story. What do you think of this story?

"In a house with a garden, a seesaw and a swing there lay a toy box of mysterious things. Within lived a monkey, all patches of twine, who stared from the windows most of the time. An inquisitive thing who loved to explore, he's seen through the windows and longs to see more

Stretching and yawning, he woke up one day. Stretching and yawning, he wanted to play. But he couldn't find dad, he couldn't find mom, and he called for his friends of which he found none. The sun hadn't risen, but the stars didn't shine, so he set out to look, he said out to find.

Across oceans and cities the days turn to years, and the monkey confirmed the worst of his fears. He found as he searched, roamed and explored, that the stars have been stolen and the sun shone no more.

Humanity lay dead and the animals were slain, the clouds black and swollen, with fire in the rain.

In need of repair, confused and bewildered, he trudged through a forest reduced but to cinders. Suddenly he paused, peered as hard as he could, and saw a hill where a tree still stood. From it's branches a soldier was tied, so the monkey hurried to help the man.

"Lo!" the man gasped, "I am but a soldier whose foes left me to die, but I can't pass away without telling you why. So, tell me your story and I will share mine. But you must tell me quickly, for I haven't much time."

"I set out to see!" said the monkey, "and I came here and saw that the stars have been stolen and the sun shines no more. Mankind is dead and the animals are slain. The clouds are swollen and there's fire in the rain. So please won't you tell me as best as you can, won't you please tell me the story of man?"

So, the soldier told him the sorrowful tale and the monkey cried out with a lachrymose wail.

"I've heard all your story, all your squabbles and fights, how you fought over borders and fought over toys. But please tell me one thing – I need to know more – why all the violence? Why all the war?"

But the man couldn't hear, he had finally died and a monkey gave a long and most sorrowful cry.

"My fur is threadbare, my stitching undone – – but who's left to fix me? There must be someone! "

Alone in the darkness, stung by the rain, the monkey called out again and again. But nobody heard, his voice tired and feeble, so he dried his eyes, took some twine and a needle.

“If no one shall fix me, if there’s no one to help, I will learn how to mend things and do it myself. Then I’ll learn how the stars shine and what makes the rain, and then, with my work done, I’ll go home again. “

Across oceans and cities that humanity tore asunder, the brave monkey travelled and fixed the worlds wonders. As he went, he found toys, all bent and all broken, and he mended and stitched them and then he awoke them.

“Lo, I have a fixed you, and the world is mended. The stars shine bright and the darkness has ended.”

Clapping and laughing, the toys danced and sang, they paused a moment for the memory of humans. Then when the sun rose and the rain clouds parted, the monkey led them back to where he had started, to a house with a garden, a seesaw and swing and a box stuffed with toys and mysterious things. “

As with all parables, Jesus just told the story and let the people figure out its meaning for their own lives. So, I need to let it speak to you, to let you understand it in your own way.

I see it as a hopeful parable. So let me just say that in the midst of our present fear, sorrow, bewilderment and concern, perhaps there are possibilities for a new creation, a new world that might have a better outcome than the trajectory on which we have been. May it be so.

And the people said.....

Will you pray with me?

Loving God, your desire is for wholeness and well being.

We hold in tenderness and prayer the collective suffering of our world at this time.

May we who are inconvenienced, remember those whose lives are at stake. May we who have no risk factors remember those most vulnerable. May we who have the luxury of working from home remember those who must choose between preserving their health and making their rent. May we who have to cancel our trips remember those who have no safe place to go. May we who are losing our margin money in the tumult of economic markets, remember those who have no margin at all. May we who settle in for a quarantine at home remember those who have no home. As fear grips our country let us choose love. During this time when we may not be able to physically wrap our arms around each other, let us find ways to be the loving embrace of God to our neighbours. And finally, call us to a profound trust in your faithful presence, you, the God who does not leave us orphaned. And now we pray together, Our Father.....

Benediction

This is another hymn from More Voices #161

I have called you by your name, you are mine;
I have gifted you and ask you now to shine.
I will not abandon you; all my promises are true.
You are gifted, called, and chosen; you are mine.

I will help you learn my name as you go;
read it written in my people, help them grow.
Pour the water in my name, speak the word your soul can claim,
Offer Jesus body given long ago.

I know you will need my touch as you go;
feel it pulsing in creations ebb and flow.
Like a woman reaching out, choosing faith in spite of doubt,
Hold the hem of Jesus robe, then let it go.

I have given you a name, it is mine;
I have given you my spirit has a sign.
With my wonder in your soul, make my wounded children whole;
go and tell my precious people they are mine.

God's peace and hope be with you all. Amen

From Lisa: [watch-v=q4M8L0s9 -c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q4M8L0s9-c) (Mormon Tabernacle Choir sings 'Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah').

PLEASE NOTE!

On Wednesday we will be taping our first online worship service. There will be four of us in the sanctuary keeping social distance. It will be available to you on utube for Sunday morning. We will probably have some glitches, but please bear with us until we get things worked out. This message will not come out as it has been, but there may be something in its place.

The hymns we will use will be sent out by email so you will have the words to sing. If you have prayer requests, joys and concerns, would you please get those to Darlene, no later than Friday (May 23) at noon.

Thanks.