

We are enough

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Community Presbyterian Church - Rochester, Minnesota

7th Sunday of Easter - May 16, 2021

Texts: Psalm 1, John 17:

Blessed are those who walk hand in hand with goodness,
who take their place with virtue and sit in the seat of truth.

Their delight is in the Spirit; they dwell in the heart of Love.

They are like trees planted by streams of water,
that yield fruit in due season; their leaves flourish.

In all that they do, they give life.

The unloving are not so; they are blown about by the wind,
they know suffering and pain, and lose touch with good judgment.

But Love knows the way of wisdom and truth;

The way of ignorance will perish;
Love's light breaks through hearts filled with illusions.

We will follow Love's way of discernment.

GOSPEL READING John 17:6-13

The last chapter of Jesus' long farewell message to the disciples is addressed to the one he calls "Father," the one who sent him into the world; this is Jesus' prayer. Throughout these chapters, Jesus is intent on persuading them that they will be able to carry on without him, that they have learned enough, practiced enough. He prays for their protection, for their unity, and for their joy - complete joy. Don't be misled by what might seem to be negative comments about "the world." The world is the vehicle for God's purpose. The world is the material thread that connects us.

"I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them.

"And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves."

Look around. See the world.



The world is full of beauty.

Listen to the world, to the news. Feel the heartache.



The world is full of woe.

Breathe. Deeply. Lilacs are in bloom.



The world is fragile, and flies away too soon.

Reach out your hand. Touch someone you care about;



Close your eyes. You are loved.

The world is full of love.



Jesus speaks to the world through the world,
So that joy--*your* joy--may be made complete.

The world is a puzzle made with moving pieces,



a tapestry of interwoven threads:

Jesus, woven together with his Father,
woven into creation, woven into our life;
Jesus weaves heaven and earth together.

Leaving the world, he prays to the one who sent him.

Jesus loves the disciples into God's grand design,

In the world, but not fully of it; made of the stuff of the world, but not contained by it.

A person could get lost in the puzzle, knotted up in the tapestry.
I've been told, if you ever get lost in a dream and want to find yourself,
Look at your hands. Your hands will bring you back to earth.

As a chaplain, I held services for elderly people in nursing homes,



mostly retired South Dakota farmers, salt of the earth.
Some were very present; some were already moving on in their minds.
Look at your hands, I would tell them. What have those hands done?

We went around the circle, looking at our hands.
Add their ages together, you'd get 1000 years or more,
A generous millennium of living in the world, touching the world.
"My hands washed so many dishes;"
"My hands dug gardens, planted and picked, put up for the winter;"

“My hands held babies, and fed them.”



“More than 100 quilts came from these hands; I can still feel the fabric.”

“Winter evenings, I’d pick up a pencil and write poems. I’ll read you one!”

“These hands could fix any machine on the farm.”

This man looks, now, at his fingernails, amazed at how clean they are.

Corinne birthed 13 babies and raised every one to adulthood.

Now she is as tiny as a girl of 10.



She lifts her gnarled hands and laughs: “I made all the bread for my family!
Oh, those kids loved my bread, warm, with butter, after school.”

Jim, nearing his century mark, is soft-spoken, thoughtful, and kind.
An Air Force major, he was tasked with keeping our country's nuclear arsenal safe.



“I packed a lot of bombs with these hands. I packed a lot of bombs.”

The world is full of beauty, and needs our eyes to see it;



The world is full of woe, and needs our hands to heal it;
The world is fragile, and needs our courage to defend it.
The world is full of love, and needs our hearts to feel it.
We are woven into one world;
Born of the world, but bigger than the world;
Overwhelmed by the world; its burdens too heavy.

We are the hope of the world; we are enough.



You are enough because your hands, your heart, are hidden with Christ in God.

You are enough because the Spirit of Christ lives in you.

You are enough because you all are here, together, both near and far,

You are close enough to touch one another, in soul, in spirit.

Our wise Executive Presbyter Jeff Japinga shared something like this last week:

‘When the disciples failed as usual to wrap their minds around what Jesus was up to, they begged him, “Increase our faith.”

He said, “You already have more than enough.

You are full of living water. You just need to pour it out.



You belong to me as I belong to God, and we all belong to each other.
This is enough.”

‘So what,’ Pastor Jeff said, ‘so what if your numbers are lower
and your ages higher than they were ten years ago?

So what if you haven’t done everything you might have done?

So what if what you have done wasn’t perfect?

You are enough. You are equipped by God

to do what you need to do and be who you need to be today.’

This is what Pastor Jeff said.

You---we---all of us, together, not alone. We are enough.

These words are spoken so that Jesus’ joy may be complete in you.

So that his love may be fulfilled in you.

So that faith may be at work in you.



So what if you don't feel rich enough, strong enough, powerful enough?
That great philosopher of the 20th century Charlie Chaplin put it this way:
'You need power only when you want to do something harmful.
Otherwise, love is enough to get everything done.'

Love is enough.

You are enough.

We are enough.

Thanks be to God.

Prayers

Eternal God, from our birth to our death you walk beside us; you have wound your way into the heart of the world to love it and heal it from within; you draw us together and make us one.

Yet for all its beauty your world is fractured and divided; we long for an end to conflict in Israel and Palestine; we pray for restoration where life is disrupted by malice; we grieve with those who are overwhelmed by covid. You know those places and you know our hearts.

Thank you for this hour together, face to face, in your presence, renewing friendship, restoring ease, knowing each other as friends and co-workers in grace. Speak tenderly to all those who are tired, sad, bewildered, discouraged, or stressed, and protect and direct all new graduates as they celebrate and embark on new chapters in their lives.

Strengthen our weakness, give resolution to our souls, grant us courage and calm to face this hour and every hour. Help us to make peace, love, and joy flow wherever we are; for where we are, there you are with us. We ask this in the name of Jesus, who taught us always to pray....Our Father, who art in heaven....