June 9th, 2019

Springfield Presbyterian Church

Sixth Sunday of Eastertide

10:30 am

Bruadarach

1. Bruadarach

As of this past weekend, I hit my 50 day streak of learning German off of the popular phone app called ‘Duolingo.’ When I made it to the 25 day mark, I was capable of saying helpful phrases like, ‘No, I am not a banana’ and ‘That is not my cheese!’ I am proud to say that I’ve moved beyond these phrases to some that are a little more applicable to actual situations, but please – I know those of you who are fluent, please do not try to actually hold a conversation with me quite yet.

But, in this relearning of German, it has reminded me of the importance of language and the beauty of it. Sometimes there are words for feelings or emotions or things that cannot be encapsulated by our English language. One of my favourite words, actually comes from Scottish Gaelic, and the word is ‘bruadarach’ which in its closest translation to English is ‘ be a visionary or a dreamer.’

This morning, as we celebrate Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit, we hear those fond words from Acts that continue to ring throughout the centuries: “your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams.” I place the word bruadarach and the Holy Spirit next to one another in my mind, for it is the Holy Spirit who does that powerful, beautiful, indescribable work of creating visions and dreams within God’s people.

II. Always a Dreamer

Pentecost, is one of my favourite holy days, nearly ranking up there with Easter and Christmas – and that may be surprising. But maybe that’s because my soul resonates so well with this bruadarach concept – this idea of the church being created by a Spirit who is so powerful and gracious and loving and constant that we can dream dreams that are beyond comprehension and see visions where the world and society would otherwise tell us, ‘No. It’s impossible.’

I enjoy Pentecost because I get to communicate to you, to proclaim to you, that the Holy Spirit is with us and all those things you thought couldn’t happen – can. Maybe not in our time, maybe not in the way we dreamt it originally, maybe it takes on a new form – but God’s people are called to dreams and to visions. It’s time to live out the call, to live out the words of Scripture you hear every week and envision life outside the box.

Let me give you a few examples. What does it mean, when we hear the great commission of Matthew 25 – where God calls us out to create disciples – dream, dream, dream – how do you want to do that as Springfield? When we hear the cries of the exiles and recognize the exiles in our world – dream, dream, dream – how do we respond as a faithful church? When we consider the dangers of tortured kings and leaders and the ill-use of power in our own world – dream, dream, dream – what do we say, Springfield?

Pentecost is the time to dream, it is the time to recognize the beginning of the church and to recognize the church in motion. It is a call to discipleship, it is a call to action, it is a call to move beyond what is to what is be. It is a call to remember that while Jesus Christ is not walking with us here on Earth, Jesus says that we are not alone – we are gifted with a Spirit who is with us always.

III. Visions

So, good people of Springfield, what are your dreams? What are your hopes? What are your goals? What do you feel called to be as the church of Jesus Christ? I can joyfully stand up at the pulpit and proclaim a good word to you, but who are we together as faithful people?

Frederick Bueckner, a beloved theologian and writer sums up the call in a profound way in saying, “your vocation in life is where your greatest joy meets the world’s greatest need.” It begs the question – where is your greatest joy, what, as cheesy as it sounds, makes your soul sing? Where can you match your greatest passion with the world’s need? Where is the Spirit leading?

These are no small questions, my friends, but they are the questions of the people of Christ and the questions that the church is called to responsibly and thoughtfully take in and respond to faithfully. You might be thinking to yourself, ‘She’s asking us big questions – what do we do with this?”

Here’s a few ways to start answering these questions: primarily – pray. Pray – ask God to guide you and lead you and reveal to you where you are called in service to the church?

Have a conversation – have a conversation with another one in the faith, whether that’s me or someone in the congregation or a beloved friend. But here’s what I really want to encourage you to do in those conversations – try to turn off the frontal lobe a little bit – try to stop yourself from saying things like, ‘that’s impossible, don’t be silly, we can’t do that’ – or, dare I say it, a favourite phrase of any church, ‘but we’ve always done it that way.’ Try to turn off that part of your mind and...dream, envision, live into the unexpected. Be, what your brain would tell you is ridiculous – because as the cheesy quote says, which is absolutely true by Norman Vincent Peale, ‘If you shoot for the moon and you miss, at least you’ll land upon the stars.” You don’t get anywhere without trying, you don’t gain anything from stagnancy, so live into that bruadarach – into that visionary and dreamer mentality, and soak it in.

My friends, this is our call – not just today on this Pentecost Sunday, but every day, to listen to the call of Christ through the Spirit and respond in faithfulness. Let us be the church – the church that is moving, that is challenged and challenging ways of thinking and being, and that is moving forward for the glory of God. Amen.