

October 25, 2020

**“Are We There Yet?”
Sermon by Rev. Susan Drake**

CALL TO WORSHIP

There is a place of justice, kindness and love. Are we there yet?

No, but we can see it from here!

There is a world where there is equity among all the races and people of all walks of life do not live in fear. Are we there yet?

No, but we can see it from here!

There is a place where there is no war, hunger, poverty, or needless suffering. Are we there yet?

No, but we can see it from here!

INVOCATION

Be thou our vision Lord, set us on a mountain top so we can see clearly the world you meant for us to live in. Clear the scales from our eyes and set them on your goals.

Completely saturate our spirits with connection to you so your energy, your strength and your love shines in us. AMEN

Deuteronomy 34:1-8

Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho, and the Lord showed him the whole land: Gilead as far as Dan, all Naphtali, the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Western Sea, the Negeb, and the Plain—that is, the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees—as far as Zoar. The Lord said to him, “This is the land of which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, ‘I will give it to your descendants’; I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not cross over there.” Then Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there in the land of Moab, at the Lord’s command. He was buried in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-peor, but no one knows his burial place to this day. Moses was one hundred twenty years old when he died; his sight was unimpaired and his vigor had not abated. The Israelites wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days; then the period of mourning for Moses was ended.

Matthew 22:34-40

When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” He said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

Sermon “Are We There Yet?”

I’m sure you all remember those car trips as a kid and maybe with your own kids where somebody would get impatient and annoyingly keep asking “Are we there yet?” I am feeling the same way about the end of this pandemic, and an end to the constant political ads.

Are we there, is it over, can we come out now? This isn’t easy. Humans by and large are pretty adaptable creatures but this is hard.

Well, think about what Moses went through, all that trouble, all that worry and risk getting his people out of Egypt, all that whining in the desert the children of God did. I’m thirsty, I’m hungry, are we there yet?

40 years of that only to get within miles of the promised land and die on a mountain top.

But here is the bright side. He got to see it. God took him to that Mountain top and showed him the land all stretched out before him. He had done it. He had made sure his people arrived and he could see it, that beautiful place. His work was done, his part of the story written, he could die in peace.

If there is anything we know about working toward the kingdom of God, Jesus’s idea of a promise land, it is just this. We are not there yet. But we can see it. We can see it because God gave us his vision through Jesus.

Jesus showed us what the kingdom of God, on Earth as it is in heaven, looks like. He laid it out before us and we may not get there in our life times but we are playing and incredible part of the journey now in this pivotal moment in our faith and our world.

Jesus tells us in story after story about the kingdom of God, but this passage in Mathew sums up his entire ministry. God’s vision for us then and now. To see a world laid out before us where our lives are filled with love for God and that spills up and spills over into loving our neighbor and our selves. Letting our lives worship God and all of God’s creation.

It is very hard to see that world right now, in the fog of the vile hatred that is toxic to us that is spewing out from politics. It is hard to imagine a world where people truly care about their neighbor when many of them wouldn’t bear the discomfort of the mask to protect each other.

It often feels like the heart has gone out of our world. But don’t you think the Israelites felt like that more than once wandering around the desert. Don’t you think Moses felt that way. But they made it through and Israel prospered for many years.

But they wouldn’t have made it through that desert if they didn’t have the encouragement of Moses and the vision of God leading them.

Many of us will die before we get to see the promise land. But we are a part of this story. A part of bringing it about. I hope that each of us gets to stand on that mountain top in the end and can see that promise land stretched out before us. A land where Love is the guiding principal of our laws and policies.

Where loving our neighbor becomes the norm and not the exception. A world of equity and kindness. Where children grow up with enough food and love so that the brokenness of this world is healed through the generations.

Where people value others because they themselves have been valued all their lives. A world we take care of not because we face extinction but because we love this beautiful home that God has given us. A place where we admit our failings in the past and move forward honestly, forgiven, healed and whole.

I'm not naive, I know the breadth and depth of human depravity but I have also experienced first hand the power of God, the power of community and the power of love. And no matter what, even now, I know to my bones we are capable of so much more than this.

I want Parkside to be a part of the next great awakening. Where we reclaim Christianity from it's own abusive history back to those two commandments. We loudly proclaim that our Lord did not walk this earth being judgmental, excluding others, being arrogant and acting superior.

Our Lord was a humble man that reached out to those in pain and need, that healed and made whole, that loved beyond borders and bias and gave his own life trying to find justice.

He could see it, he could see the kingdom of God where Justice flows down like waters, he believed in us! He had a vision of what we were capable of.

That is who we serve. Let's keep that in our minds and write it on our hearts and speak it with our tongues. Think about what a world built on love would look like and let's continue writing our part of the story of getting us there. We aren't there yet but with God's help we can see it from here. AMEN

Copyright 2020 Rev. Susan Drake
All Rights Reserved