

"TODAY, TOMORROW, AND THE NEXT DAY" – LUKE 13:31-35

The Second Sunday in Lent

By: Minister Candice Nunn

Luke 13:33 – “In any case, I must press on today and tomorrow and the next day.”

Family, during our lives we encounter warnings on a regular basis. Warnings of inclement weather, such as snowstorms and extreme heat. Warnings of natural disasters, earthquakes, hurricanes, and tornados. While warnings are naturally just cautionary advice, what the warning is signaling allows us the opportunity to cultivate appropriate means of safety.

We’ve seen warnings that caused many people to spring into action. Warnings of government shutdowns that ultimately left 800,000 furloughed federal workers sprung into action to provide for their families.

Then there are warnings of national emergencies to fund a southern border wall that reinforces America's commitment to an exclusionary and racist ideology. This should cause us all to spring into protest disregarding the miles in between our neighbors and home. Or televised warnings on the nightly news reporting that the privatized prison industry is now worth 5 billion dollars. This should have us springing into action, demanding the dismantling of CoreCivic, formerly known as Corrections Corporation of America, for the cesspool of abuse against the humanity of our kinfolks.

What I’ve come to realize is that the proximity of the warning to disrupt our everyday routines and comfortable livelihoods dictate the urgency of our response or the luxury of ignoring our neighbor.

See in this text; there is first a warning. Jesus approached by the Pharisees is warned “Leave this place and go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you” and just like with any threat, Jesus nor

the disciples knew the validity. Did Herod want Jesus dead, now? I mean Herod did have John the Baptist imprisoned and beheaded, but Jesus too? It does not seem far-fetched to believe the Pharisees were warning Jesus of potential danger. But oh, those Pharisees. The Pharisees are questionable as well. There were many times they tried to trick and trap Jesus, games of cat and mouse, and antagonistic chess moves. The Pharisees aren't the most trusted source either.

Either way, vital warning or idle threat, we encounter Jesus having to respond. Will Jesus run to the hills and hide or call the Pharisee's bluff?

Neither -- Jesus does neither.

Purpose

Jesus filters the warning through the perspective of his purpose. The Pharisees not only warned Jesus but offered their unwarranted recommendation. They said, "Herod wants to kill you" that's the warning. "Leave and go somewhere else" was their proposal of action.

Jesus rejects this suggestion because it did not come from the perspective of his purpose. So he informs them. He says my purpose is not only to drive out demons, but I will heal those sick also. Notice the work of both, deconstruction and reconstruction in his actions. We can't just drive things out without the repairing nature of healing for the possibility of new growth. I'll do it today, tomorrow, and on the third day, I will achieve my goal.

Sometimes people will not only give you a warning but offer you their uninformed recommendations. You can't allow other people to tell you the best course of action for your life when they don't know the purpose God has placed inside of you. The power of your purpose will break generational curses and heal communities of institutional structures of othering. Your purpose can set the captives free, move mountains, and revive life into dead relationships.

Imagine the people who wouldn't have been healed and saved if Jesus abandoned his purpose in chapter 13. Ten men with leprosy would still be aching with pain, outcast from society, in chapter 17. The blind beggar would have never seen the sunlight or his mother's face, in chapter 18. Zacchaeus, the tax collector, would have never tasted the sweetness of salvation, in chapter

19. You have a powerful purpose that will help others in your community; you must press on today, tomorrow and the next day. You have things to do. More chapters to write and they do get better and better the more you embody your purpose. You will achieve your goal.

We must find the confidence to start filtering out the warnings in our life through the perspective of our purpose.

Peace

Once you know your purpose, then there is a state of peace that comes to accompany you. Earnestly, you must wonder how is this possible since warnings come to disrupt your peace? Warnings try to uproot and unsettle you.

Well, peace is the passenger along for the road trip of life. The motivational coach that never misses a game. Peace fills in the blanks of whatever you didn't have but thought you needed to endure another night.

This is the peace Jesus notices on the faces of the chicks covered by the wing of the mother hen in verse 34. The storms of wind and rain don't stop, but the peace of being under the wing provides the barrier needed to still press on. The journey will still be rocky, and the rain will still pour. But the umbrella of peace reinforces the commitment that the storm will pass, morning will surely come, and you can press on until tomorrow even if there are puddles left behind.

Unfortunately, today we have covertly allowed peace to become coopted with blindness to new possibilities.

Well, I've come here to remind us of what peace isn't: Peace isn't blind - To the violence done against all the different bodies that make up Christ. Peace isn't deaf - To the screams and cries of trauma inflicted to maintain arbitrary status quos. Peace isn't silent - To those things that need to be said, demanded, and recorded.

The good news of today, tomorrow, and the next day is that the accompany of peace empowers us to do. To press and carry on. We must then radically return the power of peace to its origin.

Peace is active – Keeping the peace requires the work of first creating and then maintaining. Peace is courageous. To see the divine in the dirt of the hard work our hands and hearts must do. Peace is revolutionary for inclusion and intentionally resilient to reimagine a new earth.

While peace may not be the get out of jail free card we hoped we were born with, peace is still there. There in the noise and disturbance. There in the sleepless nights and early mornings. Peace is still there even in the simultaneity of life.

Promise

Finally, the promise. While the Pharisees were warning Jesus of the today, Jesus concludes his response with the everlasting promise of tomorrow and the next day. The undeniable certainty of purpose and accompanying peace reinforced the promise of the future beholden.

I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.”

The power of the promise is extended to you, and the extension of this promise isn't weak. So, I say Blessed are You who come in the name of the Lord. Blessed are you, where ever you may journey. Blessed are you when you speak up and stand out. Blessed are you in the protest for what is right. Blessed are you in your identity that is still divine regardless of what others think. Blessed are you in the way you choose to live and whom you choose to love and who you are to be. Blessed, are you. God says Blessed are you,

Blessed are you in the work of today, despite all the warnings, for the promise of a better tomorrow.

As we see Jesus' response to the Pharisees' warning is multi-layered. He boldly states his purpose and the resolve to keep doing. He grounds this mission in the accompanying peace of God to see him through. And he promises that all will see the fruition of the promise.

Purpose Peace and Promise -- Once you know your purpose, you can navigate life through peace to get to the promise.

Aren't we Glad we have a God who isn't moved by the warnings in our lives but will move on our behalf amid our warnings?

There is a God that won't forsake you. The same God that is a presence help so that you can do the work your soul must complete.

While during this Lenten season, and the warnings of life are raging. I've come to give you a serious and irrevocable warning.

I've come to warn you that God is with you today.

I've come to warn you that God is with you tomorrow.

I've come to warn you that God is with you the next day.

Immanuel, oh Immanuel, boldly declaring God is with us. God is with you.



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