

Gaines Congregational United Church of Christ

February 5, 2017

Old Testament Reading; Isaiah; 58: 1-12

Responsive Reading; Psalm 112: 1-10

Epistle Reading; 1 Corinthians 2: 1-16

Gospel Reading; Matthew 5: 13-20

Sermon Title: Let Your Light So Shine

Summery; If it has to be said-say it. If it has to be shown-show it. If it has to be done – do it.

OK here I start with a quick scripture recap.

Isaiah; The Lord says,” Shout as loud as you can. Tell my people Israel about their sins.”

Psalms; Happy is the man who honors the Lord, who takes pleasure in obeying his commands.

The Epistle; When I came to you, my friends, to preach God’s secret truth I did not use big words and great learning.

And finally the Gospel; “You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. Let your light so shine before others that they shall see your good works and glorify your father who is in heaven.”

Isaiah, shout about sins. Psalm shout honor to God. 1<sup>st</sup>

Corinthians, speak plainly/and the Gospel, Let your light speak by example.

Often as we hit our golden years, that is a nice way to say “Man am I old”, as we hit our golden years we sometimes wonder if the Bible has not passed us by.

The Bible seems to be extorting us to do great things and we consider it an accomplishment to have just gotten out of bed.

Jeremiah was afraid to speak the word of the Lord because he was just a youth. Just a youth, wow, not my problem. Abraham was told to get up and leave the land of his youth and we grumble when our bodies tell us to get up and go to the bathroom. The bible seems to be aimed at the millennials and we are baby boomers.

When I was contemplating this message I had an idea of what I wanted to say but was unsure of how to say it. I went to sleep Friday night stressing over this very thing.

I had a dream. Oh oh where is Joseph when we need him?

I have 3 kinds of dreams, the ones I wake up from feeling good but have no idea of why; the ones that are so clear that I can quote every word [I have only had about 6 of these in my entire life] and the ones that leave only general glimpses of what I dreamt. That is what I am dealing with here.



In my dream there was a family in a brown setting. Brown walls, brown railings hardwood floors and a brown counter top. The family was dressed in brown. The father was saying, "Well I guess I have to go to jail."

It seems he had violated some obscure law that required violators to spend 4 days in jail. He could have pled to a parking violation and got a \$15 fine but he did not want his children to grow up believing they could circumvent the law and the law [right or wrong] said 4 days in jail. This scene took place in a Town Clerk's office.

The other side of the Clerk's office was 2 tone green and a family [wearing green cloths] consisting of a 10 year old girl. Her parents and her grandparents were standing at a green counter. The girl was concerned that a man was going to have to go to jail for 4 days for a violation that should not have even been a violation. She had been taught that in a democracy if you did not like a law you went through proper channels to institute change. Although her parents did not see what good it could do they supported her by accompanying to the only Government office available.

The daughter of Mr. Brown hearing the Green girl's statement explained the it was not too late because her farther, Mr. Brown was right there and did not have to go to jail until tomorrow. The clerk issued a permit for the Green family to

camp out at the Village Park until Mr. Brown could go home from jail.

OK, here the dream ended.

How did the Green girl know about Mr. Brown's plight?

Did people seeing the Greens camped out think it was just a vacation or did they know it was to support Mr. Brown?

Did the obscure law get repealed?

Does any of this matter or is there a more important theme here?

Mr. Brown showed by example that a society governed by law matters. I 10 year old girl took responsibility and was supported by her family, and a Town Clerk showed compassion for a child and 2 families. [I bet her name was Ruth]

Jesus did not say, "Let your light shine so bright that it blinds everyone in the world." Isaiah did not say, "Shout so loud about everyone's sin that they have to cover their ears." The Psalmist did not say, "Honor God so well that everyone in the world pats you on the back." And, Paul did not say that you should beat people over the head with the truth until they had to submit to it.

Jesus said, "Let YOUR light so shine." Your light, not someone else's.

I look around this church and I do not see even 1 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. I do not see 1 Nelson Mandela. I do not see 1 Mahatma Gandhi. I do not see 1 Mother Teresa. I do not see one George Washington. I only see 1 Shannon Broda and I do not ask her to fill anyone's shoes but her own, and Shannon, God has my back on that one.

I want you to consider a stick match for a moment. If I am driving through a dry forest and I strike that match and throw it out the window it might start a 1000 acre forest fire or it might blow out or land where some deer had just relieved herself and do nothing.

I want to be a little strange here and ask that you consider a forest fire as a good thing.

A match is so small and a forest is so big. If you strike a match you might "set the world on fire" or nothing may come of it. It is not you call. It is God's call.

Either way God cannot work through you unless you do something. It is your light. It is your match.

*Your light, a word, a touch, a smile, a facebook post. your light*

It is now time to do something. Come to the table of the Lord and let your light so shine and his light shine through you.

Hallelujah and amen!