

Gaines Congregational United Church of Christ

May 26, 2024

Old Testament Reading; Isaiah 6: 1-8

Responsive Reading: Psalm 29

Epistle Reading: Romans 8: 12-17

Gospel Reading: John 3: 1-17

Sermon: **Children of God**

By Rev. Jim Gardner

Summary: “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved,”

And Jesus said, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.

This is Trinity Sunday. Baptizing in the name of The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit. All three. All three in one and all one

of three. Oh yeah, and don't forget to make disciples of all nations. Oh sure. I can do that, NOT!

Nice try Jesus but look who you are talking to. I am too old, too young, too slow of speech or have a thorn in my flesh. It is a nice idea and all of that, but I am not the one for the job, or "Job". You must be thinking of Billy Graham or Martin Luther or somebody important like that, but surely not me! Where would I even start?

Maybe we start with King David, sitting in a cave near the top of a mountain watching a storm roll through. Seeing God in all of His power and glory.

The storm sweeps across the Mediterranean stirring up the waters and slams into the mountains of Lebanon with its lightning splitting the majestic cedars like toothpicks, thunder rolling like the sounds of cannon fire in the fields of Gettysburg. The wind causing the trees to sway as if they were a herd of calves or wild oxen stampeding over the hills, and then it hits the wilderness of Kadish and even wilderness is shaken by nature's onslaught. David sees the effects of the storm on wildlife, animals often are stimulated to give birth during traumatic weather events. Trees are stripped of their foliage. The storm is gone but God remains, even after the great flood God remained. "This God will give strength to His people, He will bless His people with peace."

Or maybe we should start by going with Nicodemus by night to visit Jesus and hear how people born of the flesh are limited to the flesh, but people who are born of the spirit are held up and strengthened by God Himself. We might learn that “God did not send His son into the world to condemn the world but that through Him the world might be saved.” All we have to do is to be “Born Again”, oh sure we cannot be born physically again but we can all be born again spiritually. All we have to do is to let it happen. God, through the Holy Spirit, will do the rest.

If that is not enough to kick start your active faith maybe you, I mean we, should take note of what Paul says in our Epistle reading from Romans. Paul says, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out ‘Abba, Father’. The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”

At this point we, figuratively speaking, find ourselves with Isaiah in the Throne Room of God and the train of His robe fills the room. How can we possibly be worthy to even live in such company? Well, on our own we can't. But, with God all things are possible. With a little pain to our lips and a little tribulation in our lives Gods messengers will purge our lips and our iniquity

is taken away i.e. our sins are forgiven and erased from the book.

Now we are ready to hear the Great Commission. “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

“Also, I heard the voice of the Lord, saying ‘Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us (Trinity Sunday)?’”

Then we say, “Here I am, send me,”

A journey of a thousand miles starts with the first step, but you can’t even make it to the next room if you don’t take that first step, or in some of our cases, push that joystick forward on our electric wheel chair.

That first step is not all that hard. It is giving a smile or an ear to someone who needs it, or a ride to the store or helping a child tie his or her shoe.

My sister was a missionary in Egypt. Egypt is a police state. If anyone proclaims a religion other than Muslem they can be arrested and/or deported. You can not “proclaim Christianity” but you can admit that you are a Christian and then live in such a way that others may want what you have.

If we live like that, it is the first step, and if we show in our lives the joy of belonging to our Abba Father Jesus then people in all nations will want to be baptized and have what we got.

So, being Children of God, when we hear that voice say to us,
“Who will I send? Who will go for Us?”

We all say, “Send Me!”

Hallelujah and Amen