

Let it Be

By Rev. Sheryl Stewart

5-9-21 (Mother's Day)

Acts 10: 44-48 1 John 5: 1-6 John 15: 9-17

Psalm 98

Summary: The words of wisdom from Mother Mary in the iconic Beatles' ballad are not Doris Day's. The words after "Let it be unto me" were "according to God's Word."

As I prayed and meditated over this sermon and how to focus on Mother's Day, a famous Beatles' song kept playing in my mind. When I first heard "Let it Be," I thought the message was rather the same as Doris Day's "Que sera, sera." In other words, stop stressing and let whatever happens simply happen, a message also like "*Lion King's*" Timon and Pumba's "Don't worry, be happy."

Not stressing can be a blessing, but it is essentially a selfish goal. I recall an episode of "*The Simpsons*" where Homer was wandering around the yard singing Doris Day's song while a meteor was plummeting toward Earth, headed right for his hometown. The rest of the town was huddled in a bomb shelter, but they all came out to join Homer's carefree singing. Sure enough, when the meteor finally hit, it landed right on the now empty bomb shelter, which promptly collapsed.

As for Timon and Pumba, I recall a short episode where Timon sings “*Stand by Me*” while his friend Pumba walks beside him. Lightning strikes, rocks fall, herds of bison charge, but Timon is safe because the unlucky Pumba gets all the grief. Not stressing can either bless or curse but, in either case, it is individually experienced.

A Biblical depiction of dealing with stress is Martha’s concern over her many duties. She requests Jesus to send her sister Mary away from Bible study to help her. That intention is the opposite of letting things be. Mary, however, has chosen better since she is focused on God’s Word as opposed to the dirty dishes. This suggests that there are wiser choices than simply carrying on with routine.

If the Beatles’ words of wisdom are truly Mother Mary’s, her reply to Gabriel was, “Let it be unto me *according to God’s Word.*” We Protestants do not focus on Mary very much, but that is a mistake. If Eve is the mother of all humans, Mary is the mother of all Christians since she was the mother of Jesus. Her wisdom goes far beyond simply letting events happen however they may.

Our reading from Acts shows all the circumcised believers goggling in amazement when the uncircumcised Gentiles receive the same gift of God’s Holy Spirit as they did once they heard the gospel and believed. Rather than just letting this be, Peter immediately understands God’s spirit baptism demands the action of

including foreigners in the water baptism signifying church membership. God acts and His actions present a truly clear word. We are here today because no one just let it be, they acted on God's will.

Next, in John's first letter, he stresses that the child born of God through faith experiences that this is true as they observe Jesus' command to love one another. The water and the blood bring us together, but not to simply associate with each other. No, we are called to actively love one another, to be a real family of God.

Finally, our Gospel reading is this very commandment. We may think we chose Jesus, but He chose us first. Standing about mending their nets, hauling in a huge catch of fish, sitting by local taxes, or whatever else they were occupied with, the disciples responded to Jesus, not the other way around.

Once called, they were taught, appointed, and sent out with the Gospel that they might bear abiding fruit. That harvest of faith is others responding to the Gospel with faith, love, and witness. This contrasts with simply abiding in personal faith and letting God's Word just be. God's Word cannot exist without action, and the action of love is not simply emotional but involves caring and supporting each other's maturation in faith. This also commits us to spreading the invitation to hear

God's Word, which leads us to invite at least one friend or stranger to come with us to church next Sunday.

Let it be, let it be. Let it be to us according to God's Word and so let us fulfill the command of our Savior. Amen.