

Pastor Roy's sermon from September 10, 2017

Children's: What was your favorite moment this summer? Or what kinds of things did you enjoy? What do you like about summer? What if summer lasted all year round?

Are things generally getting better or worse? Why do you think that? What does your gut tell you.

Would things be better if we returned to the values of the 40s and 50s? Would you feel that way if you were an African American? Native American? A Japanese American in an internment camp on the west coast during WWII? Or an abused child or wife during that time with fewer options? And how do we judge? Do we base our opinions on appearances? What we hear on the news or in the newspaper? . . .or on conversations we have with the younger generations?

Change is uncomfortable. Uncertainty makes us nervous. . . But if change is inevitable, new possibilities might bring improvement. Many things have changed for the better in the past 60 years. Communication is easier than ever. Many stories which in the past would have gone untold are now coming to the light. With greater awareness brings opportunity for justice and peacemaking. So many new opportunities to share the love of Christ have arisen. We are working hard to preserve the planet. But species continue to go extinct at a disturbing rate, and long term weather patterns are bringing more extreme droughts and more severe storms. Because of these changes, whole populations of people and animals are at greater risk. So there is plenty of change, some appears to be hopeful, some destructive.

Paul suggests that the night is far gone, the day is near. He calls us to put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Salvation is nearer to us now than when we first began this journey. He calls us to put on the love Christ--and make the most of every opportunity to share and live that mercy.

I can imagine Paul saying, today, seize the moment! We have every opportunity to live in the light, to care, to lift up those who despair. Don't give up! Do the good you can do and live with joy! Don't be afraid of "not enough!" Share the abundance. Then you will learn true abundance! True joy. One of the reasons we gather is to encourage one another to push out the limits of mercy and generosity, so that we can prove to one another would love is, even for the stranger, the alien, the enemy. Friendship is a choice.

This is what it means to gather in the name of Christ, where he will be present every time. Our gospel passage this morning is all about healthy relationships. Matthew is calling us to tend the difficult relationships in the church. Healthy relationships are hard work. It's easier to walk away from someone who has offended you than to take the time to work things out. Let us show respect and honor to one another--sisters and brothers in faith.

Healthy relationships are a big part of a full life. Being children of the light is about making the time for good relationships. In healthy relationships, we share resources where they are needed, whether that be help paying an electric bill, formula for an at risk baby, or aid to those affected by disaster or just making the time to listen to the struggles of another. The larger we draw the circles of relationship in our lives, the richer our lives will be. Our lives are interconnected in profound ways. We are most healthy when we live out those relationships with kindness and integrity. Let us live in the light of caring relationships and know that Christ is with us as we gather in the name of love and mercy. Amen.