

05/28/17 BUCYRUS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

“WE WANT TO GO HOME”

Pastor Mike Corwin

Text: 2 Corinthians 5:1-21 God’s Word: Luke 1:78-79

I - DOROTHY GO HOME:

So, today we finally get to the main character of our story. We get to Dorothy. It all started with Dorothy and it all ends with Dorothy. A young girl whisked out of Kansas and transported to the Land of Oz. She didn't ask to go and it becomes very obvious that she doesn't want to be there but there she is. And her only request throughout the movie is that "I want to go home." It started her journey down the yellow brick road and her arrival home is the end of the movie.

I want to suggest this day that we are all on the same quest. From the moment we are born we want to go home. Like Dorothy, we spend some time on the road. We meet interesting people like the scarecrow, tin man, lion, and wizard. We have moments of fear when we cross paths with witches or are surrounded by flying monkeys. Sometimes this urge doesn't start till later in our lives. But ultimately we start wishing to go home. As our minds start to fail us, as our bodies begin to deteriorate, as life ceases to be enjoyable, we start saying things like "I want to go home."

And when we say this we aren't talking about a farm house in Kansas. We're talking about our home in heaven. We are talking about returning to the place we came from - to the loving arms of God our Creator. We come from God. It's God who blows his breath into us and gives us a soul. It's God who allows us to play on this planet for a while, and ultimately it is God who we begin to feel calling us home. I think the two groups of people who are closest to God are little babies, because they just left his presence, and the elderly or terminally ill because they know they're going back. We are all just passing through and when we close our eyes on human existence we want to open them in heaven...not in a witch's dark castle surrounded by evil.

II - TEXT PART 1:

That's what the Apostle Paul was speaking about in his letter to the church at Corinth. He said...

2 Corinthians 5:1-21 (NLT)

¹For we know that when this earthly tent we live in is taken down (that is, when we die and leave this earthly body), we will have a house in heaven, an eternal body made for us by God himself and not by human hands. ²We grow weary in our present bodies, and we long to put on our heavenly bodies like new clothing. ³For we will put on heavenly bodies; we will not be spirits without bodies. ⁴While we live in these earthly bodies, we groan and sigh, but it's not that we want to die and get rid of these bodies that clothe us. Rather, we want to put on our new bodies so that these dying bodies will be swallowed up by life. ⁵God himself has prepared us for this, and as a guarantee he has given us his Holy Spirit. ⁶So we are always confident, even though we know that as long as we live in these bodies we are not at

home with the Lord. ⁷For we live by believing and not by seeing. ⁸Yes, we are fully confident, and we would rather be away from these earthly bodies, for then we will be at home with the Lord. ⁹So whether we are here in this body or away from this body, our goal is to please him. ¹⁰For we must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done in this earthly body.

God knows our time here is limited. If we're smart we're using it to explore our relationship to him and to grow closer to him in our Faith. And he promises us when this journey is done we have our real home waiting. A home where our bodies will no longer suffer the ills of human life. A body made new by him. Our groaning and sighing will come to a close, our tears be wiped away. There will be no more cancer there, no wheel chairs there, no mental illness there, no insulin there, no addiction or poverty there.

And there will certainly be no homelessness there because it is there where we will finally be at home no matter what our life here was like. It is the pull of that knowledge that makes us yearn to Go Home. The Holy Spirit within us helps lead us in that direction.

III - TEXT - PART 2:

But there's something a little scary about this passage too. That verse 10 can be a little intimidating to us as it says:

¹⁰For we must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done in this earthly body.

Oh, NO! You mean God is going to hold it against me because I was mean to my siblings occasionally growing up. That God is going to smite me dead because I have had bad thoughts? Am I going to be held accountable for not attending every session at annual conference! Right now some of you are taking inventory and making a list in your mind.

Before you get too worried or need more brain paper for your list, let's look at the rest of the passage where this verse is explained.

2 Corinthians 5:11-21 (NLT)

¹¹Because we understand our fearful responsibility to the Lord, we work hard to persuade others. God knows we are sincere, and I hope you know this, too. ¹²Are we commending ourselves to you again? No, we are giving you a reason to be proud of us, so you can answer those who brag about having a spectacular ministry rather than having a sincere heart. ¹³If it seems we are crazy, it is to bring glory to God. And if we are in our right minds, it is for your benefit. ¹⁴Either way, Christ's love controls us. Since we believe that Christ died for all, we also believe that we have all died to our old life. ¹⁵He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them. ¹⁶So we have stopped evaluating others from a human point of view. At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we know him now! ¹⁷This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! ¹⁸And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. ¹⁹For God

was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. ²⁰*So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!"* ²¹*For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.*

Paul is not afraid of Jesus, Paul is in awe of Jesus for his atoning work and guidance that saved Paul from facing the wrath of God that he was on the path to receive as a Pharisee. Because of that, he has a job to do. He will spend the rest of his life trying to tell others about the Salvation which can be found through a relationship to Jesus. And it isn't just a job, it's a passion and he is sincere in wanting everyone to make it to heaven, everyone to be able to go home. He isn't doing it for his glory...he's doing it for God's glory.

He points out that Christ died for all. Not just a select few, but for all. He wants people to grasp this and die to themselves so they can take on the very nature of Jesus in their lives. That people will live not for themselves but for Christ and will carry out his work on earth.

It is through Christ that we are being called home. It is only through Christ that we can go home. Through his work on the cross we can be forgiven and God no longer holds our sins against us. So I don't believe we will be judged by Christ for our past deeds if we have been reconciled by Christ to God. I believe we will be judged for what we've done with the love Christ gave us and how we've used that love since we found it.

I see that in the end of this passage where Paul says that we are Christ's Ambassadors. That God is using us to carry on the earthly work of his Son. That he is using us to tell others about his forgiveness, found through the life, death, and resurrection of his one and only Son, Jesus the Christ.

God is using us to shine the light of Jesus into the darkness of the world and telling all of his children to Come Home.

IV - TAKE OTHERS ALONG:

That's what we'll be judged on before the throne of our Lord and our Savior. Jesus isn't going to roll out a scroll and name off everything you have ever thought, said, or done that was a sin against God. I believe that every Christian who stands before God will have to answer the same question: "DID YOU COME ALONE OR DID YOU BRING COMPANY?" Did you get your own Salvation and then sit on it, or did you allow it to transform your life and become my Ambassador so others could find their way home too.

I think the biggest message of the whole movie is that one that conveyed to us that you don't take the journey alone...you take others with you. Dorothy was in an unknown place. She had her own worries and her own problems. She was scared and uncertain of herself. But once she was told how to get home...that she should take the yellow brick road to see the wizard...she started down the road but stopped to do ministry along the way. As the scarecrow came into her life she didn't leave him hanging on a pole with little sense. She told him that she was going home and he should come along with her on the path. When the heartless tin man presented himself and told his story of woe, she decided that he

needed to get on the right path with her and follow her home. When the crying scaredycat lion stopped her, she overcame his negativity and took him down the path with her. By her actions she changed the life of these three others and they all made it home...all found their answers.

And if you stop and think, theirs weren't the only lives changed. Because they followed the path given to them, because they didn't get deterred from their journey, the lives of others were changed too. The darkness of the witch was melted away by the light of good. Even the flying monkeys and palace guards were thankful for her demise. The munchkins no longer had to live in fear, and the residents of the emerald city no longer lived under the power of a false prophet. All because Dorothy was an ambassador that took others on the journey home with her.

V - WE ARE THE AMBASSADORS:

We are the ambassadors now. It is our calling to carry on the work started by Jesus and proclaimed by others down through the ages like the Apostle Paul and all the other fathers and mothers of our faith. It is our calling to spread the love of Christ and shine the light into the darkness of Bucyrus.

We will soon begin our work in the 5 areas of darkness you have proclaimed:

DRUGS AND ADDICTION

POVERTY

HOMELESSNESS

2ND AND 3RD SHIFT CHILDCARE

JOB TRAINING / OBTAINING / RETAINING

And we'll do it because we know the true way home and will take them by the hands and hearts, regardless of the issues they face. We will share the light of Jesus with them through love and take them down the path to home with us.

Dorothy went home because she clicked the heels of her ruby slippers together three times and was taken back to Kansas...we and others will go home because our Lord and Savior took three nails into his body and laid in a grave for three days and was resurrected so we can be taken back to heaven...our one true home.

AMEN