

Unless Someone Like You...

A Reflection for the Sunday We Recognize Graduating High School Seniors

1 Peter 2: 9-10

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From the Bible (JB Phillips translation):

But you are God's "chosen generation", God's "royal priesthood", God's "holy nation", God's "peculiar people" - all the old titles of God's People now belong to you. It is for you now to demonstrate the goodness of the One who has called you out of darkness into God's amazing light. In the past you were not "a people" at all: now you are the People of God. In the past you had no experience of God's mercy, but now it is intimately yours.

Reflection:

Knowing you are now graduating from high school and ready for more rigorous academic pursuits, I thought I would take a moment this morning and introduce you or reintroduce you to Theodor Geisel, one of the most well known philosophers of the 20th century. And, drawing from his extensive literary work remind you of what I think is important as you take this next step in your life. Do you recognize his name? Maybe this will help. [Put on the *Cat in the Hat* hat.]

So, here goes...

From *The Sneetches*

*But McBean was quite wrong. I am happy to say
That the Sneetches got really quite smart on that day,
The day they decided that Sneetches are Sneetches
And no kind of Sneetch is best on the beaches.
That day, all the Sneetches forgot about stars
And whether they had one, or not, upon thars.*

From *Horton Hears A Who*

*Through the high jungle tree tops, the news quickly spread:
"He talks to a dust speck! He's out of his head!
Just look at him walk with that speck on that flower!"
And Horton walked, worrying, almost an hour.
"Should I put this speck down?..." Horton thought with alarm.
"If I do, these small persons may come to great harm.
I can't put it down. And I won't. After all
A person's a person. No matter how small."*

From *Horton Hatches the Egg*

*So Horton kept sitting there, day after day.
And soon it was Autumn. The leaves blew away.
And then came the Winter...the snow and the sleet!
And icicles hung
From his truck and his feet.
But Horton kept sitting and said with a sneeze,*

*"I stay on this egg and I won't let it freeze.
I meant what I said
And I said what I meant...
An elephant's faithful
One hundred per cent!"*

From *Happy Birthday to You*

*Today you are you! That is truer than true!
There is no one alive who is you-er than you!
Shout loud, "I am lucky to be what I am!
Thank goodness I'm not just a clam or a ham
Or a dusty old jar of gooseberry jam!
I am what I am! That's a great thing to be!*

Get it?

Here is what I mean and what I hope you remember because I think it is important.
And not just because I say so or Dr. Seuss says so, but the Bible and the wisdom of our tradition also reminds me it is so.

First this...from *The Sneetches*.

You are made in the image of God which means there is something of the Holy and the Ultimate wrapped up in your very human, very ordinary, very extraordinary life.

And, not just you, I am made in the image of God.

And, not just you and me, your best friend is made in the image of God.

And, even more important and challenging than that, the person you like the least;

Or who seems the most different;

Or who looks and acts the most different

Is also made in the image of God.

All of us, whether or not I or they or you have a *star upon thars*, share a common humanity tinged with the holy. Don't forget.

And, learn from Horton. Listen carefully for those small voices.

So much and so many scream, sometimes literally scream, for your attention, but it is the small voices which need to be heard. The small voice within you reminding you of who you are and of what really matters and what is really important and what the right thing to do is when all the other voices are urging you to do or to be something different.

The Bible reminds us God often speaks in that still, small voice within us.

So, listen for that whisper of God amidst the clamour and shouting of the world.

And, listen for the small voice of *the other*.

Those who are not big enough or strong enough or in the right position to have others to hear them or to notice them or to pay attention to them or to take them seriously. They are the ones whom God names as our neighbors and someone needs to listen carefully enough in order to hear what they have to say. Maybe that *someone* is you.

Stand by your word.

Stand up for what is right.

Speak up against that and those which demean and belittle and dismiss others.

Remember who you are and who you are called to be.

Even when...especially when... others find that *peculiar*.

In those moments, be faithful.

To yourself. To others. To God.
Mean what you say and say what you mean.
If not, one hundred per cent, as least as close to that as you can come.

And, be you.
There is no one alive who is you-er than you!
God needs you to be you.
I need you to be you.
The world needs you to be you.
With your own unique set of gifts and abilities and passion and calling.
You are who you are. That is a great thing to be.

Get it? Got it?
Good!
Oh...And one more thing.

From *The Lorax*

*And all that the Lorax left here in this mess
Was a small pile of rocks, with the one word...
"UNLESS."
Whatever that means, well, I just couldn't guess.
That was long, long ago.
But each day since that day
I've sat here and worried
And worried away.
Through the years, while my buildings
Have fallen apart,
I've worried about it
With all of my heart.
"But now," says the Once-ler,
"Now that you're here,
The word of the Lorax seems perfectly clear.
UNLESS someone like you
Cares a whole awful lot,
Nothing is going to get better.
It's not.*