



Calvary Presbyterian Church
Sunday, JUNE 4, 2023
TRINITY SUNDAY

LET US DANCE:

Reflections on Matthew 28:16-20 and 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

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Oprah special called the “Kick Off Party” featured the Black-Eyed Peas. The music started but the crowd froze while a single female dancer dressed in blue dance with all her might at the front of the stage, then the largest choreographed flash mob dance unfolded on the streets of Chicago! Twenty thousand people join the joyous throng. As Oprah said, “It was soooo cool”! <https://youtu.be/J1DwpSN2I2w>

Isn't life just like a dress rehearsal for an eternal street dance?

Scripture Passage for Trinity Sunday

Matthew 28:16-20 (The VOICE Translation)

¹⁶The eleven disciples, having spoken to the Marys headed to Galilee, to the mountain where they were to meet Jesus. ¹⁷When the disciples saw Jesus there, many of them fell down and worshiped, as Mary and the other Mary had done. But a few hung back. They were not sure (and who can blame them?). ¹⁸Jesus came forward and addressed His beloved disciples.

The disciples don't know what to think or how to act. Nothing like this has ever happened before.

Jesus: I am here speaking with all the authority of God, who has commanded Me to give you this commission: ¹⁹Go out and make disciples

in all the nations. Ceremonially wash them through baptism in the name of the triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. ²⁰Then disciple them. Form them in the practices and postures that I have taught you, and show them how to follow the commands I have laid down for you. And I will be with you, day after day, to the end of the age.

God's authority doesn't demand submission, but it empowers, and it liberates.

When we speak or act with authority, it isn't to be authoritative in our approach, but to speak and act as Christ—that is to lift up the burdened, protect the marginalized, call out abuses of power, and to bring justice into systems of oppression that exist in governments, including church governments.

There are several billboards near where I live that just state to believe Christ and to obey Christ—what does that mean, but to embody his commandments to love one another. If we are to live as Christ, we are to live a life deeply embedded and devoted to love and justice.

As we consider the vision stated in Matthew's gospel, we must embrace the multi-cultural, inclusive, diverse, and far-reaching mission placed on the early church. The words of the great commission are to a multi-cultural and diverse body to go out and share a multi-cultural and diverse message to a multi-cultural and diverse world. This was God's heart from the beginning, and this has been the mandate of the church and those who profess to love and obey Christ. The work has been diluted, exploited, and mis-interpreted throughout our human history, but the Spirit remains relentless in calling us back to a love that extends beyond and despite our racial, economic, and gender divisions.

Baptism then is best understood as incorporating our human siblings into this community where we profess Christ as the head. When we do this in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit we intentionally proclaim the relational, diverse, and united God that will never stop calling the church to be relational, diverse, and united.

On this Trinity Sunday, let us be moved by our triune, relational, diverse, and loving God to embody the relational, diverse love of God to share with all

the nations—not in a conquering, authoritative way, but in a mutually respectful, abiding, way. We live and love not because we are powerful, but because the power of life and love has been given to us along with the command to share it with others.

There's a popular love poem in the New Testament that might help us with better understanding the great commission today. The passage is known as the love chapter from 1 Corinthians 13, verses four through seven. It's a passage often read at weddings, but it wasn't written specifically for a wedding. It is read around Valentine's Day, but it isn't about romance.

⁴Love is patient; love is kind. Love isn't envious, doesn't boast, brag, or strut about. There's no arrogance in love; ⁵it's never rude, crude, or indecent—it's not self-absorbed. Love isn't easily upset. Love doesn't tally wrongs ⁶or celebrate injustice; but truth—yes, truth—is love's delight! ⁷Love puts up with anything and everything that comes along; it trusts, hopes, and endures no matter what.

It was written about God's essence, God's mission, his deepest desire for us, his beloved. It was about how to be more than yourself – how to know and be fully known in the community. It was written for us – all of us. Those who love God. You have always loved God. Those who will someday come to love God.

In the Corinthian church they thought they were loving people. But there was division. There was strife. They were a splintered church... They had no love.

Separation from God and from one another is the heartache of this life.

Scripture agrees. God agrees. It is wrong. In the garden of Eden, we were not supposed to be divided. Love does not want to be separated. Ever. This is not the desire of God, but our world is broken. We are broken. We are broken hearted. Because division, death, and darkness are like a big bully that separate us from love - no matter our age, our stature, our race, our circumstance.

But in just a couple chapters later in 1 Corinthians 15, we hear some rocking good news about death for death is swallowed up in victory.

We say that you already belong at Calvary, because we profess that life is a victory dance over any separation now. Our life can be a victory dance right now. We may feel the sting of being separate from others, but we know we know that God has promised a way for us to be forever united with love again.

We know the phrase from “the love chapter”: faith, hope, and love. And the greatest is love.

For those who let life be a victory dance. We don’t need faith because faith is the dance of life.

Our life as a victory dance means that we are already dancing right in front of the one who is love, our faith, our life, our mission is to dance in the presence of the seen and unseen.

We are all invited into an abundant life, now and not yet – a victory dance with the father and the son and the spirit! We no longer merely hope in the one who is right in front of us because we know hope.

Imagine, No more need for faith...No more need for hope, because you’re already dancing with God! You’re dancing with love! And our mission – which is our co-mission (meaning a mission with others, learning, loving, dancing) is to invite others to join the dance.

The scriptures ask us – And what remains? Love! In this life and beyond, scripture reminds us, only one thing will remain. Only one thing will matter. Only one thing. Love.

“Welcome to the awkward choreography of being human.” Alok Vaid-Menon (poet)

Choreography comes from the Greek word for dance. The word peri means around as in perimeter. Perichoresis is a fancy word used to describe God, it is a figurative word that literally means dance around; it has been used to describe the very character of God.

Let me share an anonymous poem trying to paint a picture for us:

Father, Son, and Spirit . . . [are engaged in a] dance, which is their life together, a dance without beginning and without end, a dance which is joy beyond all telling.... The music of this eternal dance echoes in the vast reaches between the stars, and pulses in worlds inside of atoms, and travels on every breeze across the earth, and surges with the blood through our veins. From time to time, we hear the music of this eternal dance. During the silences when everything makes sense; during the celebrations when we taste a bit of heaven... When we are thankful for what we've been given, proud of what we've done, hopeful about what the future holds. It is on these great and good occasions that we hear the music of the eternal dance, the rhythm of the Trinity. The Trinity is unending, joyous dance, yet the miracle is that the circle breaks open, and the Son and Spirit, still holding hands with the Father, extend their other hands to us, inviting us into the circle, drawing us into the dance, that we may become their partners, participants in their eternal dance. (Anonymous)

How do we return to 1 Corinthians 13 where we need faith and hope on the side of eternity. How are the scriptures calling us to all dance with one another. The gift of the Godhead as a triune God is how we are all called to include others – to embrace diversity and share a love that is far reaching, because our God is a diverse, relational God, that reaches to the ends of the earth and the end of time to call every nation to God's self.

Philippians 2:10-11

¹⁰So when His name is called, every knee will bow, in heaven, on earth, and below. ¹¹And every tongue will confess "Jesus, the Anointed One, is Lord," to the glory of God our Father!

The gift of the great commission and the gift of every church that follows Christ is that we are united by this commission, so that we might learn the dance to be known and fully known to understand the love written about in 1 Corinthians 13 about patience and kindness and keeping a record of no wrongs. May we all learn this dance may we all just dance with all our might!

May it be so. May it be so.

