

Sermon: I am enough

Scripture: Joel 2:1, 12-17; Psalm 139:1-14, 23-24

Christian Choi

February 26, 2020

Westminster Presbyterian Church

Springfield, Illinois

Joel 2:1, 12-17

Blow the trumpet in Zion;

Shout a warning on my holy mountain!

Let all the people who live in the land shake with fear.

The Lord's day of judging is coming, it is near ---

The Lord says, "Now, come back to me with all your heart. Go without food, and cry and be sad."

Tearing your clothes is not enough to show you are sad.

Let your heart be broken.

Return to the Lord, your God, for God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.

He would rather forgive than punish.

Who knows? Maybe the Lord will have change of mind and leave behind a blessing for you. Then you may give grain and drink offerings to the Lord your God.

Blow the trumpet in Jerusalem. Call for a special time of going without food. Call for a special meeting.

Bring the people together.

Make the meeting holy for the Lord. Bring together the elders. Bring together the children, even babies that still feed at their mothers' breasts.

They should say, "Lord, have mercy on your people.

Don't let them be put to shame.

Don't let other nations make fun of them.

Don't let people in other nations ask, "Where is their God?"

Psalm 139:1-14, 23-24

O LORD, you have searched me and known me.

You know when I sit down and when I get up.

You know my thoughts before I think them.

You know where I go and where I lie down.

You know well everything I do. Lord, even before I say a word, you already know what I am going to say.

You are all around me—in front and in back.

You have put your hand on me. Your knowledge is amazing to me. It is more than I can understand.

Where can I go to get away from your Spirit?

Where can I run from you? If I go up to the skies, you are there. If I lie down where the dead are, you are there.

If I rise with the sun in the east, and settle in the west beyond the sea, even there you would guide me.

With your right hand you would hold me.

I could say, "The darkness will hide me. The light around me will turn into night." But even the darkness is not dark to you. The night is as light as the day. Darkness and light are the same to you.

For it was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.

I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works; I know this very well.

God, examine me and know my heart.

Test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any bad thing in me. Lead me in the way everlasting.
Amen.

Sermon: "I am Enough"

Today, God is good to us and gave us a perfect analogy to take about who we are and what we are supposed to consider as worship together tonight. This morning, like many of the parents here tonight, I received an email early in the morning that school has been cancelled. Snow day~!! While I am sure all the children and youth in the service cheered not having school this morning, rest of us pretty much thought – yay... snow day...

As I looked around with a shovel in my hand, I was not thinking 'I was in Kenya only a month ago', but how beautiful it was. Cold, but beautiful as I witnessed God's artwork. Everything was covered in pure white. As the morning sun peaked through, snow reflected its radiant light, accentuating the purity of that moment. Then I remembered my original intent - to shovel my driveway - instantly making a dent in God's canvas of the day that I was marveling at just moments ago.

All of us are covered in God's grace, covered in Jesus' holy light, just like how the world was covered in a snow this morning. But as time passes, what was once untouched snow get plowed, walked and driven on, young people sled down the snowy slopes, and as warmth creeps on white snow starts to change colors and even goes through a physical change into a murky puddle. Likewise, we too, as time goes by, due to outside influence, inward choices, and many temptations along our journey that we tarnish God's holy light and sometimes our faith becomes a doubt.

It does not matter how hard the snow tries to keep its shine or its physical property. Likewise, it is not up to us to launder our spiritual selves and continue to live. We are all mortals and we realize that we need the grace of our Savior to lengthen our days. One day, we too will change our physical property and return to what our Creator used to form us: back to dust.

Ash Wednesday is a day of reflection, marking ourselves with ashes not only as a person who is doing our best to follow and live out the way of Christ, but also to admit our mortality and that we need God's help every day. Today is a day retelling God: the wrongs we have committed; forgetfulness of reaching out for God's hand that is always present when we fall attempting to do things our own way; or intentionally choosing to be rebellious to test if God will really catch us or not when we fall. Through our worship and prayer tonight, it is a way of washing our inward-selves since we cannot wash away what we have done wrong in thought and in our hearts with soap and water.

Why do we do this on Ash Wednesday out of all the days of the year? Ash Wednesday is important preparation day for Easter, the day Jesus rose up from the dead. We recognize that one day we would be dead and return to ashes, the dirt that God has formed us in God's image. Amid this grim reality, we have hope in God and hold tightly to God's escape plan: that Jesus died on the cross, to be with us and to not let death have the final say. Jesus resurrected for you and for me in order that we may received gift of life, to live out our days

thanking God. As we celebrate Jesus' life, death, and resurrection during the season of Lent and Easter for 40 days, we hold on to God's promise of our own Easter, when our mortal lives will not be finished with our own cross, fulfillment of our salvation.

The real important question that we need to ask ourselves is 'why Jesus died for me.' Why do you think Jesus died for us? It is because Jesus loves you and me. How do I know? The Bible tells me so. Today's Bible passage tells us that God rather forgives than to punish us. God wants to bless us and shower us with gifts.¹ God loves all of us for being who we are, for in God's eyes, we are enough – wonderfully and fearfully made in God's image.

So when we are together as imperfect people trying our best to share the perfect love of God, we need to say "I am Enough." ***I am enough*** to receive the promise of my salvation, for God thinks you are enough. ***I am enough*** even with my brokenness and doubt to stand before the God Almighty. ***I am enough*** when the world around me is telling me I am only worth so much. ***I am enough*** without bringing heaven's tax, gifts, and materials to enter God's heavenly kingdom. ***I am enough*** with who I am to represent the love of Christ. ***I am enough*** to make a difference in the world with God's help. I am going to borrow the words from this book, *I Am Enough*, by Grace Byers to share God's love.

Like the sun, I'm here to shine.

Like the voice, I'm here to sing.

Like the bird, I'm here to fly and soar high over everything.

Like the trees, I'm here to grow.

Like the mountains, here to stand.

Like time, I'm here to be,
and be everything I can.

Like the champ, I'm here to fight.

Like the heart, I'm here to love.

Like a ladder, here to climb,
and like the air, to rise above.

Like the wind, I'm here to push.

Like a rope, I'm here to pull.

Like the rain, I'm here to pour
and drip and fall until I'm full.

Like the moon, I'm here to dream.

Like the student, here to learn.

¹ Joel 2:13-14

Like the water, here to swell.
Like the fire, here to burn.
Like the winner, I'm here to win,
and if I don't, get up again.

I know that I may sometimes cry,
but even then, I'm here to try.

I'm not meant to be like you;
you're not meant to be like me.
Sometimes we will get along,
and sometimes we will disagree.

I know that we don't look the same:
our skin, our eyes, our hair, our frame.

But that does not dictate our worth;
we both have places here on earth.
And in the end, we are right here
to live a life of love, not fear...

To help each other when it's tough,
to say together:

I am enough.²

Therefore, let us praise the Lord together during this Lenten season as we prepare for Easter remembering these words from Psalm 139.

I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works; I know this very well.
God, examine me and know my heart.
Test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any bad thing in me. Lead me in the way everlasting.
Amen.³

² Byers, and Bobo. *I Am Enough*. Balzer Bray, 2018.

³ Psalm 139:14, 23-24