

Genesis 1:1 – 2:4a
Psalm 8
2 Corinthians 13:11-13
Matthew 28:16-20

Sermon June 4th, 2023

Faith Helps Us See the Possibilities!

It's not too long into our life journey that we realize we are going to experience bumps and bruises along the way (**Image One**: someone with a scrape on their knee). From the hunger pains you feel, because Mommy or Daddy is taking their sweet butt time getting you your bottle. To that first scrape you get on your knee when you realize you can run with those little feet of yours.

From the hurt feelings you feel from getting into that first argument or fight with a friend. To the sadness, loneliness, you feel, when a friendship breaks up (**Image One**).

From struggling through the emotional rollercoaster ride that comes with dealing with your parent's divorce. To the frustration and concern you feel as you try to help a friend find supports to enter into recovery from an addiction (**Image One**).

From the hurt you feel when your first love breaks your heart. To the insecurity you feel when you get laid off or fired from your job.

From the isolation, rejection you feel from struggling with a mental illness. To the grief you feel when a loved one dies (**Image One**).

From the hurt feelings you experience from hearing that first "I hate you" from your child. To getting out of bed, and realizing you have suddenly gotten old, as you feel the pain of aging in your hips, knees, and/or back. Probably, because you over did it the other day when playing with the grandchildren (**Image One**).

From all the anxiety you feel when you think about the health of the planet. To the fear you feel, because people are becoming more polarized, more violent. There are many challenges life throws our way (**Image One**).

Likewise, when we hear about the many adventures the disciples go through when following Jesus, we see that they too, face a lot of life's challenges. Including witnessing the arrest, suffering, and death of Jesus (**Image One**). Their mentor. Their friend.

In our gospel, we hear that some of the disciples are wrestling with doubt as they try to work through these challenging times (**Image One**). Is Jesus really present in this moment? Can I remember Jesus' teachings in these challenging times? Will I grow as a person through these challenging times? Is it possible that out of these challenging times will come new life? New opportunities?

Like the disciples, we too, wrestle with doubt when we face life's many challenges (**Image One**). We question whether Jesus is present? Whether we will grow as a person through these challenges? Whether new life, new opportunities are possible when the dust settles?

There are many challenges life throws our way that make it harder for us to live a life of faith in Christ Jesus (**Image One**).

But as we see in our gospel, Jesus doesn't shy away when we start to doubt. Instead, Jesus reiterates his invitation to us. Follow me. Share my love with the world. Know that you are a beloved child of God. And that God will never forsake you.

Through baptism (**Image Two:** picture of a baptism), Jesus invites us into a life of faith, where God promises to be present with us. Always. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit. In the good times, and in the challenging times.

Through baptism (**Image Two**), Jesus invites us into a community of believers, where our parents, God parents, and church family promise to nurture our faith, and be present with us. Through the good times, and in the challenging times.

Through baptism (**Image Two**), Jesus invites us into a community of believers, where our parents, God parents, and church family point us to where Jesus is present in our lives when we start to doubt.

Through baptism (**Image Two**), Jesus invites us into a community of believers, where our parents, God parents, and church family help us grow as people through the challenges we face.

Through baptism (**Image Two**), Jesus invites us into a community of believers, where our parents, God parents, and church family teach us how to love as Jesus loves. Taking us to Sunday School. Then sending us to confirmation where we endure the pastor with all their quirks. Like when pastor butchered the name of one of our favorite singers, or shared about a television show or song we never heard of, because we were born many years later. We are sent to confirmation, where we learn and grow in our faith, so that when we come to the confirmation rite, we are ready to take on more responsibility in our faith community. We are ready to take responsibility for our own faith journey.

But this doesn't mean our parents, our God parents, our church family, Jesus suddenly disappear. They continue to promise to support us in our faith journey. They continue to walk with us nurturing us in our faith. Like every other aspect of our teenage lives, we have one foot into adulthood, and another into childhood. We live in that constant here, but not yet, moment.

Through baptism (**Image Two**), we are invited into a life of faith. And though we sometimes doubt when life gets hard. Faith is so important to our wellbeing, because it gives us hope that all things are possible with God.

Faith gives us hope that when we feel the pains of hunger, God will provide. Faith gives us hope that though we will get scrapes and bruises, God heals (**Image Two**).

Faith gives us hope that when we get into fights with the people we love, forgiveness and reconciliation is possible. And when reconciliation doesn't happen, that new opportunities, new friendships are possible (**Image Two**).

Faith gives us hope that though our parents are not always able to reconcile their differences, that new life is possible in our new family dynamic. That though things will be different, it doesn't mean they will always be uncomfortable. That all the emotions we are feeling in this moment won't mess us up forever (**Image Two**).

Faith gives us hope that when we find ourselves standing in financial hard times, God will not abandon us in our time of need. Faith gives us hope that though grief hurts, God will be there to comfort us (**Image Two**).

Faith gives us hope that though violence, the groaning pains of the planet are sometimes too much to bear, God's redemption will happen (**Image Two**).

Faith gives us hope that though it seems like we are tackling these challenges on our own, God will invite people into our lives to walk with us through these challenges. Whether it is a good friend or a family member or a community like our church family (**Image Two**).

Faith gives us hope that though it seems like the Empire has stomped out Jesus, the resurrected Christ, the Holy Spirit, empower the church to keep doing what Jesus does. Baptizing people. Teaching them about the love of Christ (**Image Two**).

Faith gives us hope that though the churches are struggling in the 21st century, Jesus' movement will continue to breath new life into people till the end of the age (**Image Two**).

Faith helps us hope in and see all the possibilities that are out there. All the moments where Jesus breathes new life into us, and into our communities (**Image Two**).

Let us pray, gracious God, when life's challenges come our way, help us cling to the faith you have given us in our baptism. Help us remember the teachings we have received in Sunday School. In confirmation. Help us see that with you anything is possible. And reassure us that you are with us always. Through your Spirit. Through our parents, our god parents, our friends, our church family. **Amen.**