



WARWICK SCHOOL CHAPEL

TRANSCRIPT FOR CHAPEL (W/C 22 JUNE 2020)

GREETING

READING

MATTHEW 10: 40 – 42

Jesus said to the twelve: ‘Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple – truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.’

REFLECTION

“CHANGING THE WORLD”

BY REV'D DR (MOTHER) ALYCIA TIMMIS

Talking about race is never easy – for any of us. It is an uncomfortable topic that cuts to the quick. It is deeply rooted and raw. I am more than the colour of my skin – not less because of it. My colour, race, ethnicities are all part of who I am; but, not all that I am. Prejudice is to pre-judge. To make an assessment, a value—or lack of value—judgement about another person before knowing them, individually. Prejudice is to make assumptions about a person’s character, ability, intellect, tastes, humour, like and dislikes before they have had an opportunity to express any indication of these themselves.

As a student, studying Shakespeare in university, I was once told point-blank, by a noted scholar, that I was the “wrong-colour”. I have spent the better part of my life proving that person wrong. Eventually, I have found the grace to let that comment go. To forgive and love that person. As a Christian, as a person of faith, that is what I am called to do, I recall another highly-charged incident from my university days in America. It was my 1st term in uni, and my friends and I had gone along to a student gathering calling for social action to stand up against Apartheid in South Africa and the USA’s seeming complacency about it.

“You can change the world. Today. All it takes is a few simple steps!” These were the opening words of the main speaker at the gathering -- a dazzlingly articulate student, who exuded passion and charisma. Something had to be done; and, we were the ones to do it. He gave us details about a host of actions, protest marches and “occupying sit in’s” that would take place during Winter term, after Christmas break. He urged us to speak to our parents over the holidays to inform them of our intentions to participate in the upcoming actions and to make provisions for bail – as getting arrested, was a very likely consequence.

At those words, my heart sank. Changing the world was one thing; the prospect of prison was quite another. Still, over the Christmas holiday, I bided my time and waited for the right moment to put all of this to my father. My Dad was a man of few words. But, I knew him to be a man of faith, honour and courage. A man who stood up for what he believed in. My Dad had served his country in the Navy during the Second World War. Upon returning home from the South Pacific, he had participated in the

great quest for Civil Rights, as both a private citizen and a public servant: he was a barrister who became a high court judge. He was selected by, then Governor, Bill Clinton to become the first Black American to hold the post of Federal Judge in the Southern state of Arkansas. Surely, I mused, he would support my desire to ‘stand up and be counted’.

I found him, as usual, in his study reading the paper. He always held his newspaper up high, rendering himself invisible behind it. ‘Dad, may I have a word?’ There was a rustle of paper, and a faint, barely audible sound coming from behind it that encouraged me to press on – swiftly. I took a deep breath: “Dad, I’ve decided to show my support for black people in South Africa, people who look like us, living in the shadow of the injustice of Apartheid. I’m taking part in protests at Uni, and the organisers said we may get arrested. So, I just wanted to let you know.”

Anxiously, I wanted for a response, but received only silence. Then, a sudden and more substantial rustling of newspaper. Then, from behind it, came the verdict: “Alycia,” he said. “It is commendable that you care about the people of South Africa. It is a dreadful situation. Racial inequality is one of society’s greatest evils. But, I can assure you that getting arrested is a highly overrated experience.” He continued, still from behind the paper: “Marching down the road with a placard is fine, but if you really want do something, to help them and others, to make a difference and change the structure of society, you must do this: You must *be* the change you want to see in the world.”

With that, he returned to his reading. In my naivety and youth, I surmised from this response was that his answer meant: "No, I could not go and join the protest". And so, off I went in a teenage huff. But, with age comes wisdom, and over the years I have come to know, understand and appreciate fully the truth and value of my father's wise words. The things we *do*, the isolated actions we *take* are important, but, of far greater import is the person we *become*, the person we *are* everyday: how we live, how we behave, and the way we move through the world. Our inclinations, our natural responses, the content and conduct of our lives. This is less about *doing* the right things, and more about *living* the right things.

In the book of Micah, chapter 6, verses 6-8, we hear the following admonishment:

*And what does the Lord require of you?
To strive for justice, and to show kindness to others,
and to walk humbly with your God.*

These words answer the fundamental question: "How ought I live as a person of faith?" They also address the larger question of "How might I change the world I live in?" We can change the world - by being the change we want to see. The words of *Micah* 6 tell us how, in three not so easy steps.

Amen.

PRAYER (TAKEN FROM DAILY PRAYER OF THE CORRYMEELA COMMUNITY)

Courage comes from the heart
and we are always welcomed by God,
the heart of all being.
We bear witness to our faith,
knowing that we are called to live lives of courage,
love and reconciliation
in the ordinary and extraordinary moments of each day.
We bear witness, too, to our failures
and our complicity in the fractures of our world.
May we be courageous today.
May we learn today.
May we love today.
Amen.

HYMN: DEAR LORD AND FATHER OF MANKIND

Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
forgive our foolish ways;
reclothe us in our rightful mind,
in purer lives thy service find,
in deeper reverence, praise.

In simple trust like theirs who heard
beside the Syrian sea
the gracious calling of the Lord,
let us, like them, without a word
rise up and follow thee.
O Sabbath rest by Galilee,
O calm of hills above,
where Jesus knelt to share with thee
the silence of eternity,
interpreted by love!

Drop thy still dews of quietness,
till all our strivings cease;
take from our souls the strain and stress,
and let our ordered lives confess
the beauty of thy peace.

Breathe through the heats of our desire
thy coolness and thy balm;
let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;
speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,
O still, small voice of calm!

BLESSING