

Squamish United Church
Rev. Karen Millard
Easter 7

May 24, 2020

Scripture:
Luke 24: 44-53
Ephesians 1: 15-23

Love has the Last Word

To be the “body of Christ” as the church is to see the world through the eyes of Jesus—to see through the eyes of love. We as Christ’s body here on earth, are to try to create the same conditions of love that Jesus did while he was here on earth. We hope that “the eyes of our hearts” can be continually opened, as the disciples’ were that day of Jesus’ ascension, so that we can be the best representation of his love here on earth. Perhaps we can see “ascension” with Christ as an “elevation” or “heightening” of our gratitude and of our commitment to do good to offer love in this world that so needs love.

The disciples in today’s scripture are heading into a new season a new way of being a new way of figuring out how to live without their teacher and guide right there with them. It feels like familiar territory as we head into a new season here in Canada. It has been helpful to have clear guidelines of how to behave and respond in the midst of this pandemic.

Stay home, wash your hands, keep distant. Every day most of us look to our leaders to guide us in how to be and respond. Now we are being told you can open up a little but be wise.

And we hear everyone is responding differently some are panicked and demanding we don’t open, others are begging to open up. Some are afraid to go back to work, or are not sure how they will manage life with a family if they do. Others are breathing a sigh of relief and thanking God that the first phase of lockdown is over.

Here’s the thing. We don’t know what the right answer is for others we only know what it is for ourselves (and most of us don’t even entirely know that) and so today I want to encourage us to step out of the chaos and the opinions and go back to our source. Love is our source. I listened to a commentary by Becca Stevens this week and so much of what she said resonated. Love is the answer. Love gets the last word.

In a time where for many our anxieties are high, when our world is surrounded by death I find myself both afraid of the subject and drawn to it. I have known a lot of death in my life. My experiences of death are likely what drew me to being a minister in the first place.

When I was young it was traumatic and it brought me great fear. In high school I was faced with too much death in a short period of time and so I had to find peace with it.

As a young youth worker I also found myself facing the death of young people that I loved and so again I had to figure it out. I came to realize early on that we are not in control of our lives or this universe no matter how hard we try. Maybe that is a terrible gift that was given me.

Because I have learned something on this journey of life and in encounters with death. Love always shows up. Love always has the last word. I have let go of a lot of beliefs over the years. My theology has broadened and deepened and I have let go of a lot of certainties but this certainty I cannot let go of Love will conquer. I have seen this over and over and over, I have worked in foster homes, I have journeyed with families living with domestic violence, I have counselled juvenile teens, I have sat a peoples death bed, I walk with people of faith and no faith and no matter how hard it is love shows up.

It may not show up for us like a Disney movie in the all encompassing fairy tale butterflies, fireworks and snowdrops because it is much deeper than that, richer than that. Ultimately all we need is love.

Not in the form of a Beatles tune but the kind of unconditional love that Jesus offered the world. That was present when God breathed life into creation and said I desire abundance for all.

I believe with all my heart that if we spent our whole life trying to love the world better and quit trying to change it and quit trying to change everybody else, but just loved and be willing to change so that we could just love better then our lives would be much better and our world would be so much better. And we have to do it every single day, we have to practice it, perfect it. It's not something you just say like 'oh I'd like to be more loving later" no what are you honestly going to do today to enact love?" This about this world in the big picture and it starts with you and with me. Start with one small action of love. You start with a small action and love will grow.

See I've learned that no matter how angry I am, or hurt I am, or loving I am, or filled with joy I am those emotions are always about love. I hate being angry or hurt or in conflict why? Because I want to love. Why do I get resentful or feel guilt because I want love to win and nothing else. Love is more than a feeling it is a commitment to living how God intended our world to be. What do I believe? I believe Love still speaks. Love still has the last word.

So please dear God may we live love, may we see through the eyes of love and transform this world.

Amen