

Sermon: Spokane Friends Church – September 15, 2024

“This Day”

Ruthie Tippin, Morning Minister

Scripture Reading: Psalm 118:24

A week ago, Jon and I went out for dinner at one of our favorite spots – Playa Azul, the Blue Beach, in Kalama. Just as we walked out the door, we saw this HUGE red-orange ball in the sky. It was glorious! I was so excited!!! I told Jon we should run back inside the restaurant, grab the staff who had just helped us at the desk, and have them come outside to see it!!! It was incredible! (He wasn’t too convinced that that was a good idea!) But, oh it was breathtaking!!! Forest fires had caused so much smoke in the air that the sunset caused the sun to set in full and gorgeous red-orange color. I wish you could have seen it! I really do! And all of a sudden, I shouted out, “This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it!” It was the most excited I had been all day!

This Day. This is the day that the Lord has made. This day. Why did God make this day? For you? For me? Lord, what do you want to show me today? What do we need to pay attention to? To understand? What do you have to teach me? To surprise us with?

Psalm 118, Verse 24: “This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.” But, what if I don’t feel like rejoicing? What if I’m exhausted? What if I’m hurting? What if...

The psalmist *lives* that – *knows* that – and *still* shouts out this proclamation. She has known distress, fear, mistrust. But she has found God’s safety, discipline and love. *She* has found God to be a refuge. She knows God to be trustworthy. God has been in *this* day – even the *worst* days. The psalmist trusts God **in** this day, **for** this day.

Right Sharing of World Resources will meet tomorrow for a Called Business Meeting to determine the choice of our next General Secretary. I serve on their Board. Jackie Stillwell has served us incredibly for more than ten years, and we will miss her leadership. I know nothing about the proposed candidate except that she’s a woman. I called someone I know from the Search Committee this past week to ask about the candidate. I wanted to know if anyone *knew* her, or if this was an “outside” recommendation. The answer? Three out of five persons on the Search Committee know her quite well, and one has worked with her personally. Liz told me that a packet of information for Board Members would soon be

arriving, and it has. It's ready for me to review this afternoon. I didn't want to see it until I'd shared this experience with you. This has been an exercise in trust... trusting my fellow Board Members on the Search Committee, whom I approved at a Board Meeting, and especially trusting God *in* the day, *for* the day of decision making, *and* probably for years to come.

A Mennonite pastor, Rod Stafford, recently shared this with his congregation: 'To believe *in* someone is different than believing that what is *said* about them is accurate.' It is one thing to know and believe a set of facts about a person – they're organized and deliberate, they work well with others, they run a meeting well, they can walk on water, they can heal the sick, they rose from the dead... "But to believe *in* someone is to trust them, with your organization, with your money, with your future, with your soul, with your life, with your heart..."

Do you know a lot of *facts*, or do you know you can *trust* someone?

Liz told me that there was a day, a time when she faced a difficult question. She would come to Meeting and write "trust" on a piece of paper where she could see it and center as she began worship; trust that the Spirit would move and speak to *her* and through those gathered, trust that she would be present, trust that she would hear and respond to the Spirit's leading...

We are gathered in worship just now. We are held in trust. This day, in this place, across a room, and across miles and miles. God has given us this day, and by being here today, God has given us each other. We are present with God, and *to* one another. We do not know what God might surprise us with. But we are covered in purpose and presence.

I believe that God is present in each person through the Light and Love of Christ's spirit, all day, every day. We have a *choice* to pay attention to Christ's light – to walk in that Light, to rely on its leading, to be patient to hear and understand its direction. It's important to know Christ's light in *others* – they share Christ's light with me, and broaden my path. This is how I know and understand God in Christ more clearly, more dearly.

It is easy to think perhaps, that this day, each day, is made exclusively for *me*, for us *alone*. We become impatient for God to act, to solve our problems, to heal us, to rescue us. I'm convinced that many times God *is* at work, and we just don't see it - because God is changing something in someone *else's* life that impacts our

own, and if we're *patient*, we'll see our problem resolved. It's like a puzzle that God is solving, and we're *not* the only piece.

This is how I can rejoice – even in suffering, because I trust that I may *never* see the path of knowing where God has been, how God has moved, and how God has brought others around to make my life whole. But God will. Each day – *this* day – is a day I can rejoice because it is a day God has made – for all of us – for all creation.

So let us lean in to God's Spirit, into God's presence in Waiting Worship, and trust God to speak into our lives – to surprise us with things we might not have been paying attention to, or the reason God might have made *this* day for us. The smoke of our lives may reveal an incredible sunset! May God bless us as we trust all that we know of God's Spirit today.