

SERMON: “Somebody’s Got to do it.”

Rev. Geoff Ross. Sunday, July 2, 2017. St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, Brampton.

[So, it’s official; Rebekah has been called to serve as the minister of Graceview Presbyterian Church in Etobicoke – and we’re left with a hole in our community, mixed emotions, and a lot of questions. We’re all going to miss her – and her presence; some are shocked, sad, confused; others are wondering why, what’s going to happen, who’s going to do the things she did? The emotions are natural and so are the questions – (Psychologists: stages that occur when grief/loss/change happens) – but, as I said to the Session this isn’t the end of our story; it’s a new chapter in God’s story for her and for St. Andrew's.]

If there’s one thing I’ve learned in ministry – and as an Interim Moderator (a Minister who is placed in charge of a Church that no longer has a Minister) – is that a congregation isn’t about me/her/any other minister; it’s about God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit – it’s about all of us taking up our calling as people of faith to the Body of Christ – the Church. [Vacancy/IM/Growth/Questions: How?/Who?/Answer is sitting in our pews.] To help explain this I want to ask another question: When, in the Bible, did God – needing to someone to further His plan for His people – ever interrupt someone and say: *‘I have a job for you, but it’s easy – and won’t take much time.’* The answer is never, but the truth is somebody’s got to do it; and with God’s help they did.

In Exodus, God comes to Noah and says; *‘I have a mission for you. I want to begin the whole project of the human race all over again, and I’m going to do it with you. So I want you to go to Home Depot, get some materials and build an ark. Then I want you to collect two of every kind of animal. You’re going to face ridicule/hostility/hardship but I want you to know you are not alone. I promise that I’ll be with you. To prove it I will give you a sign to remind you of My promise.’* And that sign was...(any guesses?): A rainbow. And Noah replied, *‘All right God. I don’t really understand, but here I am.’*

Then God came to tired old Abraham and said, *‘I have a mission for you. I’m going to create a new community – the people of Israel – and I want to do it with you. So I want you to leave everything – your home, your wealth, your people, everything – and head off for a land that you do not know where you will live among strangers, but you will not be alone; I promise I will be with you. And to prove it I will give you a sign to remind you of My promise.’* And that sign was... (anyone?): Circumcision. And Abraham said, *‘Noah got the rainbow.’* But eventually Abraham said, *‘All right, God. I don’t really understand, but here I am.’*

The Bible is full of stories like these. God came to Moses – a orphan, runaway, hiding as a shepherd – and said, *‘I want you to go to the Pharaoh, the most powerful man on earth, defy him to his face, and demand that he let My people go.’* And Moses, being “slow of speech,” said: *‘But, But, ...’* But God didn’t take ‘no’ for an answer. Elsewhere Nehemiah rebuilds a city. Esther risks her life to change the mind of the King. Joseph

goes to prison. Daniel gets thrown into a lions' den. Obviously God never insults someone by giving them an easy job. But each time God promises to be with them.

Before our reading today, God came to David – called him in from the sheep hills – to take on Goliath. Then God made David king and promised to be with him. But sometimes our plans are not in line with God's: sometimes our dreams/schemes lead us away from God's ways. God's plan for David was to build the kingdom – not to build the Temple; that was God's plan for Solomon. David wasn't perfect – and God knew it and still promised to be with him. Being a person of faith/Christian isn't easy – and add to it a hostile/indifferent world, it can be a frightening/challenging task. Look around the room: nobody in here is perfect – or necessarily up to the task – but we're no different than the others God called to step up/serve/build up the kingdom/save lives/the world. But the work still needs to be done – somebody's got to do it.

This is why God gave the ultimate assignment to His son, Jesus: The task of reconciling the world to Himself, to show how much God loves/wants to be with us by going to the Cross. When Jesus had accomplished the hard part, He gathered His followers together and said to them: As the Father has sent me, so I send you. As I was sent, I send you. I send you. *“Go therefore, and make disciples of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.”* That's a big job – they thought – but He made a promise (Anyone?): *“Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”* Clearly, as Christians/followers of Jesus/heirs to the Kingdom to come, we have a job to do – and somebody's got to do it – so they/we said: *“Okay? Sure.”* And then they/we asked: *“How?”*

Well, the answer was there in the commission – the ‘things Jesus commanded’ of us: *“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and you shall love your neighbour as yourself.”* (Matt 22:34-40) Friends, the sign and wonder we are all called to offer this lost world is God's love. The disciples in the Acts 2 Church understood this. The 1st Century Church was a community of people – doubting followers like you and I – who put their fears/doubts/questions into God's hands, trusted in the promises of Jesus, and their faith into action to change the world. This is who we are and what we can still be! Yes, things have changed – some things will be different – but Jesus promised us that He will be with us as we take up our tasks; somebody's got to do it – maybe it's you. Amen.