

Sunday, December 6, 2020 ADVENT 2

I Samuel 17 Luke 1:5-25

### Protecting the Plan

Home Sweet Home. Many of us have spent a lot of time at home this year, working from home, earning from home, and just plain staying home. Homes come in many different shapes and sizes. In Coober Pedy, a town in the Australian Outback, more than half of the people live underground in dugouts of old opal mines to escape the extreme summer heat. Other homes are way up in the sky. At 1550 feet (472.44 m) Central Park Tower in New York is the tallest residential building in the world. Other places where flooding occurs homes are built on stilts or for some families, home is a boat in the harbour of large cities. Homes we know are built from many different materials- snow, mud, bamboo, sod and grass (soddies) and of course wood, concrete, steel. Home is where we hang our hat, let down our hair, walk around in pyjamas and even just sit. And whatever or wherever we live, we strive to protect our home from natural elements- snow, rain, sleet, flooding, as well as fire, earthquakes, tornadoes, and as many people realize the importance of home, we also want to prevent burglars from violating our safe place our place of refuge, our place where we can 'get away' and relax and enjoy some peace and quiet.

As we continue to prepare for Christmas we often wonder how we are going to decorate our homes- with lights, trees, and garlands. But what we must also prepare for this year, is how we are to keep safe from viruses and disease. We want to protect our families from any form of hurt and pain as well as vandalism as well as robbers who break and enter and leave the home's occupants feeling violated or vulnerable.

In the movie "Home Alone" the young boy has been left by himself in his large suburban home over the holidays. The freedom he has been experiencing soon comes to a change when he learns of Harry and Marv's plan to break in and steal the McAllister family's valuables. But what do we learn about Kevin? He is ready and on the job to protect his home and his family's possessions.

This scenario reminds us David who as a young strong shepherd is pitted against the Philistine giant Goliath with the winner of the battle being able to claim the land where they fight as their own. David is especially trained for the battle and as he prepares to make his way to the line of battle, he realizes he cannot wear the armour. So he rids of it and grabs some rocks and

keeps his slingshot handy. This is David's action plan. What occurs next has been used as a metaphor about the small person or small business standing against giants of industry with the hope of taking down the corporations because of consumer backlash. This image of one person defending themselves and all that they own is set up against a larger and stronger person of physical strength and power.

Kevin is ready to protect his home with an action plan. He knows his house with all its stairs, nooks, crannies, lights and sounds and he is preparing to protect his home at all cost. He uses what is available to him in the form of glass ornaments on the floor, tar on the stairs, paint cans, a hot iron, a fan, glue and feathers and the sound effects to invite the would be robbers in so he can defeat them. Kevin is all in with his plan and ready to protect what belongs to his family.

When we think of Jesus' life story we must remember that God had a specific plan in mind about when he was to be born. Jesus was to follow one who would prepare his way with the people. So the one who was to prepare for Jesus' coming was to be born. We read the story of Zechariah the priest who had entered the sanctuary of the Lord and offered incense. When he made this offering, an angel appeared to Zechariah and told him that Elizabeth his wife would bear a son who was to be named John. John would be great in the sight of the Lord and he would lead many people to God and prepare them for the Messiah. Zechariah questioned this as he and his wife were getting old. The angel Gabriel introduced himself and because Zechariah did not believe, he became mute until such time that the baby would be born. Zechariah leaves the temple and as he cannot speak he shares with Elizabeth what is to take place. Elizabeth does get pregnant and soon she receives her cousin Mary as a guest into her home and she too is pregnant. They share how they were chosen by God.

When Elizabeth gives birth to the baby Zechariah names him John as the angel had told him. Zechariah knows John's purpose is to prepare the people for the Christ. So he thinks nothing of it when John grows up and leaves to live in the wilderness and receives God's call to prepare the way of the Lord. He is John the Baptist who speaks to crowds and prepares the people for Jesus and his ministry. The plan had to be protected—because John needed to prepare for Jesus' ministry amongst the people.

And none of this would have been possible if David had lost the battle to Goliath. For we learn that it is through the line of David, in his city of Bethlehem where Jesus' birth takes place. So what are we doing right now? As a global community the Goliath we face is covid19 but

there is hope as vaccines will begin to be distributed in some countries in the world. This battle we face is not something that we as people planned, but it does exist and for almost a year the world's people have been striving in what seems like many battlefields to beat it. With this second wave now growing stronger and changes in restrictions in some areas of the province, the battle we face is not only the virus, but within ourselves.

Once the robbers were apprehended, Kevin rested and was safe in his home. He was at peace with himself and with the knowledge that no one was going to steal from his home. There was peace in the neighbourhood because the robbers were charged and taken into custody. Kevin was then able to rest after preparing and executing his plan to stop the robbers. He could enjoy the peace of the season even though he was alone. He again could take in his surroundings, the decorations, the lights, and realize that he had defeated the robbers. And he could be in the moment about who he was- a young boy in need of protection even though he protected his home.

As we continue our Advent preparations and look towards the moments when Christ lies in the manger, we need to be protective of who we are in light of what is happening all around us. Yes, there is much anxiety and stress, differences in traditions and what we have done in the past but there is also something about being present in this moment as God's Spirit is reaching out to you and touching your life. Today we will share in the sacrament of Holy Communion as part of preparing ourselves and protecting who we are as people of faith. We believe in the Baby born in the manger who came to save us all. We believe that Jesus came to live, to die and rise again so that we might be forgiven of sin. And we believe that as we remember him at the Table and eat and drink as he asked us to do, we will find peace within ourselves because Christ Jesus calls us to do so in hope.

Let us rejoice in the peace that is made possible through the wonder and protection of God's plan shared through the line of David, to John and to the Saviour Jesus whom we await and honour. Let us remember this as we share together in the sacrament of Holy Communion for Jesus calls us to him to receive his gifts of hope and peace. Come let us prepare ourselves as we pray words from Psalm 91:

God you are our refuge and our fortress; we trust in you. You will deliver us from the snare of the fowler, from deadly pestilence and we will find refuge under your wings. Your faithfulness will shield us and we will not fear night terrors or flying arrows of the day. God your angels will guard us always and they will bear us up so that we will not be hurt. You will protect us always. When we call to you we know you will answer because you are always with us in times of trouble, and through life and love we receive your salvation. God we thank you. Amen.