

Sunday, February 26, 2017

Matthew 25:1-13

Be Prepared

Welcome youth and leaders of 55th Guides and 66th Scouts to this service which enables Glenwood United church to see you, hear about your year's activities and to worship God together through music, prayers, listening to the words of Scripture and to be renewed in our focus as we share in the mission and ministry of Christ Jesus in this place,

We thank you for telling us about some of your experiences whether in training sessions here at the church or as you have gone camping whether locally or planned trips later on this year. I also thank the Cub leaders for enabling me to spend 3 sessions with the Cubs as we talked about food, Jesus miracle of the feeding of the 5000 + people and where we get our food today. A part of my sharing Jesus' story with you is so that you could make connections from Jesus feeding others to your involvement in gathering canned food for the Downtown Mission and feeding those who are in need.

What role does the church play in Scouting/ Guiding? When Lord and Lady Baden Powell established the laws and promises of Scouting/ Guiding they were very clear that a relationship between God, country and people were essential for all youth to have and development through time. It was important that youth learn and grow in faith, in community involvement and commitment to something other themselves. And this has not stopped. Because these things together enable an individual to be able to face any situation in life knowing that they are prepared to face and not only survive, but thrive due to strong leadership skills, experiences and knowledge that they have gained through the years.

Our gospel reading is the parable of ten young women who were waiting to crash a wedding. These ten young women are patiently waiting for the bridegroom to come from his house to where they know that the wedding celebration would continue in once he arrived. When the bridegroom would arrive, they would welcome him to the celebration by providing light to the entrance and when he would arrive, these women would be able to join the crowd and continue to eat and celebrate the wedding for many more hours. This was the tradition for weddings at the time. All the young women needed to do was to have a lamp ready in order for the groom to see them and to enable them to enter the wedding hall.

But in this story 5 of the women are wise and 5 are foolish—why? Because 5 are prepared to stay as long as it takes and to provide enough light for however long it takes the bridegroom to show up—and the other 5 the foolish ones, because they left home without any extra oil for their lamps.

The girls did not know when the bridegroom would show up but did not think it would be so late--midnight. Yet their lamps are no longer burning. They are in the dark. And the wise women tell them to go and buy some more- knowing that there is no 24 hour drug store available to buy oil for lamps. These wise girls also know that if they were to leave and go home and get more oil- they would most likely miss the bridegroom's arrival and not be allowed into the celebration.

And this is what happened. The cry rang out, The groom is here. -The girls with sufficient oil- trimmed their lamps so that they could meet the groom, and they were welcomed in to the wedding banquet as they were ready to celebrate with him. The other 5 had left to go home and get oil and because of this they missed the bridegroom, they missed getting into the wedding celebration and they missed the opportunity to eat and celebrate the wedding celebration.

When they came back they banged on the doors but were not allowed in because they were not known. They had not been ready.

As Guides/ Scouts you are taught many skills- and one of the most important is to be prepared for anything—snow in July, rain in January and the proper layers of clothes for each time you go camping. You are taught basic skills of cooking, self care and general ideas of God as creator. And as you continue to grow you are also taught responsibility and accountability for your actions. All of these are part of your development as Guides/ Scouts so that later on in life you are prepared for whatever will come your way and knowing that you are not alone.

Let's remember this as we pray:

Holy God bless this day with your guiding hand and enable us to know you as your children in faith. Show us your way O God. Amen.