

## The Colors of Faith – Green

March 30, 2014

2 Peter 3:1-18

*1 This is now the second letter that I have written to you, beloved, and in both of them I have aroused your sincere mind by way of reminder; 2 that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles. 3 First of all you must understand this, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own passions 4 and saying, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things have continued as they were from the beginning of creation." 5 They deliberately ignore this fact, that by the word of God heavens existed long ago, and an earth formed out of water and by means of water, 6 through which the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. 7 But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist have been stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. 8 But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slow about his promise as some count slowness, but is forbearing toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and the works that are upon it will be burned up. 11 Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of persons ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, 12 waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be kindled and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire! 13 But according to his promise we wait for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. 14 Therefore, beloved, since you wait for these, be zealous to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. 15 And count the forbearance of our Lord as salvation. So also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, 16 speaking of this as he does in all his letters. There are some things in them hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other scriptures. 17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, beware lest you be carried away with the error of lawless men and lose your own stability. 18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.*

So here we are on our fourth Sunday of Lent learning about the color Green and how it relates to our faith understanding. Green quite simply represents new Growth, both in our lives and in our faith. This seems simple enough does it not? Growing in our faith, growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord should be simple.

As you know I had the kids watch the clip from "Frozen" earlier. Found here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0HtACLaRDk0>

Besides being one of the top kids movies out lately. The movie has a lot of depth and meaning to it along with the subtle life lessons built into most Disney movies. It is loosely based on "The Snow Queen" in the Hans Christian Anderson collection. The song we watched "Let It Go" is a powerful anthem of self-awareness and acceptance. Perhaps that is why kids from all ages are singing along, parents and grandparents know all the words. And for many of us parents it has been the only movie playing in our homes for the past couple of weeks. It is one of those movies that has continued to be in the public eye for some time.

The song we heard "Let It Go" is about letting go and finally being free. Yet this anthem is only thirty one minutes in to the movie, it is only a four minute or so part. It is also followed some time later by a duet between the two sisters Elsa whom we saw letting it go, and her younger sister Anna. Watch this one now.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OwFlmPKayoE>

Quite a difference between the two songs and scenes. For those familiar with the movie we see how it all comes together between the two songs...some of us probably to be honest have most of the lines memorized. For those who have not seen it I give you a spoiler alert. The song we just viewed entitled "The First Time in Forever, the reprise version" is not the end of the movie either. You see Elsa through her wonderful winter magic froze the kingdom into an

eternal winter. The song "Let it Go" happens right after Elsa finally broke free and she is unaware until Anna visits what she has done. This duet is where she realizes that she is unable to run away, she is still not free from what is holding her back. She is not yet able to control her magic and change winter back into summer again.

The movie continues and as we saw Elsa's magic struck Anna giving Anna ice in her heart. This frozen heart can only be changed by an act of true love. Remember I told you this was a spoiler alert. That final act of true love came from Anna herself to protect Elsa from death. Anna got a little waylaid by the thought of true love's kiss but in the end it was the sacrifice of her own life for that of her sister that was the purest act of true love.

Anna's sacrifice can be understood through our Christian lens as Christological. This is another of those fun theological terms that we use when a person is willing to face death to save another. The depth of that sacrifice is similar to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for us. Yet we often utilize the term Christological in regards to literary works of fiction. Christ however, was real and sacrificed himself for us out of the truest of loves.

So what does this have to do with growth, with being Green in our faith? While Anna's sacrifice is a pivotal point in the movie. Elsa's transformation is more profound for us in regards to our growing faith. You see it sometimes takes a moment of truly letting go in order to move forward in faith. Whatever oppresses us, whatever holds us back from seeing the love of God in every part of our lives prevents us from being able to let go. Sometimes it only takes a moment, a single step to break away but that is not the end of our story.

I appreciated the realness of the struggle of letting go. For Elsa it was fear, for many of us other things oppress us. Things like family obligations, our jobs, our health, our age, our sex, our homes, our bank accounts, our expectations, our realities are just some of the ways we are oppressed by others or most often ourselves. That is what I found profound in this struggle. It was more than an outside force because that can too often be casually dismissed, this was about holding ourselves back from truly being free.

Growth comes though from accepting what is holding us back and then working to let it go. Our scripture today ended with verse eighteen "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen." This verse is the final verse of this chapter and is how the letter ends. This chapter of II Peter is one that describes how even though we know what to do, we still struggle with actually doing it. II Peter warns us that we have to be constantly aware of this struggle and strive to be diligent in our faithfulness to what we know to be true.

It is springtime, a time of new growth. A time where rain is washing away the drudgery of winter. Where we see new shoots growing. Where what we trimmed back as we came to understand it better is able to flourish and grow all the more strongly.