

The Colors of Faith – Yellow

April 6, 2014

John 14:1-14

1 "Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. 4 And you know the way where I am going." 5 Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" 6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me. 7 If you had known me, you would have known my Father also; henceforth you know him and have seen him." 8 Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied." 9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. 11 Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me; or else believe me for the sake of the works themselves. 12 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I go to the Father. 13 Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son; 14 if you ask anything in my name, I will do it.

"Sunshine, daisies, butter mellow, turn this stupid fat rat yellow" (Ron Weasley in "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone" by J.K. Rowling) That is the first thing that came to my mind, a funny line from Harry Potter, a dud of a spell spoken by Ron Weasley in the very first book. But it really hits when we consider the color yellow and what we think of when we think of yellow. We think of Sunshine, sun flowers, daffodils, warmth and all manner of good things. Yellow is associated with happiness and joyfulness in our lives. This means it makes a lot of sense that in regards to our faith yellow typically represents the promise of tomorrow.

I some months ago read to the youth the book "I am a Promise". The book is written alongside a song entitled the same thing. The song ends with this line: "I am a promise to be, anything God wants me to be." That is a profound concept for us to be anything God wants us to be in this life. This song at its base and the concept of promise however cannot be fulfilled alone.

We are aware of the concept of promise theologically. The word promise however, in our society today has lost a significant level of value. Life is full of promises made by people in relationship with one another. A parent promises to care for their child. A child promises to do better when they get in trouble for some form of misbehavior. We promise to cherish and honor when we marry. Those are the big sort of promises that often get confused with some others.

We tend to make countless promises in our day to day life. I promise to pick you up at a certain time. I promise we will finish this project. Promise is a word that is used a lot in our everyday vernacular but rarely do we take to heart what it means. The word has lost some weight in our society today. It no longer is an unshakeable commitment but it has rather become a half-hearted of course I will that is often forsaken when something else comes up...but of course we then promise to make up for whatever infraction might have occurred. I know you all know what I am saying. Why just the other day I was talking to a friend about a fairly intense point in her life and then had a call come in that I needed to take in regards to work so I said the normal "I promise to call you right after I'm done" well after I am done turned into a couple hours later because one thing led to another and another and then another I completely forgot.

We are all guilty of making promises that we can not keep. When life is knocking on our doors we sometimes get distracted by it or other things take more precedence than the promise we flippantly made to another. We do not always take into account that saying "I promise" is more than just intention it is commitment. The words we use so frequently might need to be held in more reverence.

It is while reading these passages today that I really considered God's promise to us. You know one of the first bible stories I remember learning was about Noah's Ark and the promise found in a rainbow. This is probably because one of my favorite bath toys was this Noah's ark boat made of plastic that floated but I just remember the story of the great

flood completely destroying the earth except for those on the Ark and then God realized the devastation was too much and promised to never do it again and how every time we see a rainbow we witness a reminder of God's promise to us.

So what is God's promise to us? We because we belong to Christ are heirs according to the promise given to Abraham. We are each and every one of us heirs according to the promise of God's love and abundance as continued through the generations from Abraham down to us. I find that awesome and overwhelming and humbling. It is awesome because it is God, overwhelming because it is God, and so very humbling because it is GOD's love being shared with us and in us and for us according to God's promises which are never given lightly or easily broken.

We as we enter into relationship with God become a part of God's covenantal promise to cherish us and be there for us and be with us, even in those inexplicable times when we do not see or feel or want God to be there. But Christ offers us this comfort found in our scripture, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me".

That is the response of a promise given, trust that the promise will be fulfilled. Trust. We as Christians live eschatologically. We are always looking forward to the end time. This concept is an embedded part of our faith. If we did not live in constant hope that the promises of God are to again be fulfilled when Jesus comes again then we would not be Christians. We would just be good people. In all of our lives we live in a state of trust towards God to fulfill God's promise.

But Jesus again brings up a significant point to our understanding of our faith. Turn again to our scripture. Thomas, the self-same doubter, questions Jesus. He asks "Lord we do not know where you are going, so how can we know the way." And Jesus responds "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me you would know my Father as well and have seen him." Phillip perhaps as many of us would tries to assure Jesus of his faithfulness and says "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." Jesus in apparent exasperation responds "Don't you know me, Phillip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father."

Those wonderful Disciples are asking for the same thing we often do. Tangible examples. And Jesus calls them out and says do you not see me for what I am? Do you not see God when you see me? Do you not see God when you see me; is a question we should ask ourselves is it not? If we expect others to buy into our faith that we profess then they need to see God when they see us. The same way Jesus asked the Disciples do you not see God when you see me is what we should be asking. We are the examples of the promise. Whatever we do, however we do it, we instill trust in others in us and also in God. Amen.