**January 24, 2021 - I Want to Be a Part of That!**

**Based on Mark 1:14-20**

**Prayer:**

 January 20 was an auspicious day. It was filled with hope and promise, as incoming President Joe Biden took the oath of Presidency, becoming the 46th President of the United States. For those of you that watched the inauguration, it was truly prophetic, given the setting of the inauguration event had only 14 days earlier been the site of rioting. The carnage that followed included the death of five individuals.

 We are all hopeful that President Biden will find a way forward to reunite a nation in disarray. There are formidable challenges and change for the good will be a long journey. However, one cannot help but being uplifted with what seems to be sincerity in the new President’s comments, “I will be a President for **ALL** people.” His voice resonating and emphasising the **ALL.**

Of course, those kinds of words have been extoled by former presidents. It is not only in words, but in actions that healing and reconciliation will come to fruition. First a modicum of trust must be moulded.

 It was indeed a hopeful day, but what had to be the most memorable and encouraging was this. (Video Clip play whole or in part)

 Reporters suggest Twenty-Two-year-old Amanda Gorman stole the show. The youngest poet in US history to mark the transition of presidential power, offered a passioned optimistic vision for her country in her poem “The Hill We Climb.”

 ***“We will not march back to what was. We move to what shall be, a country that is bruised, but whole. Benevolent, but bold. Fierce and free.”***

***“While democracy can be temporarily delayed, it can never be permanently defeated,” “Let us leave behind a country better than the one we were left,” “We will raise this wounded world into a wondrous one.” “The new dawn blooms as we free it,”***

 An impressive young woman, a self proclaimed skinny black kid whose family history is steeped in slavery made an impassioned speech. Many of us, and millions of others listened in awe and were deeply moved and heartened. This is what we need, and we could say, hallelujah!

 While so hopeful, we know that there are far too many who will be unmoved by Amanda’s poetic and profound voice. In fact, the voices of the far right, the radicals, the white supremists, perhaps segments of the privileged and certainly those who still abhor Black people generally and would condemn the notoriety of black woman especially, will not be silenced. They will be outraged. While the road to harmony is offered, there is much that stands in the way of meaningful reconciliation becoming a reality.

 This is not an unfamiliar story and when I reflect on Amanda’s passioned sharing, I see something I didn’t at first. I see Jesus at the podium speaking, I see Jesus at the lakeshore calling out to some simple village folk, local fishermen, inviting them along with him to build a better world

It is implied that the journey will not be easy as there will be great opposition, but Jesus, like Amanda, needs help. Prophetic voice is a call to action, a call to engage, a call to follow, a call to discipleship.

 Can you see Jesus in Amanda? Amanda was calling the villages out too. She was calling out regular folks, come and be part of a new thing, come and be part of better nation, a better world.

The obstacles for her and the new president towards healing and harmony are formidable. That was the same for Jesus. There are no doubt voices of divisiveness. “Who does she think she is that young upstart black girl? What the (expletive) is that traitor Biden doing inviting her to speak? It’s just as we figured, selling out the country and betraying our forefathers.”

In Jesus’ time the sentiments were the same, but the words were different. “Who does he think he is making comments about scripture in the synagogue? Who does he think he is preaching and healing on the sabbath? Who does he think he is challenging our God given authority as priests?” “Is this not Joseph the carpenter’s son?” “He has no special standing, no authority, no credentials.”

And who am I to suggest that I have any significant role to play in promoting what God would want to see; love, generosity, kindness, forgiveness. I am but a skinny, white, mostly bald senior, who lives a privileged life. Who will take me seriously? Who will take you seriously?

When he came to Galilee Jesus proclaimed, ***“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near;[***[***c***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=mark+1%3A14-20&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-24228c)***] repent, and believe in the good news.”[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=mark+1%3A14-20&version=NRSV" \l "fen-NRSV-24228d" \o "See footnote d)]***  A modern day Jesus might say, as Amanda Gorman did ~~something similar~~, ***“We will raise this wounded world into a wondrous one.” “The new dawn blooms as we free it,”***As was the case for Mark’s Jesus, this is a “Come with me and we can do something special together” statement.

Can we see that? Can we be a part of that? I believe I can be, I would hope I can, I do want to. I believe we all can help raise our wounded world into a new and wondrous one. That is something we all pray for and all want.

I think we start by being like Simon, Andrew, James and John, simple folk who dared to take a walk, hoping to lay a foundation where God could shine through more clearly. In that way we follow the leadership of Jesus, we walk in his footsteps and we are like Jesus as Amanda was on January 20.

Amanda’s words were incredible and hopeful. I was stirred and uplifted. In all, I think I was most moved by the ending sentence of her poetic sharing***. “There is always light if only we are brave enough to see it; if only we are brave enough to be it.”*** Jesus was that light in his earthly time and he offers to pass that to us today.

Can you, can we be brave enough to see and be light now in our discipleship? How do we see and be light after 10 months of pandemic uncertainty and isolation? How do we see and be light approaching a new Church year, where there will be more pressure on finances and volunteers? How do we see and be light as we age, perhaps feeling less and less like we can contribute, and perhaps feeling somewhat guilty that we are not doing enough?

Certainly, we are brave enough to be it. That is being kind and generous. That is speaking from a hopeful and encouraging heart. That is sharing, caring, nursing and nurturing. That is parking our ego when it needs to be and forgiving one another and ourselves when necessary. That is being patient when we don’t arrive where we hoped, or get the results we envisioned. Being is mustering the courage and tenacity to walk the journey; plodding along a step at a time knowing we can make a difference. Being is emulating Jesus and living in his light. Being is taking Amanda’s place at the podium.

Do that and others will see it. Hopefully they will want to be it too.

I Want To Be Part of That!

Amen and thanks for Listening this Morning.