

MESSAGE – Faith is a Journey

May 15, 2022

Rev. Lisa Kruse-Safford

SCRIPTURE Acts 5:27-32

²⁷ The apostles were brought in and made to appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest. ²⁸ “We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name,” he said. “Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man’s blood.”

²⁹ Peter and the other apostles replied: “We must obey God rather than human beings! ³⁰ The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead—whom you killed by hanging him on a cross. ³¹ God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might bring Israel to repentance and forgive their sins. ³² We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.”

~~~~~

It’s a big and bold thing that Peter does in the story today.

He and the other apostles have been warned to stop talking about Jesus.

But they can’t

So they are brought in to the Sanhedrin

The group of religious leaders

The same group that decided that Jesus had to go

The same group that was responsible for specifically looking for and finding fault in Jesus

The same group that handed Jesus over to Pilate asking for his death.

They are a group with power

They are a group that isn’t messing around when they say to stop.

But there’s Peter and the others defying their orders.

And not only that, but speaking the truth of Jesus to their power.

It’s a dangerous thing for them to do.

And it’s a far cry from where they have been.

Hiding out in the upper room

Abandoning Jesus when he was arrested, put on trial, and crucified  
Declaring he doesn't know Jesus

It's a stronger faith place than Peter's ever been before

- Declares: "you're the Messiah" when Jesus asks, "who do you say I am"  
And then in the next breath, he declares, "This must never happen to you."  
when Jesus is explaining how he must die.
- Peter believes so much in Jesus that he is prepared to get out of the boat when he says to Jesus, "Let me come to you on the water"  
And then in the next breath, he cries out "save me" when he becomes overwhelmed with the situation.

Peter did not get to that strong place of faith as we see in front of the Sanhedrin overnight.

It was a journey.

It was a learning process.

It's something we need to remember on a day that we celebrate confirmation.

That what you are doing today is not the ultimate act of your faith

It's not the destination of your faith.

It's a mile marker on the journey in your faith.

Today you make a declaration that you are choosing this Christian journey.

And the next day – you will be given the opportunity to live it out. Followed by the next day and the next.

And with each day, your faith will grow

With each moment of fun and joy, your faith will grow

When you are challenged, your faith will grow.

There'll be days when you mess up: "I don't know him"

And then days when you are so strong and certain in your faith, you stand unswerving in it.

Today is a day – not just for these confirmands, but for all of us.

To remember that our life of faith is a journey  
That draws us closer and closer to Christ's side.  
Our faith isn't perfect, but it is being perfected.

With every step; with every experience; with every decision.

Our faith is becoming.

So confirmands, while this confirmation day for you has arrived,  
trust that your faith is still "getting there"

The faith questions that are about to be asked will take on deeper meaning as the years go by.....

Our faith is still "getting there"

And Jesus – the "pioneer and perfecter of our faith" – will never leave us on the journey.

He will be there correcting us when needed

He will be there saving us when we're afraid of drowning

He will be there standing by our side as we profess our faith

He will be there at the very end of it, receiving us into the place he has gone to prepare for us.

## VOWS

Brothers and sisters in Christ: Through the Sacrament of Baptism we are initiated into Christ's holy Church. We are incorporated into God's mighty acts of salvation and given new birth through water and the Spirit. All this is God's gift, offered to us without price.

Through confirmation, we renew the covenant declared at our baptism, acknowledge what God is doing for us, and affirm our commitment to Christ's holy Church.

I present Kayla Boeing, Michael Hartkopf, Everett Hutchinson, Addiline Kelsey, Kaitlyn Miller, and Addison Shepherd for confirmation.

On behalf of the whole Church, I ask you:  
Do you renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness,  
reject the evil powers of this world,  
and repent of your sin?

**I do.**

Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves?

**I do.**

Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Savior,  
put your whole trust in his grace,  
and promise to serve him as your Lord,  
in union with the Church which Christ has opened  
to people of all ages, nations, and races?

**I do.**

Do you, as Christ's body, the Church, reaffirm both your rejection of sin and your commitment to Christ?

**We do.**

SPECIAL MUSIC

I Will Rise

## LAYING ON OF HANDS

Remember your baptism and be thankful.

\_\_\_\_, the Holy Spirit work within you, that having been born through water and the Spirit, you may live as a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. Amen.

## MEMBERSHIP VOWS

Through baptism, you are members of Christ's universal Church. Will you be loyal to living out your faith through church membership at First Church as a part of The United Methodist church. Will you help strengthen its ministries by faithfully participating through your prayers, your presence, your gifts, your service and your witness? If so, please answer "I do."

Members of the household of God, I commend these fellow disciples to you love and care. Do all in your power to increase their faith, confirm their hope, and perfect them in love.

**C: We give thanks for all that God has given you; for who God has made you to be. We celebrate your faith and welcome you into church membership in Christian love. We promise to keep journeying in faith with you. We promise to be a faith community for you in the years to come. We promise to surround you with love and grace and follow Jesus side by side with you.**

HYMN          Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee

## BLESSING

The God of all grace,  
who has called us to eternal glory in Christ,  
establish you and strengthen you  
that you may journey in this faith in grace and peace.

10:45

OPENING SONG                      Breathe Miracles

WELCOMING ONE ANOTHER

I present Kayla Boeing, Michael Hartkopf, Everett Hutchinson, Addiline Kelsey, Kaitlyn Miller, and Addison Shepherd whose faith and baptism have just been confirmed.

Members of the household of God, I commend these fellow disciples to you love and care. Do all in your power to increase their faith, confirm their hope, and perfect them in love.

**C: We give thanks for all that God has given you; for who God has made you to be. We celebrate your faith and welcome you into church membership in Christian love. We promise to keep journeying in faith with you. We promise to be a faith community for you in the years to come. We promise to surround you with love and grace and follow Jesus side by side with you.**

SONGS                                      Your Love Awakens Me  
                                                    Always

PRAYER

MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS

MESSAGE – Faith is a Journey

May 15, 2022

Rev. Lisa Kruse-Safford

It's a big and bold thing that Peter does in the story today.

He and the other apostles have been warned to stop talking about Jesus.

But they can't

So they are brought in to the Sanhedrin

The group of religious leaders

The same group that decided that Jesus had to go

The same group that was responsible for specifically looking for and finding fault in Jesus

The same group that handed Jesus over to Pilate asking for his death.

They are a group with power

They are a group that isn't messing around when they say to stop.

But there's Peter and the others defying their orders.

And not only that, but speaking the truth of Jesus to their power.

It's a dangerous thing for them to do.

And it's a far cry from where they have been.

Hiding out in the upper room

Abandoning Jesus when he was arrested, put on trial, and crucified

Declaring he doesn't know Jesus

It's a stronger faith place than Peter's ever been before

"you're the Messiah"

This must never happen to you.

Let me walk on water

"save me"

He didn't get to that strong place of faith overnight.

It was a journey.

It was a learning process.

It's something we need to remember on a day that we celebrate confirmation.

That what you are doing today is not the ultimate act of your faith

It's not the destination of your faith.

It's a mile marker on the journey in your faith.

Today you make a declaration that you are choosing this Christian journey.

And the next day – you will be given the opportunity to live it out. Followed by the next day and the next.

And with each day, your faith will grow

With each moment of fun and joy, your faith will grow

When you are challenged, your faith will grow.

There'll be days when you mess up: "I don't know him"

And then days when you are so strong and certain in your faith, you stand unswerving in it.

Today is a day – not just for these confirmands, but for all of us.

To remember that our life of faith is a journey

That draws us closer and closer to Christ's side.

Our faith isn't perfect, but it is being perfected.

With every step; with every experience; with every decision.

Our faith is becoming.

So confirmands, while this confirmation day for you has arrived,

trust that your faith is still "getting there"

The faith questions that are about to be asked will take on deeper meaning as the years go by.....

*On behalf of the whole Church, I ask you:*

*Do you renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness,*

*reject the evil powers of this world,*

*and repent of your sin?*

***I do.***

*Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you  
to resist evil, injustice, and oppression  
in whatever forms they present themselves?*

***I do.***

*Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Savior,  
put your whole trust in his grace,  
and promise to serve him as your Lord,  
in union with the Church which Christ has opened  
to people of all ages, nations, and races?*

***I do.***

*Do you, as Christ's body, the Church,  
reaffirm both your rejection of sin  
and your commitment to Christ?*

***We do.***

Our faith is still "getting there"

And Jesus – the "pioneer and perfecter of our faith" – will never leave us on the journey.

He will be there correcting us when needed

He will be there saving us when we're afraid of drowning

He will be there standing by our side as we profess our faith

He will be there at the very end of it, receiving us into the place he has gone to  
prepare for us.

## OFFERING ANNOUNCEMENT

Ching-Yun Huang has blessed this congregation's worship with beautiful music for the last eleven years which has been a blessing to everyone. Her giftedness on the piano has blessed the choir as she accompanies through every rehearsal and performance. Add to that her cello playing, and First Church knows Ching-Yun is gifted to be a blessing to others. Ching-Yun began working with Katrina and the choir as accompanist and special musician long before she had children, before she got married, before she knew Christ as her Lord. Each of those life events this congregation has been able to rejoice with Ching-Yun. Her marriage to Eric, the birth of their two beautiful children, Olivia and Alec, and the whole family's baptism two years ago. Ching-Yun may have come to play music, but she became church family. As we recognize her ministry today, we also share that her time with First Church is changing. She will be stepping down from weekly service for the choir and worship at the end of this choir season; she will be here occasionally to play for special events and services. As much as we will miss Ching-Yun, we support her decision to make these changes to be able to spend more time with her family. Ching-Yun's music ministry has made a difference at First Church. And your gifts have made that possible. So thank you for giving.

## CLOSING SONG

Stand in Your Love

## BLESSING

The God of all grace,  
who has called us to eternal glory in Christ,  
establish you and strengthen you  
that you may journey in this faith in grace and peace.