

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

SUNDAY MARCH 17 2024

KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

"You Are Light"

Based on 1 Thessalonians 5:4-11
and "Robin Hood" (2010)

You are light.
You are not The Light.
But you are light.
You must be light.
For to not be light, is to invite
darkness.
And there is already, too
much darkness.

Russell Crowe's 2010 take on
Robin Hood was much less
chivalrous than last week's
spin on King Arthur's knights
in shining armour, jousting
away the hours with fair
maidens in the stands
cheering them on.

Our hero today is found in the
mud and muck of France, an
archer for the English army,
caught in a power grid of
kings and kingdoms during
the Crusades.

- There is trouble at home.
- There is trouble abroad.
- There is little but death in
between.

Leaving their posts, Robin and
his band of 'merry men' begin
to make their way home. By
chance they happen upon the
aftermath of an ambush, and
see an opportunity to get

home safely by taking the
armour of the dead knights
and foot soldiers and
pretending to be part of the
king's guard until they get
back to English soil.

As they are creating their new
personas, our hero stumbles
upon a knight, who in his
dying breath, pleads for Robin
to return his sword to his
family and tell his father that
he died with honour. Robin
agrees. When questioned on
this change of plans, he
replies,
*"We must not return good luck
with bad grace. It invites
darkness."*

Today is the last Sunday
before Palm Sunday. And
darkness is here.

- You can see it now.
- You can feel it now.

This journey is nearing an
end, and by now, it should be
making us emotionally
uncomfortable.

This journey we have been on
is not an unfamiliar one. As
Christians, we are often called
to contemplate life and loss,
letting go and leaning into our
faith. We have learned that it
takes courage to explore these

difficult aspects of life. And as
we reflect on what is yet to
come in the story, we
discover:

- It takes courage to live.
- It takes courage to die.

But today, as the darkness is
now within view and there is
some tension in the space
between our hymns and our
prayers, we might be
surprised to discover that
there is also, 'humility.'

The world might see it as
weakness.
You might think that it makes
you vulnerable.
But in fact, this humility

- Makes your conviction
stronger,
- Widens your
understanding,
- Breathes in the depth of
who God is,
- Draws you closer to The
Light.

When we think of Christ in
those final days leading up to
Calvary, we see a man moving
towards a darkness that was
contrived and pinned upon
him. Yet knowing all this, He
still moved towards the
darkness because He
understood that the only way

to dispel darkness was with light.

Christ moved closer to Calvary with courage, and yet, with humility, a servant. And in those final days, he shed himself of all that continued to burden Him:

- The ministry that had failed,
- Those who did not come to believe His message,
- Those who left unfulfilled,
- Unfinished ministry,
- Plans that would never come to be.

Christ turned His attention to the glimmer of light that was beyond the cross, and He moved into the darkness.

The only way to push darkness away is with light.

- He showed us the way.
- He paved the way, so that there would be a way for us to follow.
- He proved to us that though darkness may seem to overwhelm our thoughts, our world, our leaders, this darkness will not prevail, as long as there is light.

When Paul wrote to the Thessalonians he said,
*You are all children of the light
and children of the day.
We do not belong to the night
or to the darkness. (v5)*

We are children of The Light.
We know what it means to have the gifts of the Spirit shared upon us, and how

those gifts have shaped our lives.

We are challenged, then, in this growing time of darkness:

- To be light,
- To be light in the room,
- To be light in your family,
- To reach out and be light where the curtains are drawn,
- To come close and be light where there is none.

This is much darkness in this world of ours. And I don't mean by that, that there is much evil in the world, but darkness.

- An apathy,
- A sadness,
- An anger,
- A discontent,

And these feelings are increasing.

These tensions will not be resolved by

- Changing social policies,
- Implementing programs,
- Blaming our leaders.

These tensions will be resolved by bringing light into the room.

- Bringing hope where there is despair,
- Bringing smiles and good cheer where there is sadness or boredom,
- Showing kindness and gratitude when no one is watching,

- Offering grace and humility instead of pride,
- By refusing to slip into the darkness ourselves.

The darkness cannot remain if there is light.

You cannot avoid the darkness.

You must confront it.

You must move through it to the other side.

Calvary taught us that.

*"We must not return good luck
with bad grace. It invites
darkness."*

We have been given good fortune of Spirit-filled gifts.
We have been blessed with a God of endless grace.
And it is we, who must turn the darkness away.

Calvary is on our doorstep.
Be light.

Amen.