

## **Sharing – It’s a Good Thing**

Of course, we all know it’s Valentine’s Day – we’ve set aside at least one day out of each year when we share our love with the special people in our lives. Really? One day? We should be doing that every day. Unfortunately, I’m not sure that we always do that. Oh well, I guess it’s good that we share our love at least one day, right?

In addition to being Valentine’s Day, this is also Transfiguration Sunday. As a child, I’m not sure I truly understood this Sunday. I mean, the word “transfiguration” was a concept I just could not wrap my head around. Exactly what is it?? The dictionary defines it as, “ an exalting, glorifying or spiritual change.” Okay – but here’s what always confused me. Jesus was always the Son of God, right? So why did He need to go through a transfiguration?? So, when Pastor Scott asked me to preach on this Sunday, I was more than just a little nervous. If I did not understand it, how could I preach on this Sunday??

Well, God is great because He helped me focus on that portion of the Bible text that I did understand. Notice what Peter says. See, I identify with Peter because, though he was passionate in his love for Jesus, he was constantly blurting out statements that inevitably made him sound ignorant. That’s the part I can identify with—oftentimes I speak before I think.

Anyway, what does Peter say? After he sees Jesus in all His glory, along with Moses and Elijah, Peter suggests that they build 3 tents and just stay up on the mountain. The scripture goes on to tell us that he did not know what he was saying, as if to point out again just how impulsive Peter was. The fact is, I think we're all a lot like Peter. When we experience something that's unbelievably good, do we want to keep it all for ourselves or do we share it with others? If we are honest with ourselves, the answer is probably not always.

Think about it, even when we were little children, our parents had to teach us to share – and we did not always like it. As children, we wanted to keep the toy or candy or whatever the good thing was just for us. We liked it – why do we have to give up some of it for someone else? Well, that is our basic human nature. We, even as children, are vulnerable to Satan's powers. His voice enters our head and our hearts and tells us that we deserve that good thing (whatever it is) and the other person is not as deserving. As adults, we still give in to that voice. We worked harder and deserved the bonus. We are more deserving of the recognition (even if others helped us out).

Unfortunately, we even do this in the church. I love to worship here at OSLC. I love the music, I love the fellowship, I love the prayer time – all of it

renews me and lifts me up. I love being here every Sunday. The question I must ask myself is this: today, am I more like Peter? Do I want to just keep all of this for myself or do I invite others to come and share this worship experience with me? If I don't, then I must ask myself, why? What prevents me from doing so?

In Peter's case, he wanted to continue experiencing the glory on the mountain top. I don't know that I can blame him. I'm sure it was amazing. But what he did not understand is that Jesus came into His glory that day to fulfill His mission. Jesus knew He was going to take His Father's love out to the rest of the world – He was not sent to stay on top of that mountain. His mission was to save the world.

Today, we have a similar mission. We have been called by God to take His love to the rest of the world. We are not called to just take care of those of us gathered here in this building today. We are called to love everyone in the world as God loves them. We are to see others the way that God sees them. That's not an easy thing to do. We see others through our imperfect eyes and hearts. There are those who we allow to make us mad – and we blame them. It's your fault!!! We hold grudges against those whom we believe wronged us. We withhold forgiveness even though God has forgiven us all of our sins. Again, if we're honest

we are not deserving of God's grace and love, yet He freely gives it to us. So, why don't we share the love and forgiveness as easily as God shares it with us?

What holds us back? Fear? What are we afraid of? The apostles faced imprisonment and even death, yet they continued to preach the Good News and share the love of Jesus. Surely, that's not going to happen to us. What's the worst that's going to happen if we share the love of Jesus? What do we think will happen? Our co-workers might decide to avoid us because they think we're crazy or overbearing? We will say something wrong and unintentionally offend someone? We don't know what to say so it's just better to say nothing at all?

We need to trust God completely. He will provide opportunities for us to share His love with others. When that opportunity comes along, we need to step up and fulfill our calling.

This week we begin our Lenten journey – walking with Jesus as He prepares to be crucified and rise again in victory. There is a devotion booklet that we will be using and, if you have not received your copy yet, please pick one up today. Each day during Lent we will be presented with various opportunities to pray for others. For me, praying for others is one of the most powerful ways in which we can share God's love with others. I am convinced that James 5:16 is true: that

the prayers of the righteous are powerful and effective. When we pray, God hears our prayers and responds.

During our worship experiences, we will be taking a prayer walk, stopping at various prayer stations that focus on particular individuals who need prayer. You don't have to pray out loud, you can pray silently as you walk from station to station. Members of the prayer team will be available during these worship experiences to provide a personal time of prayer if you are in need that day. The theme of our Lenten journey is Seek God for the City. We are called by God to, in essence, leave the mountain top and go out into our city to share His love with others. People are in pain all around us – at work, in our neighborhood, at school, at the grocery store, at a restaurant.

Today, let's begin our Lenten journey together – to actually reach outside these walls to share God's love with others. Remember, it is a good thing to share!