

# Standing In Love

Revs. Renee' Leboa & Christy Snow

Sermon Exchange at Seigle Ave. Presbyterian Church – February 21, 2010

## From Rev. Renee' Leboa

“Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy to a friend”

~Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

He also said “I have a Dream.” I believe in his dream as I know you must. I am personally keeping that dream alive by daring to believe in a world that lives and sees beyond borders, beyond color, race, religion, age, country and sexual orientation. I believe that we are all children of God and therefore we are all one people capable of such love as to change the world.

In my dreams I see a globe of Gods children standing hand in hand. I know it can be hard to imagine a world like the one I am describing when we have a history of violence and war. But if we do not begin to be the love that we seek, there can be no end.

Love must begin here within our own hearts; we no longer have the luxury of resentment, judgment and hate. Are you willing to consider that everyone you judge is not a failed version of you? We can no longer look to others to solve the problems of the world, we are the others. It is common among the youth to think that it is cool to have an attitude. So, what is your attitude? Are you a negative person, cynical and expecting the worst from those around you? Or are you compassionate and tolerant of your brothers and sisters. We are all related under one God and we can begin to see our differences as a fine woven tapestry of many colors and textures.

It is not too late for a New Beginning in your life. It is not too late to be the change that you wish to see. We have been waiting for happiness, as if it is a destination. There is no place to arrive; we are on a journey that is just below our feet. Where we are on the path is the destination. So, we must bring all of our love to this now moment.

This is the Beginning of Lent, and a time for Personal examination. It is time to go inward to the core of love and bring that love into every situation. We have a choice as to how we react in any given moment. We have a choice as to how we embrace one another. You may be the

only living example of God's love in someone's life today. Have you ever stopped to think of it in that way, that you are an ambassador for God?

Imagine if you were spending the day with Jesus, and he was with you all through your day, at work, in the car during rush hour, at the grocery store, when you are dealing with your children. I can bet that you would not have road rage; you would be on your best behavior. You would be on your best behavior, wouldn't you?

It is easy to feel hopeless in a world filled with such upheaval. I say we start a different kind of revolution, one of love and random acts of kindness.

Lets imagine that all those who were participating in the war or violence anywhere in the world were simply children playing a game and suddenly they realized the game they were playing was no longer fun and they all set down their guns and began playing kick ball or hide and seek.

We are teaching a class at our Center based on the book by Deepak Chopra the "Seven Spiritual Laws of Success". And the homework for this week was to give a gift, to give something material, physical, intentional or emotional to everyone you meet for the next week. Give a smile, or your time, actually look someone in the eye as they speak to you. Maybe it is just an intention of love that you send to someone. By someone a cup of coffee, help them move, hug them. Whatever it is, give your all to the moment, this present moment. If we want to live in a world beyond the borders of the heart and land, we must begin right here and now to erase those borders. Stand in love and erase the lines of separation. Decide what gift you are going to bring to life and everyone you met. What gift are you going to give to each present moment?

### **From Rev. Christy Snow**

What is "being in the present moment" to you? What does it mean to bring your faith and your intention to your life in every moment? We had the opportunity to share a movie at our teen night last Friday about being in the present moment. I couldn't help but catch the irony as every teen in the room was texting through the entire movie and not being present to view a movie about present moment awareness. I felt sad at first thinking that the wisdom we were trying to share was lost, falling on deaf ears. I wanted them to walk away with a deeper understanding of the responsibility we each need to embrace for what attitude and energy we

bring to every moment in our lives. Then it occurred to me that perhaps they are paying attention more than we realized as I was comforted by the recollection of an incident that occurred with two of the teens at the grocery store immediately prior to the event.

One of our young men, age 17, had told a woman 30 years his senior that she was beautiful while standing in the aisle of the grocery store. He just took it upon himself to randomly compliment this stranger. It turns out that his norm is to compliment at least 3 people per day. When his friend asked him about it a few moments later leaving the store his reply was "Think about it man, 3 compliments a day times 365 days per year is a lot of good in the world!" That moment really stuck with me and came back to me as I was feeling frustrated by their apparent lack of interest in this wonderful movie and I realized, ***they are hearing us***, they are watching us and even when it doesn't look like it, what we do matters. Whether it is our own children, the youth at our church or the stranger in the grocery aisle, we are each affecting one another and being affected by our interactions every day. As parents or anyone who works with teens can relate, they may not seem to "get it" in the moment that you are showing the profound movie or telling a profound life lesson but being an example of love, kindness and acceptance does matter and is felt and is worth committing to.

That is why we are here today to make a stand ***for*** something. A stand for love and acceptance that opens the way to peace. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. also said that "Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal." Gandhi put it another way, "We must be the change we wish to see". So you have made a stand here today by opening your hearts and doors and embracing Rev. Renee & I as we participate in this sermon exchange program. Crossroads Charlotte and Mecklenburg Ministries and the participating houses of faith during this six week sermon exchange program are making a stand for honoring and accepting each other regardless of differences. We are making a stand for taking responsibility for how we show up in our lives.

As a Science of Mind minister we honor all people and all paths to God as *we stand for something and against nothing*. We believe that we are connecting to God by connecting to and accepting one another. Jesus said "that which you have done unto the least of these my brethren you have done unto me." It is time for us to each LIVE our faith, LIVE our conviction and be who we say we are out there in the world and not just in here behind these sacred walls.

I heard a story recently, perhaps it is fictitious or maybe not however the point comes across clearly either way.

***A woman was driving in traffic and she was late for her destination. The traffic continued to become a more tense driving experience, much like what we experience each time it snows or rains here in Charlotte and people forget how to drive. So with her knuckles turning white from her grip on the wheel the driver was jolted by the horn from the driver behind her. She quickly made a reflex movement of a not so kind hand gesture in the rear view mirror and just as the traffic opened up and the car passed her with confusion on the drivers face next to her she remembered that just that morning she had put a new bumper sticker on the back of her car that said "honk if you love Jesus".***

So are we living and being who we say we are in the world. Are we being present in each moment and looking for the Divine in it, looking for evidence of God in our lives or are we rushing through our meals, texting through our movies and avoiding eye contact as we have conversations? Are we taking time every day to commune with God?

The call to worship that was read this morning referenced being sheltered in the shadow of the almighty and seeking the Lord as your refuge. We have to ask ourselves; are we spending time everyday seeking that shelter, seeking that guidance and that comfort? Another of your readings referenced "praying without ceasing". I believe this is felt in choosing in every day to live in alignment with the spiritual wisdom that all of the major faith traditions of the world agree upon; that of love, kindness, awareness and communion with the Divine.

Let us hear the words of some of the world's great prophets and teachers of love.

### **Jesus**

"Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

### **Krishna**

"Strive constantly to serve the welfare of the world"

### **Buddha**

He who experiences the unity of life sees his own Self in all beings, and all beings in his own Self, and looks on everything with an impartial eye.

### **Mohammad**

A man's true wealth here after is the good he does in this world to his fellow man.

## Chief Seattle

“all things are connected like the blood which unites one family.”

We are all connected as one family, as the children of God. Let us continue to do the work of erasing borders and lines of separation between us. Let us recognize that our actions make a difference, even when they seem to fall on deaf ears. My faith tradition of the Science of Mind includes the word science because it can be scientifically proven that thoughts have energy and that prayer works. When we are strong in our faith, we know this without science proving it for us. Taking that time to strengthen our faith and connect with God is not time wasted, it is what helps us to stay the course and know that our actions matter. Also in the Science of Mind we recognize the importance that Quantum Physics holds with respect to our spiritual journey. Physics has proven that objects being observed change by the act of the observation or in other words; what we focus on expands. So are we focusing on the love of God and cultivating that as our experience or are we focusing on the lines of separation and how we are different one from another. This is the message we can live right here in Charlotte regardless of which faith tradition we come from and be a wave of ripples that changes this city and flows on out to change our world. The message of standing for love and acceptance, living with the love of God in our hearts and living our every present moment with this message in our hearts is what Dr. King was talking about when he said that peace is the “means by which we arrive at that goal.” We have to BE peace to bring peace, to create peace!

I am so grateful to all of you here at Seigle Ave. for being part of this peace and this change by embracing us with such love this morning. Simply by being a part of a congregation that embraces differences, you are making a difference. I celebrate you, I honor you and I am grateful for you. Let us be empowered to live from that place in our hearts where the still small voice resides that gives us guidance and inspired action on every step of our journey, that place that reminds us that we are not doing this alone. That place where in fact as Emerson said we can get our “bloated nothingness out of the way” and allow the loving spirit of God to flow through as we connect with one another and find God in one another’s eyes.

**“Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal.”** Thank you for being that peace today and changing our world for the better simply by being a peaceful, accepting and loving presence in it. I thank you and I bless you.

Namaste and Peace.