

5-17-20

TRUE COLORS

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Scripture reference: 1 Peter 1:3-5 and Isaiah 54:10

We are talking today about the colors of our faith; when I hear the phrase, "colors of faith", the picture that immediately comes to mind is that of a rainbow. Rainbows are beautiful arcs of color that present themselves after a rain. But there is more to a rainbow than just something beautiful to look at - a rainbow does more than just please the eye... There's just something about a rainbow that kind of lifts the spirit, brings a quiet sense of joy, a sense of peace and a sense of hope for what's next. I guess that's not too surprising if we read the story of Noah in Genesis...

God spoke to Noah and had him prepare a huge Ark that would carry Noah's family and pairs of all the creatures that had the breath of life in them. Once all these were safely in the Ark, God sent rains to flood the earth - completely flood the earth, no land anywhere - all life (that was not on the Ark with Noah) was destroyed, and when the rains stopped and the flood waters had evaporated, God established a new covenant with Noah and his sons. A covenant that promised never again would there be a flood to destroy the earth, to destroy all life. And God sent a sign to Noah representing that new covenant: "And God said, 'This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind.'" (Genesis 9:12-15) A rainbow is a sign of God's faithfulness to us, and so the rainbow song we sang with the kids: red and yellow and pink and green; purple and orange and blue - isn't just about a rainbow, but is a song about the colors that represent our faith, colors that represent our relationship with God.

Logically, one would think that I would have chosen the story of Noah for our scripture message today, but then, I am not logical in the same way many of you are... in fact, there have been several occasions when people have actually said to me, "You have a really odd sense of logic"... So using my own odd sense of logic, I chose our readings for the grace, hope, and unfailing love that each reading either blatantly speaks of, or clearly alludes to.

First Peter uses the words, "new birth into a living hope" - when I see a rainbow, I feel hope, I can't help but smell a freshness that seems to permeate the air as soon as the rainbow appears - a freshness that smells like spring, like new life - and there is kind of acceptance or acknowledgement of the power of God and the beauty of what lies ahead... "This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time." So let us take these words from Peter, and let's see a rainbow, and feel a hope for what comes next.

And our reading from Isaiah. Isaiah tells us that we are not always going to have sunshiny days and starlit nights - he tells us that the Lord says, "though the mountains be shaken and the hills be moved" - so we know that life is going to be a little rough and not always smooth sailing... Yet in our trying times, Isaiah also tells us that God's unfailing love will not be shaken and His covenant of peace will never be revoked. Those words fill me with a sense of relief, a sense of peace, and again a feeling of hope for what lies ahead - that same kind of feeling I get when I see a rainbow...

The rainbow alludes to a beauty we will only see somewhere beyond this earthly life; it brings us hope and provides a sense of comfort and spiritual strength that comes from knowing His love will not be shaken and his covenant of peace, His covenant for our lives, will not be removed. The rainbow is very powerful because of our belief in the future that God has promised, the future that will be ours through our faith in Him, and in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Let's look at the colors of our faith - the rainbow that is christianity...

Red. The color red symbolizes Christ's blood, blood that he willingly shed for you and for me. It stands for the bold and passionate characteristics of our faith in the knowledge that we are forgiven and we have been set free.

Yellow. is a bright and cheerful color that stands for joy filled worship and for a faith that experiences God's presence. Yellow represents the joy of eternal life we read about in our Gospels, and is so precisely shared in John 3:16: " For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Green is the color of faith that is peaceful. The color of a faith that has purpose, a faith that continues to grow with each experience - good or bad, healthy or sick, happy or sad... Green represents our walk with Jesus.

Purple is the color of royalty. It represents our faith in the power of our Lord; and it represents our faith in our own identity in Christ. Faith that He is our Lord, our King, our Savior, and in His kingdom we will find life everlasting.

Orange represents patience - the faith that waits and believes in God's promises. And orange represents the harvest, the time we will reap in abundance all God has promised because of our faith.

Blue is the color of water and represents our baptism. We are baptized in water as we receive the Holy Spirit, God's Holy Spirit, which becomes part of who we are. Blue stands for hope and for the revelation that comes to us by the Holy Spirit as we walk in God's wisdom and in His truth.

There is truth and meaning in all the colors of our faith, each one of us carries these colors with us - they make us the fun colorful people that we are, right? But we do have to be cautious, because as each color represents the light of God, a kind of brightness in our faith, some of them also represent a kind of darkness, a darkness that can pull us away from God.

Red symbolizes the sacrifice made for each of us through the blood of Christ, but the color red is also used to represent anger and the power of temptation to draw us away from God and into a world of sin.

Green represents new growth and new life, but we often see "green" in another way... Green represents greed and jealousy as we try to best our friends and neighbors.

And then there is **Blue** - blue can conjure up beautiful scenes of water that play in our minds, blue can be calming and refreshing; but blue has come to have a different meaning. Blue represents, for many, an emotional state - depression.

These other representations, this darkness that can be symbolized by color, these are not the true colors of our faith. It is the light, the light of God, that brings us the True colors of faith. We have to look beyond, see beyond, the darkness colors can represent and see the light in those colors.

“They” (whoever “they” are) say that our true colors show in times of trial. We are living in a time of trial, in a time of illness that is changing our way of life - whether we are ready or not... What colors are you exhibiting right now? Are you red with impatience and quick to anger? Or are you Yellow with joy? Are you blue with hope, or are you blue with despair? We need to spend some time in prayer, time to really feel the Holy Spirit and be sure that we see the light of God in the colors of our faith. When we can do that, we will truly be able to live our faith. Now more than ever it is important that we are able to do that...

There are people in your life right now that need you to be fully alive with the hope of Christ, to be fully conscious of your connection to God’s rainbow, to living in the light of the true colors of faith. God is calling us to do that. Matthew 5:16 says: “Let your light shine before others” He is calling us to live the true colors of our faith and share His hope for this world.

Quoting lyrics from a song by Cyndi Lauper, I believe these are words we might hear from God if we really live our faith and listen closely for His voice: “And I see your true colors Shining through. I see your true colors and that’s why I love you. So don’t be afraid to let them show - your *true* colors. True colors are beautiful. Like a rainbow.”

And while I am quoting others, let me leave you with this quote from C.S. Lewis, “*We must show our Christian colors if we are to be true to Christ.*”

I pray you not only find your true colors in Christ, but you have the strength, the courage, and the grace to LIVE your true colors in Christ. AMEN