

Sermon: Social Justice Sunday Sept 2nd 2018 Steve Wilson

I want to begin by asking people to stand through the sermon.

It's not long. If you have a medical condition, are very young, or feel too frail you don't have to, but I encourage you to try. Call it a tribute to the working people who historically have fought for Labor Day, or relative to the suffering that regularly takes place in the world, a mild an awareness raising exercise.

And as you stand, now fix your feet in some comfortable way, but however you stand. Now don't move them.

This is a tiny experiment in getting at what it might feel like to be a person at our border. To be a refugee. To find yourself in a circumstance we would describe as political, and an issue of injustice.

To be a person, like so many are who are practically trapped. The people who had to, who have to work with no rights, who were, ...or are ...slaves, or have been kicked out of their lands, or any number of ways people suffer.

Stand, and really I am not asking you, I am telling you. Stand up plant your feet and don't move them until I say so. (Angry)

(Deep breath change of pace and voice)

This is a house of peace and love.

We may not be perfect here in our small spiritual home, but we are pretty good.

Kind words are more common than harsh ones.

More rarely if ever does that get out of control.

People don't generally run ruff-shot over others

There is an open ear to those who might be hurting, celebrating,

We attend to this pretty instinctively.

We have created for ourselves here by rules and by intentions a pretty sweet spot.

We listen to great music, lift-up our concern for others without shame, or the fear that our vulnerability will be exploited.

Our kids get more affirmation and understanding than they do scolding, and out on the patio, there is mostly healthy food, and when Hocutt is not cooking often even something fattening and sweet awaits you.

I think if PUC were a painting, I think we would be a watercolor or maybe a pastel, there are kids in the painting, and an element of comfort.

And that is as it should be.

So, to use my voice and whatever authority you might have placed in me to force you to do anything pains me. literally makes me nervous, sick.

And, my own discomfort for the next few minutes in it is part of the point.
And so is yours.

I don't think that we are doing quite as much as we could to make that the world that could be for others. I don't know that we are fully living up to the call at the end of the service, hand placed in each other's hand, that "it is now that our service truly begins."

I am not here to say we do nothing, in a half an hour those interested in charting PUC's justice future forward will meet and look down a pretty cool list of things we have done.

But, while we dream up what WE choose to do next, I beg that we, (I dead center in that WE) not forget the experiences that we will likely never have.

I want you to imagine the journey one has to take, ...
All that one has to experience, or see, to get to the point when you are dragging your young kid to the boarder of the empire, often without anyone on the other side to greet you.

Or any other, awful experiences that we societally have any control over

Lora Childer's sat at our introductory pledge meeting in Tara's office a month ago and said
And said quite clearly I don't want to work on the pledge campaign this year. I want to work on Social Justice.

I know we all got our own problems.

- some of us have health crisis's in our families- some with little kids,
- some of us got financial issues,
- we all have existential issues,
- we got kids going across the border and North off to school. Some of us might be headed South to what we think of as home.

So, I am not here to tell you what you are capable of doing, or should do. Only you know that.

But, I do know, or believe that we as a church could do more than we do.

I don't care so much what it is that we do, we could help poor people with our laundry, we could fight toxic just to the south of us, stand up for immigrants, build habitat homes, we could tutor disadvantaged kids, engage and challenge ourselves on issues of race and/or inequality. The bad news is, ...the bounty of things we could choose to engage in is a nothing less than a buffet of wrong. The good news is, ...the bounty of things we could choose to engage in is a nothing less than a buffet of wrong. but I want us as an institution to be clearer about what it is we will do. What I and we will hold ourselves too.

Unlike you who for the next few minutes I have asked to pretend are trapped in place

We are a church, and that is either a small thing, or it is a big one. We, I, get to decide how we answer that.

What we are going to do with that title.

Nobody will likely turn into the driveway and take our right away to be that.
Nobody is going to check our green-card for our validity, or
threaten our tax exempt status because we are not doing enough.
We must be our own conscience.

What we do, and probably more importantly, what we don't do is completely in our hands.

I don't have unrealistic expectations for what we might do.

As you stand there, quite literally, without any control over your next move. Please remember
(break)

One of the odd house rules for being a human is that much of what we get in this life we fall into,
we get handed by fate. By our location in culture, and in history

We don't generally earn or choose rich kid or refugee, man or woman,
tall or short, warm or cold, prosperous or deprived country.

Why were we are born to our own fate is a mystery.

You have probably all heard that if we could shrink the world's population to a village of 100, a
game we are all to some degree or another familiar with...

Somewhere between 50 and 60 of us would be Asian

75 of us would be non-white,

the same percentage unable to read.

Half of all our villages wealth would be in the hands of 6 people

3 of those 6 would be Americans.

About thirty five percent would struggle to eat,

About 6 in our representative global village would have a college education.

You know where you stand

And hopefully that makes standing still there not feel so bad

There has been a long religious tradition of taking our fate as evidence of God's favor or disfavor
towards us, or slightly later evidence as to where we were headed in the afterlife.

Or that there is a complete swap of fates as Jesus and slaves discuss.

In Hinduism this instinct to connect where we stand has gone so far as to create a system of
castes that explain that what we inherit is directly related to we have earned or inherited our
place from the past

But as a UU's.

As UU's even beyond our appreciation of the mystery in this question,
our first collective religious instinct is to level the playing field.

So, before you think that the situation is too muddled to be sure about, think about who you are in that village. And think about with yourself unable to make your own move what you would wish those more able to- to act.

So, what do we do. Honest question, some good people stay out because it is unclear how to solve this

I can't tell you what will change that village situation.
I can tell you that it is improving.

With all of the issues alive in all our lives, and a host of other causes to support what could be done is often passed by.
And that is fine for us.

But what if you couldn't go home, eat, settle
What if the fates spun it so that it was literally you who couldn't move your feet until something shifted,
...some imperfect next step was tried.

What if you were an immigrant working in a poultry factory, or the mother trying to emigrate from a rough spot.

Let's think about them today

Sometimes we overcomplicate it. Bill Sinkford is right. We are the only hands on earth. And by that I don't just mean humans are, think about our global village, it is closer to true that your – our hands are the only hands to bring compassion.
More

Wheewww!

Ok you can sit down, Thanks, '
Amen.