

June 30, 2019

## Women's Day Celebration

A special thank you to Fr. Norman Whitmire; the president of St. Hilda's Guild Ms. Glenda Charles; the wardens Enid Kelly and Yvonne Pursoo and our honoree Una Gibson.

Good Morning All Saints Episcopal Church. It is a pleasure to worship with you this morning. I am honored and humbled to be your Keynote speaker for Women's Day. When I think of what Women's Day means to me, I reflect on all those women who paved the way for us to have the ability to vote, work, hold leadership positions, enter into politics, have titles as Priest, Deacon, Minister and most of all the ability to become educated in any academic field. Ladies, we have come a long way, and it is time for us to capitalize on the foundation set before us.

How do we capitalize on anything of interest? We stay focus as Jesus set his face towards Jerusalem. He did not allow anyone or any circumstances to distract him. As in today's Gospel, those who wanted to follow Jesus requested time to put their business in order. Mind you, their request seems very reasonable, needing time to bury your father, and saying good-bye to family and friends. Especially embarking on a journey of unknown duration and if you will return home. Jesus clearly said, " No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." What did he mean by that? Well if you ever had the opportunity to plow, or see how a plow is operated you know to prevent from swerving you have to look straight ahead. It's just like driving a vehicle the moment you take your eyes off the road you will more than likely deviate much less if you are turning your head to look back that is almost guaranteed that you will swerve.

You may be wondering, what does any of this have to do with Women of Purpose? Friends this has a lot to do with women of purpose. Jesus is telling us if we are to follow him and live a life of purpose we must be willing to let go of our past, let go of what is comfortable and have faith as you enter into uncharted territories. Know that the holy spirit lives in you, and so long as we have faith in God, we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us Philippians 4:13. He tells us clearly in the Bible! Matthew 17:20 All we need is faith as big as a mustard seed and whatever we ask for in prayer we shall receive. Faith is living by belief not by sight 2 Corinthians 5:7.

Colossians 3: 23-24 tells us in all the work we are doing, work the best we can and work as we are doing it for the Lord and not for people because our rewards come from the Lord which he promises us.

Once we truly understand that God is the source of all things, and we enter into a committed relationship with God, we will let go our fears and have faith in all we do because he will never leave us or forsake us. So, let us love God as he loves us and spread the good news. How do we do this, you ask? I believe in God, but I am not versed in the scriptures. Friends you don't

have to be versed in the scriptures to spread Gods word, and you don't have to be overly religious or spiritual.

You can spread Gods word by doing the things that you are passionate about and remember to share. When we share, we are spreading Gods word of love. When you are passionate about something it hardly ever seems like work, it comes easy, and you find pleasure and joy using these gifts to help others without ever asking for anything in return.

However, what some of us may not know is it is our gift that often helps us find our purpose. We were all given at least one gift. There are several spiritual gifts listed in the bible: Administration; Apostles; Celibacy; Distinguishing between Spirits; Encouragement; Evangelists; Faith; Giving; Healing; Helping; Interpretation of Tongues; Knowledge; Leadership; Mercy; Miraculous Powers; Pastor-Teachers; Prophecy; Prophets; Speaking in Tongues; Service; Teaching; and Wisdom; (1 Corinthians 7 7; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-29; Ephesians 4:11; and Romans 12:3-8;).

However, sometimes before we can realize our gift, some of us go through a period of turmoil, an unbelievable time of suffering. I call it suffering because those of us who have a calling to live a life of purpose will face pain, unlike any other experience we have had. We will face hardship, loss of family, friends, and that could be through death, relocation, divorce, or just no longer seeing eye to eye with that person. You will feel like your whole life is going haywire. However, do not be afraid; the suffering you endured is necessary for your internal growth. That pain often brings you to your knees, looking up to God, praying for his mercy and grace. It is soon after, through our weakness, we begin to understand God's strength. Some of us begin a process of self-love, self-care all essential functions necessary to live a purposeful life. God wants us to live a life of purpose.

He does not want us comparing ourselves to others, worrying about what the next person has and what we don't have. God also doesn't want us doing our own will, running around taking it upon ourselves to do everything for everyone. He wants us to be still and hear his word. He wants us to do his will, not ours.

Friends I have witnessed this first hand. I lost focus of my purpose, yet I thought I was doing all the right things working 12-hour work days, running here and there, helping this one, doing this and that but never found time to do things for myself or for the things God wanted me to do so one day he made me be still.

I was working out and got injured.

It was through this injury that I was born again. This injury allowed me to surrender, and soon after my body filled with the holy spirit. As mentioned earlier, the experience was unlike any other. The pain was unbearable. I lost friends and loved ones along this journey of finding myself, and the funny thing that I didn't realize finding myself was necessary for me to find my purpose. I live a life now doing things with intentions. I no longer jump to do everything, to

please others or so that they would like me or not be mad at me. I do things that are in alignment with my purpose on this earth. I now turn to God first in prayer as my consult the one who advises me. I practice a daily routine as many of us do; however, my method includes prayer and self-care first above all others. As the Bible says, your body is your temple, so I began watching what I ate and changed my diet. My purpose is to align myself with Gods will the best way possible and use the gift he has given me to spread his word. We all know that change is necessary for growth but can be challenging to leave a place where we have been so comfortable. However, God wants us to venture out, walk on water, or at least take a step. Know when you take that leap, the water may be rough, but that is where your faith will bring you through.

As I close Friends, I want you to be Peter who had the courage and the faith to step out the boat and answer the calling from God. Remember everyone's leap will be different, but with faith, the size of a mustard seed that leap will bring you closer and closer to your purpose. Lastly, remember to enjoy the journey as you find your purpose in this life. Focus on what is in front of you; do not worry about all that you have to do tomorrow. Enjoy today, and when tomorrow comes, take care of tomorrow. God is a God that makes the impossible possible, so do not fret but live a life of purpose.

Roxann Sheppard-Samuel