

Sermon 7th February 2021
“A Message for Black History Month”
Mark 1:29-39

Gracious God, be with us today
in this place, in the
Scriptures and in our
words.

May the words of my mouth and
the meditations of our
hearts praise your Holy
name. Amen.

Friends, we are on an exciting
adventure as we explore
what it means to be human
together.

Humans are complex beings,
which means that human
relationships are
challenging and have the
capacity to be highly
volatile.

The joy for us, however, who are
in Jesus, is that we get to
look upon every challenge
as an opportunity for the
birthing of a new world.

I always keep the book, “The
Magician’s Nephew” by CS
Lewis in the back of my
mind.

As Digory and Polly find their
way into the unborn world
of what is to become

Narnia, they are there when
the Creator, the mighty lion
Aslan, begins to sing
creation’s song.

The Coldplay song, “A Head Full
of Dreams”, reminds me of
the Chronicles of Narnia
with its opening line, “Oh I
think I’ve landed in a world
I hadn’t seen...”

These works of art remind me
that being a follower of
Jesus is being a people
caught up in the
imagination of God—if you
can imagine it, then it can
happen.

Revelation 7:9 says this:
After this I looked, and there was
a great multitude that no
one could count, from
every nation, from all tribes
and peoples and languages,
standing before the throne
and before the Lamb, robed
in white, with palm
branches in their hands.

This is to say that we are dealing
with a God who has a big
imagination.

And I know that this could come

across as, perhaps, a one-size-fits-all colonial scripture, I also think of that text from Amos 7:9, which says:

Are you not like the Ethiopians to me,

O people of Israel? says the Lord.

Did I not bring Israel up from the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor and the Arameans from Kir?

The idea here being presented to us is that other nations and peoples have experienced liberation in the same way that our ancestors in faith did, and we can attribute it to the same source of our own liberation.

This isn't to cast our God on anyone else, but rather to name to our own community; that whatever this source of liberation be that we speak of, we do not own it, nor do we have any control over it.

As the scripture says,
The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from

or where it goes. (John 3:8)

The Spirit, which is of Jesus, isn't held captive to our religious beliefs, but invites us to, as one song says, "colour outside the lines".

When we think of today's story one line sticks out to me and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

Is the Spirit that speaks to you giving you the courage to stand up to the demon of racism and inviting you and your community to speak truth to power in such a way as it causes others to have no response?

I'm not talking about shutting down deep conversations (for there are many who really have no idea), but rather allowing others to see the world inside of suffering, leading them to respond with empathy, saying to themselves, "I didn't know...". End of conversation.

Picture of my spiky hair

Long hair

Raised money to send kids to camp.

Max's Mohawk for Missions
\$1,000

After church went to Swiss
Chalet.

Held the door for a woman
coming out.

“Punk...”

I was dumbfounded!

This sweet little old lady pre-
judged me.

It was the first time I can
remember being
discriminated against due to
the way I looked.

I now realize how privileged a
life I have lived as a white
male in our society.

Anti-racism work is really life-
affirming work.

Demons seek to destroy life, but
we, the people of God, seek
to bear witness to the life
we have in Jesus, the
Christ.

We continue to peer into what
should be our Narnia—the
world we hadn't seen—the
world as God sees it, where
people of every nation,
tribe, language, and more
are able to bear witness to
their own liberation and
autonomy, for the demon of
racism has been stood up

to, opposed, and
vanquished.

As the prophet declared,
If you do not stand firm in faith,
You shall not stand at all (Isaiah
7:9b)

Thanks be to God. Amen.

By: The Rev. Adam Kilner,
minister at Dunlop United
Church in Sarnia, Ontario
Edited By: The Rev. Max Ward