

Enduring Principles
#9 CONTINUING REVELATION

CENTRING MOMENT

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5UGWjGGxj2U&list=PLEnqfPnCRxLjADcDbd9EYkGZ_OYujVVP&index=152

(Listen in the Silence – Beyond the Walls Choir, Community of Christ)

HYMN CCS 77 – Gather Your Children

OPENING PRAYER

COMMENT

In Community of Christ, we have core values called Enduring Principles. They include statements like the Sacredness of Creation, Worth of all Persons, Responsible Choices etc

At Discovery Camp last year, the Young Adults recorded themselves discussing these values for a series of social media posts. They're good! But one of the principles that took a little more work for them was "Continuing Revelation". And that's the one we're going to focus on today!

The young adult who got this core value to think about was called Ruby. Here's her thoughts on what it might mean.

VIDEO Young Adult Social Media Video on Continuing Revelation

[Continuing Revelation](#)

COMMENT

Ruby's idea is that continuing revelation means God isn't just a voice from the past that's silent today. As she put it - "God isn't frozen in time". God's Spirit is still speaking to us, still wanting to help us grow.

So if that's what we believe what is God saying to us today?

One way we hear God talking to us is through the Bible and the stories of people over thousands of years. The people may be long gone but the lessons they learned about God can still speak to us today.

So we're going to start thinking about this enduring principle with one of those scriptures.

SCRIPTURE Matthew 5:13-20 (NRSVUE)

¹³ "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything but is thrown out and trampled underfoot.

¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵ People do not light a lamp and put it under the bushel basket; rather, they put it on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

COMMENT

Salt, bushel baskets, cities on hills. At first hearing this scripture may not sound like it speaks to us in the 21st century. But I found this explanation from someone called Micah Krey, a pastor in the Lutheran church, about how God is still trying to tell us something through this very old scripture. It's helpful to know that an important focus for the book of Matthew is Jesus is sending his disciples out to do ministry.

STORY 1 Salt and Light

by Matthew Krey – adapted

Matthew 5:13-20 (5th Sunday after Epiphany) – February 5, 2023 – Micah Krey

I hate the idea of entering into anything without feeling thoroughly informed and prepared. But a few years ago, my spouse and I were told that our landlords were going to sell the home we were living in. With time not on our side, we jumped into the house buying scene headfirst: mortgages, loans, contracts, inspections, costs.

We made mistakes and had to double-back on a couple of things. We relied on the deep wisdom of our estate agent. We relied on the wisdom of the inspector who told us the house we found had good bones. We relied on the wisdom of my father-in-law who walked

many different houses with us and saw the cracks behind covered up problems. We learned and re-learned as we went.

I never felt ready to buy a house. I never felt like I had all the information. But even though I was not 100% sure of everything, we ended up buying a wonderful house that we have now called home in for three years. There are some times when you just have to jump into the process and learn as you go.

Our example from scripture is this odd group of people, random folks from all walks of life that had come together in this moment with Jesus. And it is to them that he is immediately telling that they ARE salt. They ARE light. And to continue being disciples, they need to follow the law and the prophets now, doing to others as you would have them do to you.

HYMN CCS 387 - Bring Forth the Kingdom

COMMENT

So, in the Bible we can still hear God's voice, calling us to share the good we know about God and the love we've felt with others.

But in Community of Christ we believe that God continues to speak directly to us today, individually and collectively as a church.

Doctrine & Covenants is a record of God's dealings with us as a collective body or church. The latest passage to be added was in 2016. It has a familiar message:

SCRIPTURE D&C: 165

6 a. Beloved Community of Christ do not just speak and sing of Zion. Live, love and share as Zion: those who strive to be visibly one in Christ, among whom there are no poor or oppressed.

C. And, always remember, the way of suffering love that leads to the cross also leads to resurrection and everlasting life in Christ's eternal community of oneness and peace. Trust in this promise.

STORY 2 Pass the Flame

by Michael Botts of Hannover, Germany

The composer Gustav Mahler said, "Tradition is not preserving the ashes, but passing on the flame." This quote is true for disciples of Jesus Christ. We should be in the forefront of passing on the flame of God's love. We should continually be trying to bring the good news and help people do and be their best.

I love the story of Jesus' encounter with the woman caught in the act of adultery. Her fate was clear. Caught in the act, there was no question of what to expect. The Mosaic Law would have had her stoned. But Jesus was a transformer, a bringer of good news. His message to the woman was about God's grace for her. He said, "I do not condemn you. Go and sin no more." That is what our name, Community of Christ, is about. We bring the good news of Christ to others.

There are many people who have passed the flame from their lives to mine, and who have helped transform me. I hope and pray I will be able to bring the good news to the lives of others, too.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Who are some of the people over the years that have passed on God's love to you?
- What do you think it means when it says "Do not just speak and sing of Zion. Live, love and share as Zion"? How easy is it to do?
- How much confidence does it give if we believe God is there leading the way?

COMMENT

God might be speaking today but sometimes the challenge is knowing how to hear.

We're going to practise listening together in a moment in our prayer for peace. First, here's a reading about how tricky it can be to find time to listen.

Author Unknown

As you got up today, I watched and hoped you would talk to me. Just a few words, such as thanking me for something good in your life yesterday or last week. But I noticed you were busy selecting the right clothes for work. When you ran around the house collecting papers, I wanted to tell you that I could help you accomplish more than you ever dreamed possible if you would just spend some of each day with me, but you never slowed down.

I noticed at lunch you looked around; maybe you just felt embarrassed to talk to me. You glanced three tables over and noticed some of your friends talking to me before they ate, but you wouldn't.

There was still more time left. You went home and had many things to do. After they were done, you turned on the TV. I waited as you watched and ate your meal but again you wouldn't talk to me.

At bedtime you were totally tired. After you said good night to your family you plopped into bed and fell asleep. I had so much wanted to be part of your day. We could have had so much fun and accomplished so much together. I love you so much.

Well, maybe tomorrow! I'll be waiting.

Your Friend,

God

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Light the candle

For our prayer for peace today we're going to use a very short prayer of St Francis of Assisi that's been interpreted by Daniel Ladinsky in *Love Poems from God*, Penguin Books, p.54

1. First reading – just let the words wash over you.
2. Second reading – what word or phrase catches your attention?

3. Final reading – how does this poem inform your prayer today?

POEM

The result of prayer is life.

Prayer irrigates the earth

and the heart.

PRAYER

God, Free us to focus our thoughts on you, listening for that inner peace of the Holy Spirit to guide our hearts, the hearts of our community, and of our world.

In the name of, Jesus, our Lord and Saviour.

Amen.

OFFERING

One way we help to pass on God's love is through our offerings. They help keep the church doors open, they help fund ministry across the UK and the wider church, they support people when they need it most. They help others believe that God is still speaking today.

Our offerings will now be taken.

OFFERING PRAYER

STORY 4

by Gillian Vincent, Manchester, England

I believe God is still speaking to us today. I also know how easy it is to miss that voice.

This week I was busy working, waiting for a phone call, running a bit behind and needing to make a list of what to talk about on the call. Then the doorbell rang. I answered and there was a man carrying a card with a rucksack on his back. He said I didn't need to be afraid of him, he was just out of prison, and he was selling cloths and kitchen gear as a way to get back on his feet.

I knew about these guys because they'd been to the door before and my husband has bought all sorts of things from them. But I was busy. I had minutes before the call. I couldn't stay. So, I apologised and said I didn't have time. The man was polite, said not to worry and left. I closed the door and ran upstairs to my call but before I got to the top of the stairs I realised the irony of what I had just done.

I was about to talk about mission and the church in the British Isles. And yet I'd just closed the door on someone who had asked for help. I looked out of the window to see if he was still around, I thought I could run after him, but he'd gone.

I do believe that God wants to help us 'pass on the flame', but it requires us to do something very simple but very challenging in our busy world. We need to be awake enough to hear God's voice and those quiet, simple nudges.

COMMENT

Let's use our final hymn as a prayer of commitment to listen out for God in the week ahead. After we've sung it, we'll have a sending forth statement as our closing prayer.

HYMN

CCS 240 - Light Dawns on a Weary World

SENDING FORTH

Christ has no body now on earth but yours,
no hands but yours,
no feet but yours,
Yours are the eyes through which is to look out
Christ's compassion to the world
Yours are the feet with which he is to go about
doing good;
Yours are the hands with which he is to bless...now.

Amen

—Teresa of Ávila