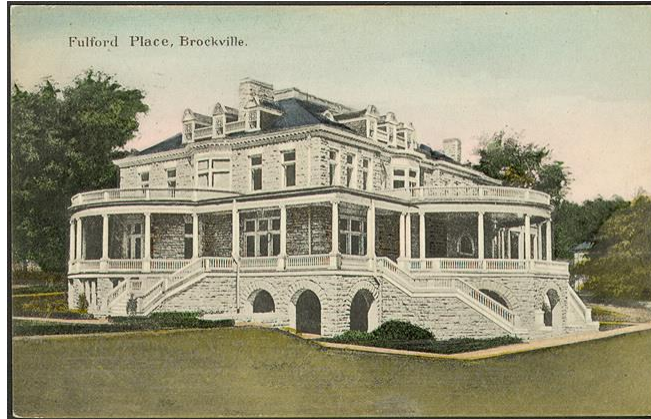


“More Life”

May 10th, 2020 Covid 8
John 14: 1-7

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Wall Street United Virtual Church



Psalm 84: *How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts! My soul longs, indeed it faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God.*

John 14:1-7 *“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.”*

Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?” Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

This is a favourite scripture reading at funerals, so we tend to associate it with death. But this is not a text about death, it’s a text about life — more life.

Last week we talked about the 23rd Psalm and I mentioned that when Psalm 23 says: *“I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever”*, it is not just about a future heaven, but even more about *belonging to a family now*. Jesus belonged to the house of David, the family of David. When it says we

are part of the house of the Lord, it means that we belong to the family of God.

“In my father’s house are many rooms.” This is not about architecture. If you’ve ever visited the Fulford Mansion in Brockville that George Fulford, (who invested in Pink Pills for Pale People), had built at the turn of the last century, you know how big it is.

That house has a lot of rooms! Rooms for the family, many rooms for the guests, lots of small little rooms for the staff up on the third floor — I don’t know how many rooms, but you could fit a lot of people in that house! Jesus says there are many rooms in his father’s house. But this isn’t about stuffing one more person into heaven and figuring out which room you get. (As in, “I want the blue room that faces the river!”) It isn’t about a physical space, but about a relationship. In my father’s love there’s lots of room. God’s love is expansive — there is always room for more.

A couple of years ago I adopted the mantra “No more life!” An odd sounding mantra I admit; but hear me out. We had a tank full of fish, a Cockatiel bird named Basil, our Standard Poodle, Rupert, and we occasionally did some dog-sitting for my brother’s sweet puppy Millie; plus of course I have 4 kids — probably only really 3 at the time as Anna was off to University; which is why we had her bird.

Like most mothers I ended up being the one to care for all these life forms, and I decided that we had more than enough. I’d had it. So, when a fish died, it was not replaced. The last couple of suckers who refused to die a natural death I managed to talk my youngest into giving them away. And when we had a Refugee family living with us for a month last September and the Basil Bird fell in love with them, I took it as a sign from heaven. When they moved to their new home, I gave them the bird. Basil is a very happy bird — and the feeling is mutual.

I can tolerate a lot of life and a lot of chaos, but I have my limits. Everyone probably has different limits, but I had reached mine. I still have the dog and the kids and so far, I plan on keeping them.

It’s Mother’s Day. When we think of a mother’s love in an ideal way (I know that reality is not ideal and that many people had or have complicated relationships with their mother or just didn’t get that ideal love) but when we think of what we imagine a mother’s love should look like, I think we get a pretty good picture of God’s love — an unconditional love where there’s always room for more.



I have 4 kids, and whenever I had another child the next one older always had their nose out of joint for a while. Though the kids are too little to really articulate what they are feeling, what those older kids were saying with temper tantrums and bonking their baby brother or sister on the head with a toy truck was: “*There ain’t room for the both of us in this town and I was here first!*” But it’s not the room in their mother’s house that they are worried about — it’s the room in their mother’s heart.

We humans are born, it seems, with a scarcity mentality. We are born with a feeling that there is not enough: not enough food, not enough attention — as we get older, not enough energy or money or health or sunny days or toilet paper — and along with that, we have a feeling that there is not enough love either. We feel like there are say, 2 cups of love for the day and if you run out or it gets dropped and smashes on the floor in an argument then that’s it — you’re out of love. Sucks to be you.

That is the way it is with people sometimes. You can have times when you just don’t have more to give, when you are weary and depleted. You don’t have to be a mother of 4 kids and multiple pets to understand that. Maybe that’s how you are feeling right now. It’s a very human feeling, but it’s not a good feeling.

But you need to understand that that’s not the way it is with God. God never runs out of life. God never runs out of love. There is room. There is so much room.

True love expands and has no limits. That’s why when baby number 2 or number 4 or more comes around, what a good mother knows and what the older kids will eventually learn is that love grows with each new addition.

When we abide — when we connect in with God, we not only fill up on love — we can fill up so much that there’s lots to give away. Again jumping back to last week and the 23rd Psalm, it says “my cup overflows”. The way of the kingdom is abundance — not scarcity!

God doesn’t just give us enough; he gives us so much it’s wasteful. I think of the love of God shown most incredibly on the cross — I don’t think there was anything in him but love on that day — he was so empty of anything from the world and so full of God’s love.

When you have to care for someone’s children or a partner or perhaps deal with someone at work who is draining, don’t give from your limited supply of care and love that will run out and leave you feeling drained and resentful. Instead give out of the love of God.

How do you do that? Say a prayer something like “God, I don’t have enough to give this person but you do—fill me with your love so that I can share you”. Then you become a pipeline for God’s love. Sometimes it’s not that we don’t have more to give ... it’s that our own life bucket is leaky, and when someone compliments us or tells us we are loved, because of past hurts or trauma it doesn’t fill us, but just drains away. Sometimes we have to do some work to clear space, to take out the garbage and confess any sin, because it can get in the way. Sometimes it is important to get some help to heal those holes. But when you can clear away what doesn’t belong, you will find that when you ask and seek you will find so much love.

As many of you know, I’ve been living at my parents’ house for the past 5 weeks. Being there reminded me of the time my parents put the well in. I think it was in the early 80’s while this property still had a cottage on it. For days there was a big machine that was hammering down to find water. We started wondering if this was the right place to have picked to start the dig when all of a sudden it was like we’d struck oil — it was a total geyser!

They’d hit an underground spring. For hours the water sprayed out of the ground and flowed down to the river. They connected it to the house, but also attached another pipe that just runs off into the river. And here we are almost 40 years later and there is still overflow water coming through that overflow pipe, pure beautiful well water! More than enough! Jesus said “I have come so that you might have life, and have it in abundance!”

This Mother’s Day I pray that you can be replenished, restored, renewed and filled up with the transforming love of God. I pray that you will know that there is always more, and that there is always room for you in the love and in the house of God.

Thanks be to God.