

Scripture Reflections/Sermon Starters

for Sunday March 13, 2022

By Jeffrey Dale

Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18

God's covenant of Abram comes with devotion and work. As we read through Genesis, we consider the ways in which we have been called in our covenant with God. For some it maybe through the ministry of preaching, pastoral care, education, justice and/or service, while for others it maybe through ensuring church buildings are maintained. We all are called by God in our ministry. In this week of PIE Day, there is a myriad of ways to consider God's covenant with queer Christians, and the call that God gives to heterosexual Christians to respond to the queer covenant. Consider, as you are reading Genesis, how you are called to be public, intentional, and explicit. Consider how that PIE call feeds your desire to be present in relationships with queer folks throughout this church.

Psalm 27

The psalmist invites us into considering the ways in which God comforts and protects us. For many of us, we see church as a place in which we may seek sanctuary in a world in which being who you are is often not a lived reality. We still experience spaces in which transgender people consistently experience misgendering and erasure, and gay and lesbian people experience homophobia through words and actions, while bisexuals and asexual people experience a barrage of doubt and questions. If we consider what the psalmist writes in verse four as a focal point of this particular psalm, we can acknowledge, that the desire is for us to not only be loved and understood by God, but to also be integral in the living space of God's house. Consider, if you will, the ways in which your church has been a house of dissent, consider the ways in which your worshiping community of faith continues to be inaccessible to queer people, and then consider the ways in which you can truly work together, as a community of believers, to build God's house in your community.

Philippians 3: 17 – 21

We live in our bodies, and as Philippians informs us, there will come an experience in which what we know physically today will be manifested in a way that is now a holy mystery to us. Reading Philippians, consider the lives and experiences of Dominique Jackson, January Marie Lapuz, and Raymond Taavel, who experienced physical violence and death because of who they were and whom they loved. Our bodies are vessels on this earth, and we embody both our

relationships with one another and our experiences of God. As such, we belong to God fully and wholly. As you read through the Philippians scripture, challenge yourself to consider how the queer experience is an embodiment of God's presence here on earth.

Luke 13: 31 – 35

It has been a regular occurrence for queer people to experience brutality at the hands of the systems of power, whether they be police, religious, or political, and yet, queer people still continue to exist. Consider for a moment the movements that existed in the United Church of Canada's history that desired erasure of queer voices in our church, such as the Community of Concern, and yet queer people continued to show up in spaces of spirituality and religion. We have a history in the United Church of Canada where queer existence was desired to be erased, regardless of the work and care that queer people, and often we do not talk about the experiences of the trauma and damage that occurred because of the organizing against queer people in the United Church of Canada? Why? We must wonder. This week, as you are reading this passage from Luke that is about Christ's continued presence in direct response to adversity, research and ponder, question, the ways in which members, ministry personnel and lay, of the United Church of Canada have worked to erase queer people from this church's life – and how other members, ministry personnel and lay, fought to ensure that did not happen.