

May 1 2016 Speaker Micki Weisbarth

Scripture Lessons

Psalm 67

Genesis 1:31-2:1-9

John 14:23-29

Sermon *Music and the Soul*

Growing up I don't remember music being a big part of my life. Neither one of my parents was musically inclined. Quite often we didn't have a television or a radio that I can remember. I am thinking that after all six of us kids were born and grown some, there was enough "noise" in the house that music wasn't missed. Then sometime in my high school years I can remember the day that Dad brought home one of those big huge consoles that had a television set, record player, and radio combined. It was a wonderful day!

The first record I ever owned was Bobby Goldsboro's "Honey." Yes, it is nice if you laugh and not groan. My family did not appreciate Bobby Goldsboro so I have heard groans before. I loved Bobby Goldsboro and still do. If I had a hard day at school, I would come home, listen to that record, have a really good cry, and everything would be better. Music moved me. Since that time music has been a part of my life. I don't play an instrument. I was accepted to be in choir so I guess I was OK. The kind of music I am listening to depends on my mood. It can be anything from rock and roll to classical.

Music has a way of reaching us beyond just hearing the instrument being played or the words that are being sung. Think about how you feel if you hear "The Star Spangled banner" or "God Bless America". If you are like me, you are moved. If the music has a good beat, pretty soon your foot is tapping out the beat or you are up on your feet and dancing.

So I imagine you are wondering where this is going about now. Ever since soup suppers I have been thinking about the messages of the pastors. They picked hymns that had significance to them and inspired or moved them. I thought about what hymns I would pick and immediately come up with four hymns.

The first one I thought of was "How Great Thou Art." It tells the story of God's greatness. The first line says, "When I in awesome wonder, consider all the worlds thy hands have made. I see the stars; I hear the rolling thunder, thy power throughout the universe displayed." This hymn started as a poem written in 1885 by Carl Boberg, who was a Swedish minister and later was put to music. God is great, he created the universe and everything in it as was told in the scripture that Nancy read to us. He is all seeing and all powerful. Yet he is there for all of us on a more personal

level too and the next hymns I chose are all related to more personal relationship with God.

The next one that came to mind was “Peace Like a River” or “It is Well With My Soul.” It was written by Horatio G. Spafford after many tragedies that happened in his life. Russ talked about this not long ago. Spafford lost his family, and lost everything. His faith was strong enough to believe that God was still there with him and looking after him. It was well with his soul”. We all should have faith that is as strong so that no matter what we are going through in life, God has not forgotten us. Sometimes our view is cloudy or filled with tears but he is there.

Then comes “In the Garden.” I am especially moved by the chorus, which reads, “And he walks with me and he talks with me, and he tells me I am his own. And the joy we share as we tarry there, None other has ever known.” It was written by C. Austin Miles who was a pharmacist whose hobby was photography. He was in his darkroom one day reading his Bible while waiting for a photo to develop, when a vision came to him. The words of the song describe the vision that he had. Can you imagine being in a garden and having Jesus right there with you? I am sure that even if you don’t see him, he is there. You may need to still your thoughts and open your mind to “see him” but He is there.

The fourth hymn and most likely my favorite is “Amazing Grace.” It was written by John Newton after going through struggles in his life and nearly drowning while at sea in a severe storm. The words of the song tell how he was so far from God due to the circumstances of his life but yet God was there for him. God had not given up on John and he doesn’t give up on us. No matter where we are in life, no matter how far we have strayed away, he is there for us, ready to forgive our transgressions and to take back into the fold.

We have or we will sing three of these hymns today during the service. As you sing, let the words and the notes move into your soul. Remember that God is great, he is all seeing but he is there for all of us on a more personal level, too. We just need to open our hearts and minds to the music.