

A Word on Wednesday from Pastor Tonia

"Life on Lake Woe-be-gone" 11/16/22

Casting all your anxieties on God because He cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7)

Seems like everybody wants to live on the lakeshore. Lake side living, sandy beaches, calm waters, where all the women are strong, all the men are good-looking, and all the children are above average.

Here everybody lives a Christmas-letter life. Listening to them talk is like reading Facebook posts of serene scenery, perfect pies, glorious gardens, and terrific trips.

Where are the people in pain? Has anyone suffered a loss? Are all warm and well fed? It's hard to imagine anything going wrong here at Lake Woe-be-gone. Yet there are people with food insecurity, people who long for jobs which pay a living wage, and people who lack comfortable shelter and basic health care. There are people who do live at Lake Woe-be-gone and people who live at the Lake of Woe.

To both of them God says, "Do not be afraid." To both of them God says, "Be healed." For us God came, lived, loved, laughed, cried, was abandoned, and crucified. To us Christ arose and said, "Peace be with you."

We may not all live on the lake. We're glad for those who do. Maybe a little jealous. We may fantasize about sitting on the shore with a warm breeze and a cool drink. We may close our eyes and hear the waves come ashore. We may dream of setting sail at sunset. But we wake up and realize we don't live on Lake Woe-be-gone. We're not all strong or good looking. We're not all above average. Some are. Some are popular, some are bullied and put down. Some have smooth sailing and some face rough seas.

We all face our own worst, our own pain. We have empathy for those who hurt. We have compassion for those who are down, because in God we love our neighbor. Some are in pain, but hide it as they stiffen their upper lips. Some are in agony, yet they find a way to continue. Some wonder, but still know God is with them.

Martin Luther King Jr encouraged us with these words, "If you can't fly, then run. If you can't run, then walk. If you can't walk, then crawl. But whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward."

We all hear God's words, see God act in different ways. We each need a different message. We are in different places. Some want to hear words of joy because they're thankful. Some need words of encouragement because they feel unable to take one more step. Some are in the stifled darkness of a struggle; some are dancing in the joy of accomplishments. Some have hope for tomorrow. Some are in fear for today.

Blessed are those who are poor in spirit, who cry, are hungry, go without, for God is with them. They will also laugh, feast, and live in the abundance of God's grace.

To both sides of the spectrum and to all those in between, God came to be with us. To laugh with us. To cry with us. To help us carry our heavy loads. To dance with us. To walk the lonesome valley. To climb the crooked trail. To slide down the grassy hill. To sit with us on the lake shore. God walks with those who mourn and with those who rejoice. Some live at Lake Woe-be-gone, some live on the Lake of Woe. Wherever we live at this moment, know God came down to the lake shore to be with us in our here and now.

Please pray with me.

Ever Present God, we thank You for being with us – even when we feel alone. For coming to our woe-begotten times, those times when we long to be on Lake Woe – be – gone and giving us comfort and joy. Especially be near those who are alone though the holidays, come into their days and bring them joy. Again, for the abundance of Your grace, we give You thanks.

Amen.