

How to Be a Kid Again

Isaiah 62:1-5
1 Corinthians 12:1-11

January 20, 2019
Faith Community

Last Sunday was one for the record books. For the first time in more than forty years, you called a new pastor. Today we arrive at another pivotal point as we ordain and install Deacons and Elders.

Friends, look how far you've come. There's new life all over the place. There's positive chatter, hope filled attitudes, and we're even starting to dream. Not too shabby.

Listen to this, from today's Old Testament reading:

You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD.... (Isaiah 62:3) That was originally written about a restored Israel. Do you think there's something there for us as well?

As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you. (v. 5) Imagine that: God rejoicing over the likes of us. How might we help bring that about?

"When I was a sophomore in high school, my English teacher put a small chalk dot on the blackboard.

"She asked the class what it was. A few seconds passed and then someone said, 'A chalk dot on the blackboard.' The rest of the class seemed relieved that the obvious had been stated, and no one else had anything more to say. 'I'm surprised at you,' the teacher told the class. 'I did the same thing yesterday with a group of kindergartners, and they thought of fifty different things it could be: an owl's eye, a cigar butt, the top of a telephone pole, a star, a pebble, a squashed bug, a rotten egg, and so on. They had their imaginations in high gear.'

"In the ten year period between kindergarten and high school, not only had we learned how to find the right answer, we had also lost the ability to look for more than one. We had learned facts and figures but we had lost much of our imaginative power."¹

¹ Roger von Oech, *A Whack on the Side of the Head: How You Can be More Creative* (New York, Warner Books, 1983), pp. 28-29.

How might that story speak to us? Might it apply to organizations as well as people? Might God rejoice over the restoration of our imaginative power? What if we could learn to dream again? When I arrived here almost a couple years ago, it seemed to me that that would be a good thing to help bring about.

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. (1 Co. 12:4-6)

Imagine this church becoming an equipping station where gifts are discovered and people empowered to put those gifts to work, all in the name of the God who makes all things new, and that includes churches like this one and people like you. Imagine the world being different because God is praised and people are transformed at 44400 West Ten Mile Road in Novi, Michigan. How might we be part of something as noble as that? How might we become ***a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD?***

In planning a wedding ceremony, I like to give my couples a list of choices: Scripture passages, vows, prayers, so that they have a part to play in putting it together and it becomes all the more personal. I love it when their choice for the call to worship includes this:

“Love is dynamic and will fly away from a marriage which has become static and unbending. When love lives, as it does here today, it reflects the deepest and most tender secrets of the universe. And I charge you with the responsibility to keep love alive; to grow, to change, to maintain the capacity for wonder, for spontaneity, for humor; to remain pliable, warm and sensitive. I charge you to give fully, to show your real feelings, to save time for each other, no matter what demands are made upon your day.”

Keep love alive
Maintain your capacity for wonder
Spontaneity
Pliable, warm, sensitive

....so shall your God rejoice over you.

Let me tell you what my four year old granddaughter taught me about this.

She was visiting Nana and Pop-Pop for a couple days, and it just so happened that one of our projects was taking down the Christmas tree. The ornaments had all been removed and packed with care, and then it came time for the lights. Starting at the top, Fran climbed up on a stepladder and handed me one end of a strand, and so it began, with my end growing ever longer, being careful to not let it bump into anything. Pretty soon I had most of the first string of lights, holding both hands high and letting the first part hang down all the way to the floor.

It was at this moment that Millie looked up and excitedly proclaimed, “A cave!” Then, standing next to me with that string of lights framing the entrance to her cave she proceeded to make a magical jump across the threshold right into the mysteries the cave might have to offer. So that was the first string of lights.

We didn’t need a ladder for the second one, so Fran handed me one end and we moved right along, with that string growing ever longer but closer to the floor. After a while Millie looked at that and said, “A bridge,” and proceeded to walk right alongside.

A household chore became an adventure of discovery. There, friends, is my hope for you.

Maintain your capacity for wonder. Recognize the hand of God in the midst of the infinite number of gifts as they’re discovered and put to work. And ***you shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD*** and ***so shall your God rejoice over you***. Now let us proceed.