

The Feather

Christ the Redeemer Church
July 11, 2010
Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

Luke 10:25-37
Rev Gary L. Smith
www.christredeemerchurch.com

Ken Medema (www.kenmedema.com) and I led Story Telling workshops together these past two years for outstanding United Methodist high school students up at Southwestern University in Georgetown.

Lots of stories from the youth during these two years. We are teaching them to learn how to tell their own Story of walking with God in life. We teach them and they teach us.

I told them last year of the time I was at a Ranger's baseball game, having traveled from The Netherlands just to get an American baseball game fix in 2003. I had tried for 50 years, unsuccessfully, to catch a baseball at a major league game. We had tickets in right field known as Home Run Alley, under the right field pavilion cover. I was disappointed to not be closer to the infield.

I had on my favorite Boston Red Sox hat, given to me by my Amity, at the Oakland A's/Texas Ranger's baseball game and someone from behind me threw yellow mustard, white mayonnaise, and green hot dog relish that splattered on my very nice hat and shirt. I looked around and no one claimed credit for the throw.

A few pitches later I heard a noise above me and looked up and a pigeon was peacefully cooing and looking down at me. He or she was very happy to have been the one who crapped on my head and hat. It was not mustard, mayonnaise, and relish. It was pigeon crap.

I moved five rows down while all of my family and friends laughed hard at me. I told them I was not sitting under that pigeon and being a target for the entire game. They laughed at me more.

Two pitches later, Jermaine Dye of the A's hit a rocket line-drive home run that landed ten seats from me and ricocheted off the seat and rolled down and stopped at my feet. I held the treasured ball up high and yelled for the world to hear, "If that pigeon had not crapped on my head I would not have moved and gotten this ball!"

Point to the high schoolers was that we all have crap fall into our lives at times and sometimes blessings come to us after the crap causes us to move to a new row in life.

One girl told me last year, "Yes, but you had to move **forward**, not backwards, to get the ball...to get the Blessing." Brilliant observation from a high school girl.

That girl knew the crap story. You see, her mother is a drug addict who is loved by her

daughter. That girl's mother has served prison time for her addiction. That girl's mother got out of prison and had a stroke at a very young age and is now in a nursing home. This girl knows the bird crap part of life. This loving daughter whose life has been crapped on and who has lost her innocence in life at such a young age...she is the one who told ME and the others "You have to move forward after you are crapped on in life. You can not move backwards." She is in high school.

I showed this year's students this feather I found on campus while walking to breakfast.

I carry this feather around these two weeks in this little lanyard pouch around my neck, trying to not mess the feather up. Something beautiful and symmetrical about this feather. It gets messed up hourly just by being carried around. Just by existing.

When I pull it out and gently rub it and shape it back into being it immediately responds and goes back to its original shape. It was created with a Memory. It goes back to being beautiful and symmetrical, as it was created.

You see, God gave it a Memory so that it can always go back to its original shape...the shape it had at its birth. Camps and retreats and worship services like today's are days when God gently shapes us back to the way we were created. We have a Memory given to us by God of what we are designed to be.

One adult leader told me this last week, "That feather story reminds me of how I work so hard to NOT mess up my life. I need to relax more and just live and not worry so much about messing up in life."

I give each youth a feather this year. We are all carrying feathers in our pouches now. Go find a feather this week and let it remind you of how God created you beautifully at birth and that God gave you a Memory within that will bring you back to your beautiful shape periodically at times like this morning. Ken, sing away. Then we will sing the song "Something Beautiful, Something Good". Amen.