March 17, 2019 (St Patrick’;s Day)

Rev. Kenneth Hetzel

Richland Presbyterian Church

Sermon:  Who Are The Children Amongst Us

Texts: Proverbs 22:6, Train up a child…

Matthew 10:26-27, What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight…

Ephesians 6:1-4, Fathers, bring (your children) up in the training and instruction of the Lord…

God made a Covenant with Adam and Eve, promising that Evil would one day be overcome.  One day a descendant of Eve and Adam would crush the head of Evil even as Evil would strike the heel of the Savior.  We understand this to be the first promise and prophecy of the Messiah.  Once the Covenant was pronounced it was the responsibility of Adam and Eve to keep the promise alive as the ultimate Hope.  Adam and Eve had to tell their children, Abel, Cain and ultimately Seth, so that they and all future generations might believe and have hope.

Genesis then records all those “begats” through which we should understand the Covenant is being passed generation to generation.  Noah, at the climax of the generational listing is the beneficiary of all that teaching and telling.  He believes.  He teaches his wife.  He teaches his sons and daughters in law.  They are saved and the Covenant of Hope is carried to new generations in the descendants of  Ham, Shem and Japheth.

The Covenant is renewed and restated to Abraham who teaches it to Isaac, who teaches it to Jacob, who teaches it to  his eleven sons and two grandsons.

Along the way the Covenants were to be told to all the world as the Hope of the Covenants, the Salvation and Redemption of God was for all the world.  That part didn’t go so well, yet the Covenant took firm root within the start of God’s Chosen People, the Chosen People God called as God’s Own, called as Children of God, the Daughters and Sons of God.

If you will, God trained up God’s child/children.  As they grew and matured, after sin, with repentance, they constantly returned to God’s Promises.  God would send God’s Messiah who would save all who believed on Him from their sins (the truth of John 3:16).  God was guiding all parents by example, by training of God’s children in the way they should go.  Paul, in our reading this morning, was pointing out the obvious.  As God trained God’s own children in God’s ways, in God’s Truths, so too the followers of Christ Jesus are to train up their own children in God’s Ways and Truths.  Children don’t learn by osmosis they learn by instruction.  Children don’t learn of Christ Jesus by accident, they learn by instruction and example.  Hence our efforts at Sunday School and Youth Groups and even morning worship, in training our children.

Taking a slight turn of direction, our many Missionaries believe their ministries are first understand all the world’s population to be potentially God’s Children.  After all, all are created by God and loved by God.  So missionaries with passion seek to go into all the world to preach the Good News, to call God’s children to God’s ways.  (I submit that this was the life-passion of St Patrick, to preach the Good News to God’s lost children in Ireland that the Irish too might hear and believe and be saved.  No one was doing it, so Patrick would.)

When Jesus was teaching his Disciples and telling them to speak in daylight what they were hearing in the dark, Jesus was saying there is nothing secret, nothing to be withheld in any of what the Disciples heard from Jesus in private, away from the crowds, in a house, on a hillside, or in a boat.  Nothing was secret; everything was to be proclaimed from the rooftops so all might hear and believe.

What Jesus was saying to His Disciples, Jesus was and is saying to each one of us.  One way or another, in one manner or another, we are to proclaim, to teach the Good News, to carry the Covenants of Hope to all in our generation and to those in the coming generations.  We are to recognize the need for Hope in all of God’s Children and we are to keep that Hope alive.  We are to proclaim that Hope, offer that Hope that all of God’s Children might hear and believe the Good News.

What I am saying and meaning however, we also need to expand our thinking about who are God’s Children.  Our efforts are indeed to be directed to our Children, those born into our family and those born in our Church family.  But there are more children than that.  There are grown children, adults if you will, sitting right next to us, standing next to us on the streets or in the stores.  There are grown children where we work or where we worked before we retired.  There may be grown children within our individual families.  All these children, including ourselves, need to hear, or hear again, or be reminded, or be reassured of God’s Hope freely given, of God’s love freely extended.  Someone needs to teach it because someone’s need to hear it.  And who else should it be than us?

                        *Jesus Loves Me! This I know,*

*For the Bible tells me so.*

*Little Ones to Him belong;*

*They are weak but He is strong.*

*Yes Jesus Loves Me!*

*Yes Jesus Loves Me!*

*Yes Jesus Loves Me!*

*The Bible Tells Me So.*

Remember that song?  It is not a children’s Sunday School song.  It is your song, our song.  We are the children that Bible has told us Jesus loves me.  We heard and learned the Truth of the Bible because some teacher taught us, probably in Sunday School, perhaps at home.  We are the weak; Jesus is the strong.  When we sing that song we sing about ourselves and each other, and our children.

                        *Jesus Loves Me still today.*

*Walking with me on my way.*

*Wanting as a friend to give*

*Light and love to all who live.*

*Yes  Jesus loves me!*

*Yes Jesus loves me!*

*Yes Jesus loves me!*

*The Bible tells me so.*

A verse little known, but me, today, and adult, and as a grown friend of Jesus sharing God’s light and love to all God’s Children.  What we have heard we are to proclaim.

                        *Jesus loves me! He who died*

*Heaven’s gate to open wide;*

*He will wash away my sin,*

*Let His little child come in.*

*Yes Jesus loves me!*

*Yes Jesus loves me!*

*Yes Jesus loves me!*

*The Bible tells me so.*

I am the little child, you are the little child of the first verse.  You are forgiven your sins in Christ Jesus, the Jesus who loves me, the Jesus who loves you.

There is another verse still:

                        *I love Jesus, does He know?*

*Have I ever told Him so?*

*Jesus like to hear me say,*

*That I love Him every day!*

*Yes…I love Jesus!*

*Yes, I love Jesus.*

*Yes I love Jesus!*

*The Bible taught me so!*

 Amen