

Who moved my Jesus?

8/7/18

I speak in the name of Jesus the Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to the glory of God the Father.

Amen.

I recently came across a book at my local library, not that this was unexpected, but this little book caught my eye, for this little book helped me along a rough part of my life journey a few years ago.

The title of the book? Perhaps some of you may have read it, as well?

“Who Moved My Cheese?” by Dr Spencer Johnson.

This little book is unique in that it tells a fairly simple story with a very deep meaning, that both children and adults can access in terms of meaning and symbolism. Furthermore, the book is written in such a way, that you will be able to re-read it at various stages in your life and it will continue to speak to you.

So what is this little book about and how can it contribute to our daily journey as Christians?

I have aptly named this sermon, “Who moved my Jesus?”

The story is a simple parable that reveals profound truths. It tells a story about four characters. Two are little men and two are mice. The four characters live in a maze. Their main role in life is to search the maze for cheese. The cheese is important for cheese is what nourishes them and makes them happy.

Now, obviously, the “cheese” can be extrapolated to represent or symbolise anything in our lives that we continually yearn for or strive after. The cheese may therefore have different meanings for everyone here this morning.

Generally speaking, the cheese is a metaphor for what we want to have in life... whether it is a good job, a loving relationship, money, possessions, health or spiritual peace of mind.

The maze represents or is symbolic of something else.

The maze may represent the organisation that you work in, your family; the community that you live in, or dare I say it, the church that you worship in?

The four characters are interesting:

There are two mice, namely Sniff and Scurry. Sniff is known to sniff out change early. Scurry is known for scurrying into action quickly without hesitation or procrastination.

There are also two little people in the story. They are known as Hem and Haw. Hem is a person who denies and resists change, as he fears it will lead to something worse. Haw, on the other hand, learns to adapt in time when he finally sees that changing leads to something better.

These four little characters are meant to represent the simple and complex parts of ourselves, regardless of our age, gender, race, nationality or even denomination...

The story goes on to explain how the two mice and two little people find a certain spot in the maze that provides them with wonderful cheese every day.

All is well in their little world. They are comfortable, happy and content.

Then one day, the two mice and two little people go back to Cheese Station C and to their absolute horror, there is no cheese. After a while, the two mice realise that they need to move on, don their running shoes and move back out into the maze in order to search for a new supply of cheese. Hem and Haw are different. They stick around, determined that someone has made a mistake and that the cheese will eventually be delivered to them. After many days of struggle and frustration, Hem and Haw eventually realise that they need to move on out of Cheese Station C and search for a new supply in the maze. Sniff and Scurry were way ahead of them and have already found a new supply of cheese that is even more bountiful and delicious than Cheese Station C.

You see, Sniff and Scurry were more adept to four life skills:

- 1) They were able to anticipate change
- 2) They were able to change quickly
- 3) They were able to enjoy change
- 4) They were ready to change quickly, again and again

What message does this have for us as Christians this morning?

I am reminded of the title of this sermon, "Who moved my Jesus?"

There are various scenarios that could apply to this theme:

- 1) I have met Christians before who feel that Jesus has "left" them in their moment of need or despair. The truth of the matter is that the Bible tells us that Jesus is the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last. Jesus is consistent, constant, unchanging, ever-loving and forgiving. It is more often than not us who stray from being centred in Christ, in both our living and thinking. We experience it as Jesus leaving us, but in actual fact it is us who have left Jesus. Sadly, it often takes a life-changing event for us to realise this and re-align ourselves in the Holy Spirit.
- 2) Sometimes, as Christians, we are faced with change in our lives and we are too anxious to embrace it. This may be in the form of a new liturgy, a new priest, a new way of worshipping. Often, we tend to hold onto what we know and what we are familiar with. There is growth, life and sustenance in change. Perhaps Jesus is calling you and me out to change and grow, for it is in growing our faith that we become more like Jesus and less about ourselves.
- 3) Thirdly, as Christians, we need to constantly be asking ourselves the question, "What is my cheese?" Is it that new car? Is it that new house? Is it a bigger salary? Or is it growing closer to Jesus and staying centred in the Holy Spirit? As Christians, Jesus is our Cheese. Full stop. He cannot be replaced with anything else. That is not to say that a balanced life is not important, like our family, our careers and our loved ones, but ultimately, all of that falls into place when we focus on Jesus as our Cheese. Jesus is our resource. Jesus is what makes us happy. Jesus is what fills our hearts with joy and mission. If

this is not the case, perhaps our cheese is off and we need to relook at what we are using to sustain us as Christians?

- 4) Lastly, as Christians, what is our “maze”? Yes, we will have various mazes in our lives in terms of our families and the institutions that we work in. However, how much of our maze belongs to Jesus? Are we spending that extra time at church seeking to help each other where we can? Are we as Christians involved in an outreach of some sort that builds the community that we live in? Are we continually reading and praying as we seek the will of Jesus in our lives? These are some tough questions that each of us need to answer to. How is your maze looking?

I am reminded of the Gospel reading this morning where Jesus sends out the Twelve. In essence, the Twelve are sent out into “their” maze. Their maze was the various villages that they were tasked to visit and spread the Gospel. Jesus instructed His Disciples to take nothing for their journey, apart from a staff. No bread, no bag and no money. Why would Jesus say this? Jesus knew that the Disciples needed to focus on the Spirit only and have faith. Their maze was the villages and their cheese was Jesus. They needed nothing else to be successful.

How much do we need?

I am reminded of a beautiful poem entitled “Footprints in the Sand.”

One night I dreamed a dream.
As I was walking along the beach with my Lord.
Across the dark sky flashed scenes from my life.
For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand,
One belonging to me and one to my Lord.

After the last scene of my life flashed before me,
I looked back at the footprints in the sand.
I noticed that at many times along the path of my life,
especially at the very lowest and saddest times,
there was only one set of footprints.

This really troubled me, so I asked the Lord about it.
"Lord, you said once I decided to follow you,
You'd walk with me all the way.
But I noticed that during the saddest and most troublesome times of my life,

there was only one set of footprints.
I don't understand why, when I needed You the most, You would leave me."

He whispered, "My precious child, I love you and will never leave you
Never, ever, during your trials and testings.
When you saw only one set of footprints,
It was then that I carried you."

So the questions are:

Are you a Sniff or a Scurry?

Or perhaps a Hem or a Haw?

What does your maze consist of?

What is your cheese?

Has it moved?

May God bless you this week ahead as you navigate your maze of life in search of your cheese.

Amen.