

## **“Letting Go”**

Meditation Preached by The Rev. Jennifer Cameron

October 24, 2021 – St. Columba Presbyterian Church, Belleville

### **Hymns for Worship Video – October 24, 2021**

“Be Thou my Vision” #461 in the Book of Praise Vv. 1-3

(Verse 3 added from the Book of Praise)

**V. 1** Be Thou my Vision O Lord of my heart

Naught be all else to me save that Thou art

Thou my best thought by day or by night

Waking or sleeping Thy presence my light

**V. 2** Be Thou my Wisdom and Thou my true Word

I ever with Thee and Thou with me Lord

Thou my great Father thine own may I be

Thou in me dwelling and I one with Thee

**V. 3** Be Thou my breastplate my sword for the fight

Be Thou my armour and be Thou my might

Thou my soul's shelter and Thou my high tower

Raise Thou me heavenward O Power of my power

*Eleanor Henrietta Hull | Mary Elizabeth Byrne | Russell Mauldin*

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“One More Step along the World I go” #641 in the Book of Praise Vv. 1-3

**V. 1** One more step along the world I go

One more step along the world I go

From the old things to the new

Keep me traveling along with You

*Chorus*

And it's from the old I travel to the new

Keep me travelling along with You

**V. 2** Round the corners of the world I turn

More and more about the world I learn

All the new things that I see

You'll be looking at along with me

*Chorus*

**V. 3** As I travel through the bad and good  
Keep me travelling the way I should  
Where I see no way to go  
You'll be telling me the way I know  
*Chorus*

*Sydney Bertram Carter*  
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“Take Time to be Holy” #638 in the Book of Praise Vv. 1, 2, 4

**V. 1** Take time to be holy  
Speak oft with thy Lord  
Abide in Him always  
And feed on His Word  
Make friends with God's children  
Help those who are weak  
Forgetting in nothing  
His blessing to seek

**V. 2** Take time to be holy  
The world rushes on  
Spend much time in secret  
With Jesus alone  
By looking to Jesus  
Like Him thou shalt be  
Thy friends in thy conduct  
His likeness shall see

**V. 4** Take time to be holy  
Be calm in thy soul  
Each tho't and each motive  
Beneath His control  
Thus led by His Spirit  
To fountains of love  
Thou soon shall be fitted  
For service above

*George Coles Stebbins / William Dunn Longstaff*  
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Closing Chorus: "Walk with the Lord"

Walk with the Lord

Go from this place

filled with his everlasting grace.

Walk with the Lord

Go where he leads

blessed by his love and his peace

Each day you live in all you do

let the light of Christ be found in you

Walk with the Lord trust and obey

Go now and serve him in faith

Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen

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**Scripture Texts: Psalm 51:10-14**

<sup>10</sup> Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and put a new and right spirit within me.

<sup>11</sup> Do not cast me away from your presence,  
and do not take your holy spirit from me.

<sup>12</sup> Restore to me the joy of your salvation,  
and sustain in me a willing spirit.

<sup>13</sup> Then I will teach transgressors your ways,  
and sinners will return to you.

<sup>14</sup> Deliver me from bloodshed, O God,  
O God of my salvation,  
and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.

**1 Samuel 16:1-13**

The Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons." <sup>2</sup> Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me." And the Lord said, "Take a heifer with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.'" <sup>3</sup> Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you." <sup>4</sup> Samuel did what the Lord commanded, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, "Do you come peaceably?" <sup>5</sup> He said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

<sup>6</sup> When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, “Surely the Lord’s anointed is now before the Lord.” <sup>7</sup> But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.” <sup>8</sup> Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, “Neither has the Lord chosen this one.” <sup>9</sup> Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, “Neither has the Lord chosen this one.” <sup>10</sup> Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, “The Lord has not chosen any of these.” <sup>11</sup> Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all your sons here?” And he said, “There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here.” <sup>12</sup> He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The Lord said, “Rise and anoint him; for this is the one.” <sup>13</sup> Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

### **John 7:24**

Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.

### **Meditation**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

[PLAY FIRST 2 VIDEO SEGMENTS]

I was 17 years old and in a battle of wills with my mother. Not unlike most teenaged girls, the mother-daughter drama was, well, noticeable, to say the least. In a nutshell, neither of us was responding terribly well to anything the other one said. On one particular occasion, a disagreement about a certain boy that had broken my heart, I became so irrationally angry that it took over my self-control. (I’m giving you some pretty sensitive insight to my personality as it developed throughout the teen years.) I punched a hole in my closet door. I’ve always had a quick temper, but I had never let it fly like that. It had never gotten the best of me before. And I froze. My mother came into my room and froze. Then, I lost it. I broke down into uncontrollable sobs, and mom simply put her arms around me and let me cry. She knew. Her side of the family has a short fuse, and she knew it had come to me. So, instead of letting her own short fuse take over, she acted with understanding. When I was finally able to have a rational conversation again, she said I needed to find a way to control my temper before it got the better of me. And I didn’t argue. It took a long time, and I will give my dear Bruce a great deal of credit here for helping me rise above. I admit there are still times when I am quick-tempered, but it’s considerably less intense than it was when I was younger. I’m pleased to say I have control over it, rather than it having control over me.

That’s probably not what you expected after watching the video clip of a song from the popular Disney movie “Frozen.” What you may or may not know about the back story to that

song is that Elsa, the character that sings it, has been isolated for years because of an incident caused by her icy power. When she emerges, she realizes there is something within her she has to control before it becomes dangerous. Something within her could get out of control if she does not control it first. And she does. And she becomes a powerfully good Queen for her kingdom. The song is about letting go of what inhibits you from being who you are meant to be, and embracing your true self in positive ways. In embracing that true self, it is important to recognize the things needing some effort to keep in check, and the things you know are helpful as you contribute to the world around you. In my case, I had to recognize the effort it would take to control my quick temper, and also what parts of my personality could really make a positive difference in the world. Mercifully, I had God to do most of the work for me, because I also had to let go of the idea that I could do it by myself. I had to let myself go in order for God's Spirit to do the work that was needed within me, and create in me the person God intended me to be.

*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.* This verse from Psalm 51 comes to mind whenever I realize I have acted in a way I don't like. Maybe not immediately, but when I think about losing my temper, or speaking a critical word, or neglecting a task I don't want to do, this verse helps me reset and rethink my approach. I don't believe God wants me to be angry, or judgmental, or neglectful, but my humanity gets in the way sometimes and I act in ways I don't want to act. As the apostle says in his letter to the Romans, *I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate... Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me (Romans 7:15, 20).* And so, we draw on the Psalmist's words for our hearts to be renewed and our spirits to be reset. It's such a good thing to be able to draw on God's Word for help in those moments when we need to rise above our own human flaws. To try and do it on my own would result in disaster.

That's one way to look at what letting go means. Sometimes we have to let go of what holds us back and allow what makes us the fullest person God has created us to be really shine.

When we look at the reading from 1 Samuel today, we see another way to understand that letting go is a big part of enjoying a faithful, trust-filled relationship with God, and positive, healthy relationships with other people. In this case, it is important to let go of what we think we see, because we do not see the whole thing. We do not know the whole story of someone else's life. What we see on the outside is only a tiny piece of who that person is.

When Samuel was sent to find and anoint Saul's successor, he didn't know who he was looking for. He only knew he was to find Jesse and discern from among his sons who would be the next to sit on Israel's throne. So Samuel did what he was instructed and invited Jesse and his sons to the sacrifice. One by one, Jesse's sons passed by Samuel, and one by one the Lord rejected them, even when Samuel thought them to be fit, tall, strong, and well-suited to lead an army. God, however, told him there was more to be seen than what was seen on the outside. God saw far more than that in each one. When they had all passed and none was accepted, the prophet asked if all of Jesse's sons were present, and there was one yet to be seen. The youngest, David, was guarding the sheep. Samuel sent for him. He is described as what we might have called a pretty boy in high school. Fair, bright-eyed, handsome. He looked the least likely to lead Israel as

their king, yet God identified him as the one, and Samuel anointed him. God's power came upon him "mightily," the text says.

When Samuel let go of his preconceived idea of what a king should be, God placed the chosen one before him, the one from whose line would come the Messiah, the Saviour of the world, and the prophet did well by Israel. He wasn't the one Samuel would have chosen based on what he saw. But David was the one God had chosen because of what God saw, beyond what Samuel could perceive.

Here is what a biblical scholar from Texas has observed about what happens with David: "Other than Jesus, the Bible says more about the life of David than any other biblical character. A two-sided character if ever there was one, David's life exemplifies the best and worst of what life looks like when a person does and does not follow God. He is the epitome of God and Samuel's warning that Israel should not have a king.

Unlike Saul who was chosen simply because of his outer appearance, his height and good looks, David was chosen because of his inner self, a heart tuned to God. Even his repentant response to his sins shows him to be a man after God's own heart. He represents Israel's/God's second attempt at a successful monarchy."<sup>1</sup>

David is a complicated person in the history of God's people. His faithfulness was met with military and political power. His looks drew people to him – especially women.

When David held onto God and let go of himself, he enjoyed influence and military success.

When he let go of God and made himself the priority, he experienced painful consequences.

When he used his position to protect and lead God's people in God's way, he had confidence and security.

When he used his position to get what he wanted, quite outside of God's plan, he fell apart.

He was a failure as a human father. He schemed and manipulated to get what he wanted. And he ignored behaviours within his own family that deserved harsh consequences. And yet, he was the one God declared to be after God's own heart, and David became the most influential king in Israel's history. He paved the way for Solomon to build the temple in Jerusalem. He opened the path that would lead to the coming of the Son of God.

Many of you will have heard the phrase, "let go and let God." In essence, I believe it is meant to encourage us to let go of our desire to control our own lives, our decisions, and our relationships, and let God lead us in all of it. I do not believe it means we are to let go of our role in our relationship with our Creator, but it does mean God has a considerably better insight to what is happening in our lives, and we need to trust that we will be led onto the paths of righteousness, for his name's sake. We make our lives more difficult when we get our heels dug in and resist God's leading because we don't want to go that way. We still have to use the free minds we have been given, draw from what we learn throughout every age and stage of life, and discern which of our relationships are good and which ones may be toxic. We also have to

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/narrative-lectionary/god-calls-david/commentary-on-1-samuel-161-13-psalm-5110-14-3>. Written by Alphonetta Wines.

remember we do not do these things alone. To use an image I heard from a sailor recently, God keeps the divine hand on the rudder. In other words, God is still steering, setting the plan. We make sure the boat keeps going in the direction God is steering. I know there have been times in my life when I'm very glad that was the case because if I had tried to steer I probably would have ended up on the rocks.

Let it go, let it go

Can't hold it back anymore

Let it go, let it go

Turn away and slam the door.

Letting go can mean all kinds of things in our lives.

Let go of grudges and anger.

Let go of control.

Let go of negative behaviours.

Let go of the idea you can handle things on your own, without God to help and direct you.

It can also mean:

Let go of your perceptions based only on what you can see.

Let go of prejudice and judgment.

Let go of those things that inhibit you from being the fullest person God intends for you to be.

In short, let go, and let God create in you a clean heart, and put a new and right spirit within you.

[PLAY END OF VIDEO]

Amen.