

Psalm 25:1-10

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

O my God, in you I trust; do not let me be put to shame; do not let my enemies exult over me. Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame; let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths.

Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long.

Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and of your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.

Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for your goodness' sake, O Lord!

Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in the way.

He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way.

All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.

Once upon a time... on a text thread far away....

There was a group of church staff who wanted to make worship during Lent special for everyone in the land. They had talked about very “Lent-y” topics like sin and sadness and the world making us weary... then Pastor Kathryn said (and if you don’t like this idea it was Pastor Mark), “I feel like we’ve spent a lot of time on how hard this all is. It feels like Lent from last year never actually ended. I know it’s LENT... again - but what if we went with a lighter theme? Like the year all of the sermon titles were Journey songs or the time I used Hamilton lyrics in all of the sermons?”

It was a long text message... and then she waited. Soon, clapping hands and heart emojis and the Wonder Woman gif (okay, not that one) came across her screen and it was decided! YES - we would still mark the Sundays of Lent with seasonally appropriate music and liturgy, BUT the sermons would be based on the top 8 Disney movies chosen by the congregation out of a field of 62, and we will reveal them in a countdown just like we did the Christmas hymns that time.

Once the proclamation was read at the Meeting of the Zoom, there was much rejoicing and the congregation and extended viewership of MPC online lived Happily Ever After.

>>>The End<<<

Please join me in the spirit of prayer:

Lord, may the words of my mouth, and the meditations of our heart bring glory to you. Open our hearts and minds to who it is you are Calling us to be. Amen.

Jeremiah 1:4-10

Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.” Then I said, “Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy.” But the Lord said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a boy’; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you, Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord.” Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth; and the Lord said to me, “Now I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.”

The Stories of God for the People of God...

Today we begin the Big Reveal - what were the top 8 Disney movies (including the Marvel and Star Wars franchises) as chosen by the members of MPC?

#8 - National Treasure

This movie was released in 2004 and starred Nicolas Cage, Jon Voight, and Harvey Keitel... you know what, no - I'm not preaching on that. If Cathay, our local historian, loves that movie so much, she can preach on it.

#7 - Moana

Moana was released in 2016 with music written by Lin-Manuel Miranda (hired before *Hamilton* fame) and featured the debut of Auli'i Cravalho (*Ow-lee-ee Cravalio*) voicing the lead character, Moana, and The Rock, as Maui. It tells the story of the daughter of the chief of a Polynesian Village who is chosen by the ocean to reunite a mystical relic with the goddess of Te Fiki. But first, she must defy her father, sail out past and way beyond the reef, find the legendary demi-god Maui and his hook.

Her adventure is based on traditional Polynesian mythology with many of the names and stories based on ancient Polynesian tales and some truly universal themes including “discovering who you are and who you're meant to be.”

Much like Jeremiah in our Old Testament reading, Moana starts out very young.

Let's look at the clip https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KGqBfyQFG_g
(starting at 56 seconds, ending @ 2:30)

-OR-

An early scene shows Moana as a toddler wandering alone down to where the waves are gently lapping on the beach. As she approaches, the waters gently part and Moana makes her way to a shell and then another shell, and then another shell even further still. She is surrounded on three sides by walls of water that allow her to see into the ocean. As the viewer, we know she is in no danger, even as a big wave comes up overhead, pauses, and then playfully places a flower in her hair. The ocean gives her a green stone (what we learn later is the heart of Te Fiki) and when we hear Moana's father's voice calling for her, the wave gives her a gentle ride back to shore.

Moana's call from the ocean isn't perfectly clear to her yet, but the seed – or the heart – has been planted. And just like our young Jeremiah, she and others will have times when they doubt.

There are as many Call stories in Scripture as there are people trying to get out of them. Moses tried to convince God his stutter was too much to overcome. Jonah was so disruptive about his Call that he tried to jump ship in another direction. Moving to the New Testament, a young woman is asked to carry God's Son. She responded: *Here I am, the servant of the Lord, let it be with me according to your Word* (Luke 1:26-38).

What does God's Call on *our* lives look like? I'm assuming none of us are at a beach, being gently called into the ocean... I mean, you'd bring me with you, right? I'm quite sure none of us have been anointed by the Lord or asked to filibuster for Pharaoh or chosen to care for the Messiah.

You'd let me know, right?

A Call doesn't need to be of Biblical or Disney proportions to be important. All that matters is that we have ears to hear. God Calls to us in unexpected ways – both through the voice in our hearts and through the world and people around us.

For Moana, it was her grandmother who gave her the knowledge and nudge she needs.

Listen: (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gOugSGDGWqs> 2:08 – 2:30)

***You are your father's daughter; stubbornness and pride
Mind what he says but remember
You may hear a voice inside.
And if the voice starts to whisper
To follow the farthest star
Moana that voice inside you is who you are.***

God uses the people/the community/the world around us to guide us and nudge us into being who it is that God is Calling us to be. And it is because of this community that we are able to step out and live into this Call.

We live in an increasingly secular society and a divided one at that. There are a lot of reasons to look around and come to the conclusion that all hope is lost. This is where we count on our people – our community – to remind us Whose we are; to help us regain our hope and embrace our mission – to share love and the Good News.

Toward the end of the movie, Moana has given up hope and her grandmother returns to remind her who she is and that she is not alone.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SgXpsZa8_i4 (Starting at 1:11 through 2:24)

Moana asks, “Who am I?”

And as she begins to answer the question (in song, of course), she envisions her community – those who came before her – who give her strength to continue on her mission.

I know most of us don't go about our day, spontaneously bursting out into song.

I know most of us won't have a Disney movie based on our lives complete with Lin-Manuel Miranda soundtrack.

I know most of us aren't the daughter of a chief, palling around with an animal sidekick – the telltale signs of a Disney princess.

I know most of us are not from the land of Nunya.... Nunya business.

(Sorry, I had to get that in here somewhere. The Rock made me do it.)

Whatever God's Call on our lives is, it's bound to be one that pulls us out of our comfort Zone. Otherwise, it would be a “to do list” – not a Call.

Strengthened by the community around us, we must go into the world to share God's love and the Good News.

How did I do? Did I do okay? What can I say, except – you're welcome!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=79DijItQXMM>