

So, we made it to the final Sunday of our sermon series, "Are We There Yet?": Disney in Lent. And now your favorite Disney movie, taking the number one spot is...Toy Story.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7PGZnOVdxzk> Woody meets Buzz.

Toy Story is a great movie that has launched into an amazing franchise that seems set on trying to make parents cry. The first movie though sets up this amazing dynamic between Woody, an old-fashioned cowboy doll with a drawstring, and Buzz Lightyear, a brand-new space ranger with movable parts, and lights, and noises. What we see is not a collision of merely personality types, but two completely different realities merging together.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WhVLgTsoMhQ> Buzz Falls with Style.

I don't know about you, but that scene has the same energy as this one we find in scripture:

²² Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. ²³ And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴ but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land,^[a] for the wind was against them. ²⁵ And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. ²⁶ But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. ²⁷ But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid."

²⁸ Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." ²⁹ He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. ³⁰ But when he noticed the strong wind,^[b] he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" ³¹ Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" ³² When they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

-Matthew 14:22-32

I can't help it. But the more and more I watch Toy Story, the more I keep seeing Buzz Lightyear as Peter. They are bold! They say what they are thinking. They react first. And then overreact second.

Ever sense Peter was called by Jesus to be a disciple, Peter has tried extra hard to be the best disciple who has ever disciples. Over and over again. Peter casts his nets where and when Jesus

says. Peter takes Jesus to heal his mother-in-law. Peter walks on water if Jesus calls him. And when Jesus asks, who do you say that I am, Peter, declares, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

And Jesus applauds Peter saying, "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." (Matthew 16:18-19).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YMgoKhFEN6s> Buzz thinks he's real.

Buzz continues to think of himself as the space ranger stuck on a planet needing to get back his mission. He seems to have zero doubts about who is and what his mission in life is all about. Woody, the toy whom Andy loved, seems to have a better handle on life but is constantly butting heads with Buzz. But, Buzz seems undeterred.

And so, Peter continues with his head up high becoming the best disciple he can be. He still screws up. And Jesus has to try to teach and guide. For not long after Peter gets applauded, he quickly gets hit with reality as Jesus talks about his upcoming suffering and death and Peter tells Jesus you can't think like that, think positively, you're scaring the twins. Jesus responds, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things." (Matthew 16:23).

But six days later, we get to the Mount of Transfiguration and Peter is quick to make a run to Ritters for supplies to get some homes built so they can all stay together forever. Peter is trying so hard to be the best disciple. But, it's as though he keeps missing what Jesus is trying to tell him.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VLWd8tzQhc0> Woody tells Buzz he is a toy.

Peter continues to strive towards being the perfect disciple. We come to the Passover meal as Jesus washes his disciples' feet to which Peter refuses, but then because of Jesus' correction, overacts asking Jesus to wash him from head to toe. And later when Jesus tells of the disciples soon deserting him, Peter declares, "Though all become deserters because of you, I will never desert you." And "Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you."

But then Peter denies. And the cock crows three times. And Peter is left with the reality of who he truly is.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vddEvqS6M4o> Buzz finds out he is a toy.

This brings us to our first reading this morning. Peter realizes that he isn't the disciple, in fact, he realizes that he has no place being a disciple. Peter gives up. Peter goes back to his old life. He gets a boat and goes back to fishing. And after fishing all night, morning comes, and the nets are still empty. He can't even do that right. The pain of betrayal, the pain of failure fills Peter, leaving him as empty as his nets.

But a voice from the shore changes that. A voice with a command that was all too familiar asks him to cast the nets on the other side. And it happens. The nets fill with fish as they realize who it is on the shore. Peter gets out of the boat, just as he did on the stormy sea, this time swimming as quickly as possible. And there he finds Jesus. His friend, his companion, his teacher, his Lord preparing a meal for him and the other disciples.

The tension still builds between Peter and Jesus. Which leads us to second reading picking back up in John 21.

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." A second time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go." (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, "Follow me."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wBaP6BOTwT8> Woody helps Buzz.

Buzz discovers that no matter what he is, he belongs. He learns no matter what he does, he is loved. He realizes that whose he is, is what matters most. He finds that who he is, is enough.

Jesus has a hard talk with Peter. It's hard. It's painful but it's true. Jesus asked these hard questions because Peter needed to answer them for himself. Peter needed to make the

decision did he love his old life of fishing, he did he love Jesus more, willing to risk everything that he tried to protect while denying he even knew Jesus.

When we read about Peter in the book of Acts, he is different. He has changed. While James, the brother of Jesus, seems to run things in Jerusalem. And Paul travels through the Roman empire sharing the gospel and starting various churches. We find Peter traveling the countryside around Jerusalem, staying with strangers, spending time in prayer by himself, and traveling to where God calls him. Peter helps to lead the church. He is the calm deciding factor in arguments between James and Paul. Peter becomes Christ-like, following in the footsteps of Jesus.

Peter embraces whose he is by embracing who he is.

During this pandemic, a lot has changed. We've seen cracks form across a world that we took for granted, a world we thought was unshakeable. And at the same time, we found those cracks to shine a light in places we've often overlooked. Some of us found a new joy in family around the table and time spent on home cooked meals. Some of us found a new joy in spending time outside walking, hiking, biking. Some of us found a new joy in sewing, gardening, guitar playing. And some of us found the joy of just being, of resting. And I pray that all of us found the comfort of knowing that threw it all, though the church building was closed, the church never was.

And now here we are. As the vaccine is out and things are beginning to go back to the way it was, we have decisions to make.

We are here on Easter morning with empty tombs and empty nets. Do we hear the voice calling us from the shore? Do we hear the voice asking us, "Do you love me more than these?" Do we hear the voice calling us to feed his sheep?

Can we trust that we are enough?

For when we trust in God and who God created us to be, hearing the voice of Jesus calling us, well that's when we truly will go to Infinity and Beyond.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8jrFbNFRrM> Buzz and Woody fly.