

“That They May be One in My Hand” Jen Garbin

Friends, thank you for being here. Thank you for answering the call that God makes to all of us, not only today, but every day of our lives, to be one people, united by one faith, one baptism, one Lord. It's important for us to be together, to gather here as one body. It wouldn't matter which of our two countries we chose to gather in...it wouldn't matter if we were in a grand hall such as this, or a little country church in Milton, Nova Scotia, it wouldn't matter if we were in a new church plant in Kansas City or one in Calgary, Alberta...it wouldn't matter what name hung above the door or was printed in the bulletin...it wouldn't matter because we come together as the church, the body of believers, redeemed of Christ, beloved of God...all of us, one people, one body, one church. There is no political boundary that can keep the people of God from the unity that is in our very DNA.

And it is a glorious thing to see.

Le temps que nous partageons est poignant, du moins, il devrait l'être...parce que nous faisons partie des chanceux qui vivent sur un continent paisible, qui, pour la majorité, ont la liberté de se mouvoir, d'adorer et de penser. Ainsi, ce soir, alors que nous pouvons respirer la paix et la bénédiction qui émanent ici, pensons à ceux qui n'ont pas cette liberté de respirer librement, gardons-les et élevons-les dans nos prières, qu'importe où ils puissent être, faisons le pour la gloire de Dieu. Accrochons-nous à l'alliance que Dieu a faite avec nous en aimant tel que nous avons été aimés. Réunissons nos sœurs et nos frères autour du monde, ainsi que ceux qui sont ici dans nos communautés, dans nos deux pays, qui sont opprimés, opprimés, souffrants, marginalisés, et emmenons-les ici. Car Dieu a une parole pour chacun d'entre nous, et sûrement une bénédiction également.

For this is what God told to Ezekiel that he should take up two pieces of wood, two sticks...write the name of Israel on one, and Judah on the other...the two halves of the nation of Israel...hold them in his hand and proclaim the message of hope to all who would listen...that that which was torn in half would again be united. That which was blessed by God to be one nation would be one nation again, for all time. That it is God's intention that we not be divided, but that we be one...as God is one...

And this is the message that God has for us, whether you be the frozen chosen from north of the 49th or sun-baked on the shores of California, whether you live at the foot of the Rocky Mountains or on the windswept tundra, on the shores of the great Mississippi, or the great rock of Newfoundland, whether you speak French, or English, or Spanish, or Creole, or Korean, or Inuk, or Tagalog...or any other of the dozens of languages spoken in our communities...we are children of God all...this is the message from God for us all: that there is much that divides us...our sticks are scattered and broken...this is true...but there is a power, a will in the universe that is working to bring us back together, that is struggling to re-create new life in us, that is moving mountains to unify us in new and wonderful ways, that is keeping us in a strong embrace together...we have this hope.

Oui, les temps sont désespérés. Le monde et l'église de Jésus-Christ sont au sein d'une transformation. Les situations économiques changent, devenant de moins en moins fiables, et ce, jour après jour. Le statut du monde est en train de changer...des guerres et conflits sont fréquents et dévastateur, la famine est omniprésente, l'oppression est fréquente, l'injustice semble fleurir au sein d'une peur et

d'une isolation sans précédent. Nous nous éloignons de plus en plus d'une série de génération de croyants...et n'avons pas encore le langage pour se connecter à eux... nous ne savons pas exactement comment les retrouver, comment répondre à leurs besoins, comment régler nos différends.

We are a stick broken. Nous sommes une branche brisée. The pieces scattered. Les morceaux sont éparpillés. But not lost. Mais ils ne sont pas perdus. Not irreparable. Ce n'est pas irréparable.

Ezekiel speaks to his people, and to us... it is God's fervent hope, that we turn afresh to God and see that this ancient covenant of peace and hope is still valid, still in effect, still holding us all together. We are like pieces of wood held in the hand, with strong fingers of grace, love and peace, justice and wholeness wrapped round to heal and reconcile and restore us... to make us one. This is God's intention...that we be one. This is God's gift...that we in all of our beautiful diversity...be one. One body, one church, one people. This is God's intention that there be a new creation...that all of God's people be one.

But it may take some conversion, some renewal, some change, some transformation...there may be growing pains... God is the source of all life. Dieu est la source de vie. The source of our life together... and we experience this life more fully when we put aside what divides us and CHOOSE to unite hearts and minds and spirits together, living out God's covenant of peace...for we have this promise that we will be God's people, and God will be our God.

Our divisions, friends, are nothing short of sinful. When we cling to our traditions and our ways of doing things over clinging to the word of God that unites us, we become that lukewarm stuff that is spit out onto the ground. God is not divided. So neither should we be. God does not love one more than the other. So neither should we. God does not prefer one congregation over another, one tradition over another...and so neither should we. God see us all as equals...and my friends, so should we...we are equal in the sight of God...all of us unworthy of grace, but all of us recipients. When the arms of Jesus stretched out on that cross, they were stretched out for you and for me...and for all humanity. There is and was grace there enough for all, undiminishable, unmistakable, unfathomable. The covenant was renewed that day, for all eternity. A covenant of peace. A covenant of unity

Il est maintenant temps de jouer notre partie. Ceci est un commencement. Où nous allons à partir d'ici dépend de nous. Nous sommes un dans la main de Dieu... mais nous devons consciemment faire le choix de vivre ainsi. Friends...this is a beginning...let us continue to work together for reconciliation..not only among our congregations but for all creation. Let us work together for peace...not only among our own people...but for all the world. Let us work together for justice...not only in our own backyards, but everywhere. For we have this promise, we have this hope, we have this covenant... "I will save them says the Lord, They shall be my people, and I will be their God." La louange, la gloire et l'honneur soit à notre Dieu à jamais. Amen.