

Greenfield Hill Congregational Church

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Date: June 7, 2020
Sermon: The NEXT Greatest Generation
Scripture: The Bible Says . . .
Pastor: Rev. David Johnson Rowe

"The Bible Says"

A Litany of Scriptures

The Bible says: *You know what is good and what God requires: do justice, love mercy, walk humbly with God.*

The Bible says: *Let justice roll down like the waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream.*

The Bible says: *A new commandment I give you: Love one another.*

The Bible says: *Blessed are the peacemakers, the persecuted, and those who mourn.*

The Bible says: *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.*

The Bible says: *Thou shall not kill. Thou shall not blaspheme, or lie.*

The Bible says: *Faith, hope, and love abide, but the greatest of these is love. For love never ends.*

The Bible says: *God is Love.*

A Mini-Sermon for our Graduates! And the rest of you can listen in too!

Christmas Eve! Let me take you back to a "happy place." Christmas Eve. December 24th, 2019. It was a beautiful night. By 11 PM, we'd already had a thousand people come to five Christmas Eve services! Remember those days when you could still crowd into Church, squeeze people into each pew, snuggle up, high-five, greet, hug, kiss?

We'd been having Church all day, but we still had the traditional, old-fashioned candlelight 11 PM service to do. What folks still call "Midnight Mass." And it was an even greater service! With amazing music provided by young people who grew up in our Church, back from college, mature and accomplished in their singing and playing.

I happened to be with them all in the parlor before the service started, five of them. The youngest, 19; the oldest, probably 22 or so. I've known them their whole lives. As I always do with the young people, I gave them a little pep talk. Told them how proud I was of them, thanked them for helping us out on Christmas Eve. Joked a little bit.

And then I apologized. I apologized for the mess in the world they were inheriting, my generation and the fact that we had not taken some things seriously enough, that we had kicked the can down the road on a lot of stuff. I apologized for that but then told them that, knowing them, I felt very optimistic about the future of America, very positive, knowing the world was in their hands.

That was December 24th. A month later, the coronavirus was percolating just below the surface. One hundred six thousand Americans would die, 40 million out of work. American culture and way of life turned upside down. Plus, a black jogger was killed by neighbors in Georgia, and a black EMT was killed by police in Louisville; and George Floyd's death in Minneapolis devastated most everybody.

I can't think of a single aspect of American society that isn't hurting, isn't troubled, isn't divided, isn't part of the problem, isn't part of the solution, isn't a mess. Tragedies compounding tragedies. So . . . to the class of 2020!

I've always loved God's calling of the Prophet Jeremiah. Prophets are God's spokespersons and mostly very unpopular. We've all had coaches and teachers for whom nothing is ever good enough: your best paper, your best project, your best game, your best effort isn't up to their standard.

That was every true of every Biblical prophet. On God's behalf, they were never happy, never content, and never popular. And so, when God tells Jeremiah, "I want you to be my prophet," Jeremiah tells God, "Oh, God, please, God, no! Plus, I'm too young!"

That's an interesting excuse. I've heard "too busy," "too old," "too scared." But I've never heard someone offered responsibility say, "I'm too young!" And frankly, God doesn't buy it either. "Don't say you're too young," God tells him, "I need you now. I chose you. I called you." God actually says, "I knit you in your mother's womb." In other words, "I made you for this."

Eighty years ago the world was a mess. America was a mess. The Depression had ripped apart the economy. Nazism and Fascism were at their height, and on the march. Pearl Harbor was just around the corner. D-Day was up ahead. America was woefully unprepared. Industry, military, government—unprepared. And you know what happened? In June of 1939, June of 1940, June of 1941, '42, '43, '44, kids graduated from high school and college to face the worst the world could produce. And those kids won! They became "The Greatest Generation." There aren't many left. They did their job, they gave their all; and

after that they returned and rebuilt America. And I dare say they passed the baton to you. You must be our new Greatest Generation.

And that's my message to today's young people. You were born for this. This age. These times. You were made for this. It's your turn to storm the beaches, to stem the tide of hatred, to lift the banner of true peace, to resurrect honest faith, to revive real patriotism.

You young people, you young adults, you teens and 20s and 30s and 40s, you've got this. I believe that. God knows it: You are *not* "too young."