

“What is Entrusted to Us?”
24th Sunday after Pentecost
Stewardship Sunday
November 15, 2020
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Iao United Church of Christ

Poem “*Entrusted with a Mission*” by Moses Maimonides

“Everyone entrusted with a mission is an angel.”

When we are entrusted with many of God’s most sacred treasures – why are we so afraid of using them? God has entrusted each and everyone of us our own and unique sacred gifts of time, talents, treasures, power, confidence, etc. Our question for us to ponder this morning is – why are we sometimes so afraid of using the sacred gifts? Why do we hesitate in taking changes at times church? When we are presented with great ideas – what are some of the things we throw at these ideas?

You have heard me talk before about “mustard seed” ideas. Since I have been here, I have heard many great ideas from any of you about which direction our Iao Church should take. The thing about mustard seed ideas – like the mustard seed itself, when they get planted and nurtured, they become big bushes, these mustard seed ideas become large producing ministry focused ideas.

Back to my question – what are maybe some of the things we do when we are presented with “mustard seed” ideas? Fear, hesitation, the “no can do” attitude sets in, the “we’ve never done it that way before” often comes up, the “won’t work” before we have even had any discussion about someone’s idea. Why do we do that church? Why do we throw all our negativity at someone’s mustard seed idea and even at times, at our own ideas? We are like the third servant – “I was afraid of losing your month that I put it in a box and buried it.” Sometimes we are our own worst critics.

There’s a story by Marianne Williamson who wrote: “Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. **Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is**

our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God.” Marianne Williamson continues with: “Your playing small doesn't serve the world. There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. **We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us.** It's not just in some of us, it's in everyone. **And as we let our light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.**

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate but that we are powerful — that we have a quarter million dollars worth of impact — or maybe more.”

Amen and Amen Church! You see beloved church – we attend funerals and memorial services to mourn the loss of a loved – why? Because they have made a huge impact on our lives. Amen? Their light had shined so brightly to inspire our light to shine. Why do we make ourselves small when God sees us as much greater – and most importantly, God needs us to be much greater to a world in need. God needs us to believe we can unite as a country. God needs us to believe in the greatness of others and in their ideas. God needs the greatness of our Iao Church to shine as bright as the Bethlehem star. When the church allows its light to shine – or when people see the light shine from within the church – beloved Iao Church – people are inspired – people are moved by the greatness and confidence of the “we can do” attitude of the church. People can feel and see the church in action and makes them want to become part of the action.

Next week, we will continue to unwrap the “when was it Jesus” question. From our House churches – are we telling our Iao story? I sure hope we are not leaving it all up for the pastor to do it! I can only reach so many, I can only inspire so many – but imagine what we as a whole church can do when we all tell our story and show our greatness. You didn't call me to be your pastor 3.5 years ago to save you – only Christ has done that. You called me as your pastor to inspire you as I am inspired by you. To

dream big dreams and bring those mustard seed ideas out in the open – Iao Church, be the church that our world needs today. Imagine, like Marianne Williamson stated, imagine the million-dollar impact we can have if we but believe in ourselves and in each other. It may be scary to take changes – but how exciting it can be as well.

As I mentioned before, we are sometimes our own worst critic. We think that we do not make much of an impact in our community, society, or our church. We think we cannot inspire others with our words or ideas. God tells us we are made for a reason and that reason is not to be like another person but to bring out the best in ourselves. God entrusts us with these great gifts and we sometimes poopoo on them before we have given ourselves and others a chance. Not to bury our time, talents, and treasures into the ground. God entrusts us with these gifts and needs us to use these gifts out in our community – back to the “when was it Jesus” question for next week.

Theologian Walter Brueggeman once said: “What God does first and best and most is to trust people with their moment in history.” Beloved community, beloved brothers and sisters in our virtual world, God entrusts us to make “history.” God entrusts us to make “herstory” and to make an impact in our community. Just like our loved ones who are no longer with us who made such an impact in our community, our society, our churches, we are given the mantel to do the same. It is like the great commission that happens from one generation to the next. Lillian Maeda must have had a great impact and made a great impression and inspired so many of you Iao Church because many of you still call her out by name, call out her ideas, call out the ministries she left because we still carry them out – the impact she made is carried in the heart of this church we call Iao UCC for generations to come. What impact will we leave behind church? What will we be remembered for for many generations to come?

Let us not fear in investing for God and for our Church. Let us continue to invest in the future of our beloved children and youth. Let us not teach our children to be fearful but to be wise and confident. We are powerful people of God, especially when

we use that power for the sake of the Gospel. We can move mountains and we can inspire others to be just as confident and powerful.

Let us close with this beloved community. A famous activist, Clarence Jordan, once wrote: "I've heard so many sermons preached on this idea: "Give your talents to the Lord." They got that thing backward. The Lord gives the talents to us. What are these talents? Are they money? No, Jesus had no money to give. What did he have? What is the stock-in-trade of a great teacher? It is his ideas, his concepts, his teaching. He leaves them to his followers. All these three years he has been talenting them." Beloved community, we have been given these talents for the sake of a desperate world in need. Let us not bury them in the sand.

Amen, Amene, Ashe, A-ho and Alleluia.