

God In My Life

Preached by Bob Parks

First I want to thank the Rev. Morrison and you for giving me this opportunity to talk to you today.

Before I start a few disclaimers

- (1) I am not a preacher. By that I mean I do not believe that I have been called by God to deliver his message and give others moral direction. Therefore I don't believe I have the right to lecture you or the authority to give moral advise
- (2) I am not a spoke person for the negro/colored/Black population in The United States, Massachusetts, Peabody, Danvers or for that matter even the Parks household.
- (3) The following message is the opinion of Robert Parks and I alone am responsible for its content.
- (4) To answer a question raised by my Sunday School students year after year-To the best of my Knowledge I am not related to Rosa Parks and at best would be related by marriage only, because she was married to Raymond Parks.
- (5) I am somewhat of a story teller and I will tell you stories today that only I can give you. They are stories about God's effect on my life. An hopefully from these stories you will see the effects of God in your life

I liked today's scripture lesson on Samuel being talked too by God and being told by Eli how to respond to word of God. As a little boy when I heard this story at my Grandmothers knee I could relate to the story in several ways.

- (1) Samuel was a little boy just like I was---yes I was a little boy once.
 - (2) Samuel was being raised by his mother and from three to seven I was raised by my single divorced mother.
 - (3) God was talking to this little person and I believed he could talk to me. What a wonderful idea. And as I prepared this talk I began to realize just how much and how often God talks to Children

I am going to tell of some the times in my life God has spoken to children and the profound effects of those conversations in my life. I hope that these stories will help understand those same events that have and will occur in your life.

So lets go back to my boy hood from 1950 to 1963. Compared with the 3,000 years back in history you have to go for Samuels story. The 50 years back to my child hood is not so far. But it was a far different world than today.

So let me tell you a little about my world.. I was raised in Wilmington Delaware. A city of 100,000 persons the size of Lynn , 30 miles south of Philadelphia Pa. Wilmington is also just South of The Mason Dixon Line, Public transportation and lunch counters at 5 & 10 cent stores were integrated but the Schools, restaurants, movie theaters, housing and Public Parks were segregated. The play ground that I used was divided but the colored section did not have a water fountain. The hardest part for me to understand was when the pre school children would turn us into the councilors when we tried to sneak into the white section for a drink. I could understand the councilors and the adults, but I couldn't understand why the little children didn't like me. Now the Lunch counters had a interesting practice if you were white and asked for a drink they gave you a glass, if you were a negro they gave you a cup. My Grandmother looked white and she would order two drinks then my mother who was my completion would come to counter and drink from the glass. That's when I decided prejudice had to be wrong they couldn't tell the difference in White and negro then how could this be right. I was trying to make some sense out of the law.

on May 17, 1954 The most significant miracle in my life occurred when the United States Supreme Court determined that Segregated Schools were not constitutional. Now many of you can see this as a political matter or as legal matter. The result of the hard work of the Group of NAACP lawyers including Thurgood Marshall, Louis L. Reading or the hard work of Chief Justice Earl Warren. It was all this. but a Miracle by God? Well on that day the Court overturned a precedent. The process Courts usually follow is to decide a precedent and then make rulings based on that precedent. Today appointments to the court are being denied if prospective justices indicate they might overturn specific precedents. But for the court to overturn a precedent and then do that not as 5/4 or 7/2 decision but as a unanimous decision must be the work of God!. In May 1954 the court unanimously declared the precedent of separate but equal was not longer constructional in public education. In my life this made a profound change, because the City of Wilmington immediately complied and starting September 1954 I attended an integrated School. This set the stage for another miracle. I became friends with a David Steward, a white boy, who lived across the street from us. Now the street I lived on was as wide as Chester Street, but the houses were closer to together and much closer to the street. This boy and I had lived across the street from each other for over three years and never spoken until we went to school together. After a short time these two nine year olds came to an earth shaking conclusion, that if colored and white people could talk together there would be no more racial problems. We had a dream in 1954/1955. In truth the dream is not new but making it a reality has proved most elusive. But my friend like Samuel had a call from GOD. He didn't know he was called, but I believe he was spoken to by God. In the summer of 1955 this young man decided that he wanted his colored friend (me) to go to Bible school with him. This was quite a courageous stand at that time. First he had to ask his Church if was ok for a color person to attend, because no colored people attended his church. Then he asked his parents and finally he asked me. I then had had to ask my parents who said Ok but with much trepidation. Can you imagine trepidation about going to Church? I

went to this bible school for several years and set many records for bring in new students (my cousins and friends),by the time I graduated the student body of this Bible school was well integrated. Graduation from this Bible School qualified you teach Sunday School in the Presbyterian Church. So some twenty years later when Sue White asked me to teach Sunday School here at Holy Trinity, my graduation from this bible School made me think I had official qualifications to teach. Now don't you think David Stewart my friend was called by God?

In 1960 I learned more about accepting people. My family decided that after birth of my sister they needed

The next Miracle that I will mention happened when I was 24 not a boy, but not fully mature and it eventua
Now back to the present.

This Christmas eve I was sitting in a church in Roxbury and there I saw the progress that human relations in Massachusetts is making. They were celebrating the reopening of the Church after a 20 month renovation. That church with approximately 150 members had just completed a 3 million dollar capital fund raising campaign, primarily to provide after School programs to the youth in the area. Present in that church that evening were white and black, poor and rich, Jews and Christian, Liberal and conservative, Republican (The Lieutenant Governor and family) and Democrat. All there because they had contributed to this project in one way or another and to hear a Christmas eve service. That Church needed to conduct a program that the City of Danvers is providing it residences. The pastor that night was asking for help in talking to the City representatives to address the sharp increase in crime and murders in their neighbors. Why is a Citizen of the Common Wealth of Massachusetts in Danvers safer than a citizen of the Common wealth in Roxbury? Is the sales tax rate less in Roxbury than in Danvers, Is the income tax rate less in Roxbury than in Danvers? Why is the police protection allowed to be less?

I have tried to show some incidents were God works for us in small ways and maybe unknown at the time. I hope you will look over your life and see were God has performed a miracle in your life and if you are at one of those low moments that you will have hope that God is using this a moment to help you.

Remember That God Loves you and so do I.