

THE GRINCH

Dec. 4, 2019

Rev. Richard Rogers

[Rev. Rogers begins by gathering all the kids in the room around him, and reading the story, "How the Grinch Stole Christmas," to the congregation.]

Rev. Richard Rogers: So Grinch's story is the story of what?

Congregation shouts out: Transformation!

Rev. Rogers: It's a story of transformation. And the transformation happened how? His heart grew. So there's a story of love in the midst of our story that invites us to love in a way that's bigger than we think we can. Right?

Because how many of you have ever experienced a painful experience? How many of you have ever known a degree of trauma? Upset? Frustration? Disappointment? Right? And so, for most of us, the methodology – that's a big word... For most of us, the way we deal with that is: we close our heart. And we think that's a great idea. If we close our heart, then we can't get hurt again! So we keep it closed, and we keep it closed and we keep it closed. And we think that we've just solved all our problems, because our heart is closed; we can't ever get hurt again!

The thing that begins to happen is: happy people begin to annoy us.

[Congregation laughs]

Is it true? Happy people begin to annoy us! Because we're so shut down that anybody that's happy becomes absolutely Public Enemy #1. And the happier they get, the more annoyed we are! Right? And so we stay annoyed – in our righteous annoyance – for years and years and years, until the moment that we decide it's time to open our heart again. That cute little Cindy Lou Who is just too much cuteness for us not to open our hearts. And we open our hearts!

And then we begin – for the first time in a long, long time – to remember how it feels like to love and to be loved. And being loved and loving is really what every soul comes to experience. How much can I love? And how much can I let others love me?

And it seems radically crazy to open your heart when there's pain in the world. It seem crazy! Like, who would ever do that? And yet, over and over again, the more we open our hearts, the more everything in life begins to make sense again.

How many of you know that you could open your heart more? How many of you know that you've used pain and the past to keep yourself shut down in little and big ways? And how many of us would be willing to open our hearts this holiday to really see if we could love and be loved in greater ways than we ever had before?

See, one of the parts of this story that I like about the best is the part that says that, when his heart opened, he went right back into Whoville.

Now, how many of you have ever made a mistake? Anybody make a mistake?

[Congregation laughs]

Anybody ever make a big mistake? Like, a really, really big mistake? How many of you would think that, if you stole Christmas, that would be a big mistake? If you stole Christmas for a whole town, that would be a really, really big mistake! Wouldn't that be a big mistake?

Now, if you made a really, really big mistake, and you realized it was a big mistake, would you go down to town feeling the joy of your heart opening up? Or would you leave in shame?

See, what I want you to see this Christmas is: how many times you're making a choice out of shame that keeps you from love. Because the reality is: we've all made mistakes. Some of us are just really good at it. Right?

[Congregation laughs]

Some of us just excel at mistakes, right? And the mistakes are never the problem! Right? The problem is when we keep our shame from letting us back into love. When we keep our story or our drama from moving back into love.

This Christmas, would you be willing to open your heart to let love out? And to let more love in? Because we think it should be the easiest thing in the world, but for most of us, it's the hardest thing we do! Because we know our story. We know all the silly, creepy, stupid mistakes we've made. And we let those things keep us from love over and over and over again.

This Christmas, what if you just decide that your story is no different than mine [The Grinch]. That you're "Grinchy" from time to time. And that your Grinchiness – your mistakes – don't keep you from love. They don't keep you from all the love that's totally available to you right now.

See, the easiest thing in the world – to open your heart – for most of us is our life's greatest work. So I want you to practice. Will you practice with me?

I want you to just feel the size of your heart. Now, you're just going to make that up, right? You're going to make that up. I want you to just close your eyes, if you're willing, and I want you to feel the size of your heart. And now I want you to feel your heart becoming three sizes bigger. Breathe into your heart! That your heart could be three sizes bigger! See how it feels to be able to give and receive that much love. Feel how vulnerable you feel when your heart's three sizes bigger! Feel how scary that is when your heart's three sizes bigger! And tonight, you're going to trust love. You're going to trust love over and over and over again. You're going to trust love to be the greatest power in your life. To attract the greatest good. And so we say, "Thank you! Thank you, God; thank you, God; thank you, God!" And so it is. Amen.

So God bless you all! Merry Christmas! Thank you for being here tonight, and I hope you have a wonderful Christmas season!

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