

The message given by Rev. Dr. Tom Zoelzer on Sunday, June 6, 2010 based on 1 Samuel 16:1-13.

Looking on the Heart

I have been doing some research, and I have discovered that congratulations are in order for our graduating High School Seniors: if you would have graduated from High School in United States of America 100 years ago in 1910, you would be in an elite group. Only 10% of people your age graduated from High School that year.

Whether you were a High School graduate or not, you probably could have found a job in 1910 because the unemployment rate was 2.3%, but you needed to live fast in 1910 because the life expectance of a man was 48 and 51 for a women. If you were a High School graduate you probably would have been able to get paid more than the average worker which was \$15 per week or \$750 per year.

I am disturbed to discover that the number of hours worked per week is returning to the 1910 average of 54 to 60 hours per week. Women were not prevalent in the work force in 1910 unless you were a child or a young woman because child labor was allowed. Another sad statistic of 1910 was that there were 76 lynching in America that year.

In 1910, you had a 50% chance that your occupation would be a farmer, a farm worker or a machine operator including a delivery driver (truck or horse) whereas today only 12% of the population is in those professions. Today, over 50% of American workers are professionals, technicians, managers, proprietors, and clerical workers.

Today, the 3 most popular careers are Network System Analysts, Physicians Assistant, and Medical Assistant. Most of those jobs didn't exist 100 years ago. I wonder what will be the most popular jobs 25 years from now.

In the 1970s, one of the popular movies of the time was *Cabaret* starring Lisa Minnelli, Joel Gray and others. It is the story of an American girl singing in a nightclub in Germany in 1930 during another time of economic downturn. One of the songs of the movie goes like this:

Money makes the world go around
 The world go around
 The world go around
 Money makes the world go around
 It makes the world go 'round.

A mark, a yen, a buck, or a pound
 A buck or a pound
 A buck or a pound
 Is all that makes the world go around,
 That clinking clanking sound
 Can make the world go 'round

It does seem that money does make the world go round today. We seem to spend most of our time thinking about it and acquiring it. But Jesus seems to have another thought. His thought is that "love" makes the world. It's love that makes the world go round.

When Jesus was asked to list the greatest commandment in the Scriptures, he didn't pick the ones about commerce. He picked the ones

about love and compassion. Jesus seemed to think that love not money really makes the world go round.

So what is a person of faith to do?.. For me, it is a balancing act that balances personal needs with the common good. It balances the desire for personal well being through money with consideration of others. It balances providing for ourselves while supporting ways for others to do the same. Money may make the world go round, but love makes it go round better!

In the Bible, love is an attitude of compassion and care that starts with God and radiates throughout human existence and behavior. The love of God that Jesus speaks about keeps life in balance because if only money makes the world go round then we can justify slavery. If money makes the world go round then we can justify oppression and rampant classism. If money makes the world go round, then when it is gone, there is nothing.

But if love and compassion makes the world go round then there is something more. We find ways to be connected to each other. If love makes the world go round then we find solutions that help all people and we thrive. If love makes the world go round, then we care.

Today in scripture, Samuel was told to anoint the next king of Israel, and he was surprised who the candidate was. It was not the handsome, tall, oldest son of Jesse but it was the boy named David because Samuel was told that God looks upon the heart not outward appearance to determine who is right with God.

What would God find on your heart? Does God find compassion and love there that keeps your life in balance? Or does God find hardness and fear that crowds out the love. Jesus invites us to open our heart and let the love and compassion of God in so that we find the peace and ingenuity to not only solve our concerns but do it in a way that brings others along and makes the world go round.

My thoughts today are with mostly young men from the United States, Canada, Great Britain, and France who dropped out of the sky and stormed the beaches of Normandy 66 years ago today to change history that declared that freedom not Nazi tyranny would make the world go round. My thoughts are alive with young men and women of America who stood with their African American brothers and sisters in the 1960s and declared "We shall overcome" so that all Americans could be truly equal and have equal opportunity in America. My thoughts are alive today with young men and women of China who 21 years ago now stood in Tiananmen Square and declared "Let freedom ring!"

Yes, we live in changing and challenging times. But it is often the youth of the world that have the courage to bring change. It is the love of God that keeps us in balance so that we find the things we need to thrive. What's on your heart? Amen.