



“Remnant Beauty”

BY PASTOR JOHN HILLMER

“Project Runway” - Do you know the show? Jan and I have watched a time or two. That is what happens when you are married to an art teacher who specializes in fabrics as her art medium. One episode had a warehouse with ‘odd lots’ of fabric. Remnants; the pieces left over from the full bolt of fabric. That is what the designers had to work with in that episode and beautiful creations came out of it! Some of you quilters out there work with ‘remnants’ (scraps) from other fabrics and have made them into beautiful works of art.

In the Old Testament, the Shepherds have scattered the sheep but God will gather the ‘remnant’ and restore Blessing. The Shepherds - the Kings of Israel (“Shepherd Kings”) cared NOT for the sheep but only themselves. God will gather up the scattered, the lost, the remnant and restore.

We hear in John 10, I am the Good Shepherd; or in Psalm 23, The LORD is my Shepard. The GOSPEL tells us Jesus healed all who were weak, sick, disabled. Many who were ‘cast off’ or ‘cast out’ - in other words the remnants of society - Jesus restored them. He made them whole and beautiful.

We, the church, are given the work of gathering the remnants, and caring for them. NO ONE is beyond God’s grace and love. We are all God’s Children and so we gather the remnants, just like the Old Testament promise in Jeremiah. Nothing and NO one is beyond worth. The world may say: “Forget it. Forget them. Too far gone.” God’s grace says: “Gather! Gather the remnant.”

Sometimes, we are the remnant and God gathers US. We, who ‘didn’t fit in’ to the tapestry - the larger fabric that someone else was spinning, and creating - were left to the side, or on the scrap-heap where we’ve become forgotten. Yet God gathers us.

The Gospel again tells us: "The Apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all they had done..."

Sunday worship is like missionaries home on leave who share the stories of God working in the world both through them and around them. As we worship here today, we gather around Jesus! We share where we have seen God at work in our lives and in the world. Jesus in his great compassion teaches us, feeds us, and sends us forth again forgiven, restored, refreshed and renewed to be servants and witnesses in the world.

"Remnant Beauty" - God sees the worth, the value, the beauty of every child on earth. Whether they are 'apostles', or shepherds (shepherds who have done their job, or shepherds who have forfeited their leadership role); whether they are fishermen, or Pharisees; whether they are the sick, and the sidelined, God, in Jesus, gathers them up and gives them a place of welcome, of healing and of acceptance.

To touch even the hem of his garment / the fringe of his cloak and they were healed.

Think of what that cloak must have looked like: tattered and torn, and its beauty. Beauty NOT in its outward appearance but in its power and purpose in the world.

May WE see beauty in the world. Not "as" the world sees beauty but as God sees it in Jesus.

Amen.