

Meditation for October 28, 2018
“A Grown-ups’ Sermon”
on
Where the Wild Things Are

Luke 15:11-24

It’s all about sin and grace. On Sunday morning we usually have a service that is designed for grown-ups. The hymns and readings and such are on an adult’s level for the most part, but in the service we have a time for the children. During that time we bring the theme or message of the service down to level of children.

Today’s service is kind of the reverse. The service is designed on a child’s level. The use of the children’s book “Where the Wild Things Are” sets the tone of the service for a child. This meditation is an attempt to bring that theme down to a grown up’s level. It occurred to me that I could even ask all the grown-ups to come down and sit on the floor for this part of the service, but I quickly came to the conclusion that it wouldn’t work either logistically or orthopedically.

The story of the Prodigal Son, which we just read, is a good Biblical story that brings the message down to where even grown-ups can understand.

The story is simple. It’s all about sin and grace. A man has two sons. The younger one says to the father, “You’re dead to me. Give me my half of the estate.” Amazingly the father does, and the son goes off to a distant land and wastes it all on wild living.

Then the son comes to his senses, and he decides to go back to his father. He doesn’t expect to be welcomed back, but he goes to offer himself as a servant, not a son. The father has been looking for the son to come back, and graciously the father welcomes him back. He brings him robes, and shoes, and a signet ring symbolizing that he was a son, and not a servant. Then they roast the fatted calf and have a feast!

The son had sinned against his father and God, but the father was gracious and forgiving and welcomed him back. In the same way God is gracious and welcomes us back.

In “Where the Wild Things Are,” Max acts like a wild thing. He dresses up like a wolf and acts out. His mother even says that is acting like a wild thing. He embraces that title.

Because Max is acting like a wild thing, his mother sends him to bed without his supper. No pizza and macaroni and cheese for Max! In his dreams Max goes to a distant land where the wild things are. He even becomes their king and leads a wild rumpus! After all the psalmist reminds us that God is the Creator of all living things, including the wild things. After a time Max comes to his senses and wants to go back to where he is loved, so he starts the long journey back home.

When he arrives back in his room he wakes up to the smell of his supper by the door. His mother has welcomed him back. He wakes to the smell of – pizza! She was ready for him to come back, and had already slaughtered the fatted peperoni for him.

We’ve all been wild things. We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. We have all acted mean and ferociously to our neighbor and have not heard the cry of the needy. We have from time to time journeyed to the land of the wild things. We have even relished being the ruler of the wild things and leading a rumpus.

Then like the Prodigal Son, and Max, we came to our senses. We decided to go back to that place where we are loved best of all. Sometimes it was a long journey. Sometimes it was just about opening our eyes.

In that moment, we found ourselves back at home in the midst of God’s love and grace. Wait, what’s that I smell? Is that bread, and wine? Look! The father has welcomed us back from where the wild things are and set a table for us. Through Jesus’ death, God has embraced us and prepared a meal for us. Come, let us keep the feast!