

## Introduction

Check-in & Introductions

*"How Far I'll Go"*

## Old Testament Lesson

Deuteronomy 26:1-11 (NRSV)

<sup>1</sup>When you have come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess, and you possess it, and settle in it, <sup>2</sup>you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from the land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his name. <sup>3</sup>You shall go to the priest who is in office at that time, and say to him, "Today I declare to the LORD your God that I have come into the land that the LORD swore to our ancestors to give us." <sup>4</sup>When the priest takes the basket from your hand and sets it down before the altar of the LORD your God, <sup>5</sup>you shall make this response before the LORD your God: "A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. <sup>6</sup>When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labor on us, <sup>7</sup>we cried to the LORD, the God of our ancestors; the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. <sup>8</sup>The LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; <sup>9</sup>and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. <sup>10</sup>So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, O LORD, have given me." You shall set it down before the LORD your God and bow down before the LORD your God. <sup>11</sup>Then you, together with the Levites and the aliens who reside among you, shall celebrate with all the bounty that the LORD your God has given to you and to your house.

## Bible/Sermon Focus

At the end of the book of Genesis, the people of God had made their way to Egypt and there they grew in number. But a new Pharaoh rose into power who did not know the people, and he enslaved them and forced them to do hard labor. Within just a few generations the people of God forgot who they were. By the time God summons Moses to free the people, God has to remind Moses of who God is. "I am the God of your father, of your ancestor Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." And Moses responds to the call and guides his people out of slavery to freedom.

In just a few generations the people of God forgot their own story. Moses didn't even know what name to call God. When we forget to tell our story, when we forget to hold onto the corporate memory of our community, we risk losing our identity.

In the same way Moana's people had forgotten that they were once a people who explored the oceans finding new islands. The skill of wayfinding had been lost. This piece of their history that was so integral to their identity had been almost forgotten. And they almost died as a population for it.

We must make practices and rituals to remember our story and to pass it down from generation to generation, or we risk losing our way. And this is what our scripture from today is touching on. In the wilderness God gave the people a law, with built in rituals that would give

them opportunities to retell their story to the next generation. A massive part of our faith is found in the practices of worship, of high days and holy days, where we tell the stories again and again. Where we partake in rituals of remembrance. So that when we die the next group knows who they are and who God is. And when the young know the story, they, like Moana and like Moses will continue by the grace of God to guide us further into freedom.

We are who we are because of the people who came before us and we respond by working within our community and sharing this story and life together. And when we do it right, the young will guide us and remind us of who we are.

## Discussion Questions

1. Discuss Disney's "Moana" in relation to this week's sermon.
2. How have the younger generation at our church and in the faith carried our story?
3. Who are the ancestors in our religion that you resonate the most with (from history or the Bible)?
4. Do you think it's important to Manchester UMC to lift up young leadership? How?
5. Who are the Gramma Tala's among us?
6. What was your favorite movie of this series?

## Prayer

Holy God, we thank you for ritual and story to remember you and your love for us. We thank you for the elders who pass on our story, and the new generations that continue it. We praise you for the way that you save your people over and over again. Amen.

*"And the call isn't out there at all, it's inside me  
It's like the tide  
Always falling and rising  
I will carry you here in my heart, you'll remind me  
That come what may  
I know the way"*