

**First United Methodist Church  
618 Eighth Street Columbus, IN 47201**

November 11, 2018

Youth Sunday

“Semonish” by Sami Heathcote

1 Samuel 17:45 and Mark 12:41-44

I do not enjoy speaking in front of people or having people read what I write. I feel uncomfortable sharing words with other people because I don't trust my words and I don't know how they will react to what I say. I am self-conscious of everything I say and am always trying to find the perfect words to use. In classes, I have to volunteer to go first for every presentation. If I do not go first, I am unable to appreciate other people's presentations because I am panicking about mine. While giving presentations, my palms will get super sweaty and sometimes I'll feel like I'm going to throw up. Therefore, speaking in front of you today is very much outside my comfort zone. I would much rather be sitting down there with the rest of the youth listening to someone else talk but I was told all of us have to give a sermon before we graduate and there are quite a few junior girls so I decided to go ahead and take my turn this year. But, still, this is a scary experience.

In our scripture today, we heard about different people putting money into the collection bin at a temple and we heard that Jesus was watching them. Many rich people in the scripture put in the large sums of money, but one woman had only two coins to give. This was the woman that Jesus noticed and called to the attention of his disciples. He praised her for her devotion to and trust in God. The two coins she placed into the basket were leptos, which together are equal to one kodrant (quadron), which is 1/64 of a denarius. A denarius was one day's pay for a worker during that time. Therefore, this woman was living off of less than 2% of a laborers daily wage. She had practically nothing to live off, but she wanted to give to the Lord, so she put her money into the box of offerings. She trusted that God would provide for her and did not worry about the future.

Most of us will probably never experience this level of destitution, so it is hard to relate to this woman's experience exactly. However, we can relate to her thoughts and feelings. This woman is faced with a decision in the story. She can put her money into the box and trust that God will provide for her or she can walk away with her two coins to find a nice, warm dinner. The comfortable choice would have been to take her coins and find some food, but the one she chose was the hard one. She chose the option that she knew was right but it was a little bit hard to do. A lot of times, we are like the rich people from the scripture. We want to do the right things, but we also want to be comfortable. We don't want to do something that is new or unknown because we are scared of the unknown.

Sometimes, staying within our comfort zone is a good idea. For example, if we thought it would be advantageous for someone to walk across a rapidly-moving river on only a tightrope, it might be better if we let a practiced tightrope walker do that good deed. Or if we need to travel across the seas to help in Africa, we should probably let a pilot fly us there instead of trying to fly ourselves. These are times when it might be better to stay in our comfort zone and let others

lend a hand, but a lot of the time, we could easily step out of our comfort zone without putting ourselves into too much danger, but instead we chose to stay comfortable.

Fairly recently, I got an opportunity to try something new. Every week, I go to “taco church” for lunch on Thursdays, which is where Asbury United Methodist serves tacos to high school students. Most weeks, the pastor of Asbury will walk around with the plate of jalapeno pieces trying to get us to eat them, so we have nicknamed him the “jalapeno guy”. This past week, however, jalapeno guy came in with jalapenos AND starbursts. For most of the people in this room, a jalapeno and starburst combination is probably not something you eat everyday or have even tried before. It definitely is not something I had tried before last Thursday, so I was very convinced that the two would taste terrible together, but jalapeno guy assured us that they were very yummy, so we all tried them. Surprisingly, it tasted fairly good. The sweetness of the starburst helped to calm the spiciness of the jalapeno so that together, they created a wonderfully sweet and spicy combination. Although most of my table was fairly hesitant at first to eat the strange, new combination, our entire group tried it by the end of our lunch period. Some people took a little more coaxing than others, but eventually, with all of our group supporting each other, we were able to step up and try the scary, new food together. With the support of friends, trying things that aren’t comfortable can be made a little bit easier.

In the movie Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer, Rudolph is cast out of the reindeer games because of his red nose. Hermey, one of the elves, has a passion for dentistry and wants to quit making toys. They both decide to leave the North Pole in search of acceptance. Here is a clip of when they meet. (PLAY VIDEO) Leaving the North Pole and becoming independent was an experience outside of their comfort zones, but being independent together was a little bit easier.

Much like how stepping out of your comfort zone can be made easier with the help of friends, the song “Shoulders” tells us that God is there to support every day in our times of confusion and chaos. It reminds us that our strength comes from God. The song shows us that although stepping out of our comfort zone can be scary, with God and other supportive people surrounding us, we can do it.

Although speaking up here today is not comfortable for me, it is not as scary as if I was speaking in front of strangers or in a different place. In this church, I know that God is with me and supporting me. I know he’s cheering me on, telling me that I can do it. Also, I know that the people sitting in front of me are supportive people who have taken in all I’ve said today with open hearts and open minds. Stepping outside of our comfort zones can be a very challenging and uncomfortable experience, but it is far easier when you remember that God is with you just as he was with the woman that put all of her money into the collection plate and when we remember that there are plenty of encouraging people to help you along the way just as my friends helped me to try the jalapeno and starburst combination.