

## Leadership – January 10, 2021 Sermon

Stand before the people you fear and speak your mind - even if your voice shakes.

Maggie Kuhn

Dave Weldon

Little did I know that when I picked the topic of “Leadership” for today’s sermon that a group of people would storm the Capital and attempt to thwart the constitutionally mandated process of the Senate and House of Representatives.

A group that does not believe the results of the election chanted, “Hang Pence!” and erected a makeshift gallows on the capital grounds. I heard with horror that a vehicle filled with bombs, guns, and zip ties was in front of the Library of Congress (my favorite building in all DC.) There is a group of people from pandemic

to science to elections who refuse to admit facts over conspiracy. I have always contended that ignorance is much more dangerous than stupidity. I believe that we are seeing the fruition of ignorance.

I will admit I am afraid to even mention it today from this pulpit, nevertheless, do what I believe every member of clergy ought do in the Presbyterian church, condemn the acts of violence with no reservation.

I am sad that there might people who might think it inappropriate that I condemn acts of political violence from a pulpit, but I am led by my faith, conscience, scripture, and our confessions. It troubles me more that there are those that think that standing up for truth is an act on some of our parts to elevate just one side of an argument. I believe in truth. I would not be a clergy if I did not believe in truth. I think that some of what people are portraying

as an argument for the other side are merely excuses to remain in ignorance of truth.

We are reminded that the truth will set us free. It is for politicians concerned with power like Pilate to respond to truth by asking, "What is truth?" We believe that truth is real and exhibited in the nature and person of Jesus Christ who was claimed by God as God's own during his baptism.

Ignorance is not bliss. Ignorance is the opposite of truth. Ignorance is not stupidity. Ignorance is an active psychological and spiritual process to ban reality from our presence. Ignorance is much more dangerous than a reduced mental facility. Ignorance is wrong.

There are people who will always traffic in perpetuating ignorance for their own gain. They will not be people who are reliable, nor will they be dependable in the future. Truth exists.

There are not a set of facts for one person and a set of facts differently for those who are on opposite sides of a religious or political spectrum. We must reject cultivated ignorance as both dangerous to the neighbor we love and to the spirituality that honors a deeper truth.

What this does not mean is that any are rejected by God. God shows love and through the prophets implores his people to return to the truth and reject idols made of stone and wood. Idols that cannot speak, cannot see, cannot hear, and cannot feel.

Leadership means that we must have the humility to listen, to discern, but also to stand on the side of truth when it is called, no matter the cost.

It should be of no controversy for a minister of Jesus Christ to condemn violence in all forms. So, today I condemn the violence that I

witnessed at the capital which was so dangerous and those who seek to gain any change by violent means.

It has never been easier to turn the channel and live in denial of facts, reason, logic, the center of our spirituality, or even science. That doesn't make it right. You can go somewhere else if you don't like a message, or a pastor.

What we are called for here is none other than the most radical task and maybe the most foolhardy. Believing that no matter who we are, no matter what we are convinced outside these doors that we are united in becoming the body of Jesus Christ. That means that those who may dislike me, must see me as one of God's own, claimed by God. It means that I must do the same in return.

No matter what happens in the world, it is our faith in Jesus Christ that can unite us, even in

the midst of violence and rancor. It is my prayer that we find a love that does not ignore the truth, but also finds humility, mercy, and justice.