

Sermon Title: **Mission Impossible?**

Bible: John 11:1-6, 32-44

Where & When: Sunday Service at Gilroy UMC on July 21st, 2019

Audience: about 30 English-speaking Church Members

Opening Prayer

Gracious God, you are everything. Your grace is always with us. Please open our eyes to your presence among us. Please guide us to see you and your vision, and your mission. Please use me, according to your will. In Jesus' name. Amen.

1. Movie Night #1 – The Mission (1986)

We are having three movie nights this summer. I plan to share two messages related to each movie. The first movie was not “Mission Impossible,” but “The Mission (1986).” Have you watched this movie before? Do you like this movie? The first reason why I chose this movie was the music. But today's message is not about the music. I will share my second message with the music on the first Sunday of August. It is coming soon. So please stay tuned.

2. What bothers me?

I believe that some of you do not want to watch this movie, because it bothers us in many ways. But I recommend that you watch this movie. So, I will be careful about how I share this movie's story, because I do not want to be a spoiler. I want to be kind of a good trailer. The

ending is not what we want to see. It is not a happy ending. I confess that this movie shows an unavoidable reality in South America in the 18th century. This unhappy reality does not stop even now and here. I can say that it is not just the story of others, but it is the story of us. It is our story, even though it is difficult to see and digest.

This movie bothers me as well. I watched this movie at least three times. Every time, this movie bothers me, but it gives me some insights. In the movie, there were some native people who joined the army of the colonial government. Maybe they were from different tribes, but some of the native people joined the fight against other native people. The colonialism divided the native people and pitted them against each other. These native people were not able to exercise their free will. They could not make their own decisions. They could not have their own faith.

This bothers me, because this causes me to look into my theology. We are all theologians. As our faith journeys are different and unique, our theologies--what we believe-- are different and unique. According to the history and context, there are many theologies: Black Theology by African Americans, Liberation Theology by Latin America, Feminist Theology by women, Asian Feminist Theology by women in Asia, and Minjung Theology by Koreans. Each group has their own context, history, and experience. They by themselves develop their own theology. How about me? As a Korean who came to America, and who serves Gilroy United Methodist Church, what theology do I have? What theology do I live? Do I have my own theology? Who

develops my theology? Do I have freewill? Or, do I just copy others' theologies? I will never stop these questions. That's because this is an ongoing process, like our life and our faith journey. We are - all and always - under construction. But I will not worry about this. I might be too serious, but I will rejoice in this faith journey. In our Methodist understanding, through sanctifying grace, we will grow and mature as who we are, as whom God intends us to be.

3. Mission Impossible in the Movie?

In the movie, the main two figures made their own decisions, when they faced a great threat. They made their choices, according to their own theologies, what they believed. Even though they were friends, their decisions were very different. But they respected each other's decisions. One marched with the cross - the passive resistance, and the other fought with the sword and gun. Both wanted to protect their community, their dream, and their mission. Unfortunately, both failed. Their ways did not work out. Their dream did not come true. Their mission was done incompletely. However, this was not the actual ending to this movie. There are more stories in the following generations of the native people, in the governors, and in us. So, I will say that their dream and their mission is still on the way.

4. Mission Impossible in Gilroy?

How about our mission, our dream? First of all, we should develop and live our own theology. Who knows Gilroy? Who lives in Gilroy? Who can do God's mission for Gilroy? Who has

God's dream for Gilroy? No one but us can do these. We are all Gilroy-an. I am one Gilroy-an, who knows the taste of the garlic ice cream. We love Gilroy and we care about Gilroy. God sends you and me to serve not only this church, but also this community. God needs you and me. We are the church for this community. Then, what is our understanding, our mission, and our dream for Gilroy Community? What can we do for Gilroy? Where do we see God's smile and God's tears in Gilroy? I believe that these questions will lead us to find out our Gilroy Theology.

We should remember that God's timing and God's way might be different from ours. In the scripture we read, Jesus was not there when Lazarus needed Him. Oh no, Jesus was late. Mary said to Jesus, "If you had been here, my brother would not have died." Martha also said to Him, "There is a bad odor, because he has been dead four days." I do not understand why Jesus was late, why Jesus was not there when they needed him. In the movie, it is difficult to find out God's presence - where was God, when people suffered?

Jesus' way might be different from ours. What Jesus wants us to do can be different from what we want to do. Martha and Mary wanted Jesus to come and cure Lazarus. But what Jesus did was not to cure Lazarus' disease, but to raise Lazarus from death to life. And what Jesus wanted them to do is to take away the stone. Jesus' way is not what we expected.

For our life, and for this church and this community, God's timing can seem late, according to our perspectives. Sometimes, we cannot understand God's way, because it is beyond our

knowledge. But when God tells me to take away the stone, I will take away the stone with my faith! Between the scriptures that we read, in John 11:25-26, Jesus said “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” I believe that Jesus is the resurrection and the life. Our mission cannot be impossible with Jesus. I will do what I can do. And God will do what God can do for us. That’s because God is in us here and now.

Closing Prayer

Gracious God, you are the resurrection and the life. You are the one who lives in us and leads us to the life. Please show us your way, your timing, and your mission. We are here to follow our Lord, Jesus Christ. In Jesus’ name. Amen!

Possible Questions.

1. What can you do for this church and this community?
2. Where do you see God’s smile and tears in Gilroy?