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Jesus told him, 'Go and do likewise.' Luke 10:37 NIV July 10, 2016

So, to borrow a phrase from a well-known manufacturer, the theme today is 'Just do it' Thank you Nike!

Last week we were talking about flowers, and how growing, to them, is **an entirely natural process**. They just keep on growing... (and the weeds keep on growing faster if anything) Their mission is to reach up to the sun, and to produce flowers, and then seeds for the following year, for the future.

Through a process called photosynthesis, plants use energy in sunlight to turn a gas called carbon dioxide and water into sugar. Plants then use this sugar to grow. At the same time, plants produce a gas called oxygen as a waste product, which is lucky for us and other animals because we need oxygen to breathe!

Now at this point in time we should be asking ourselves...how did this come about?

Was it an entirely random act of nature that started this whole cycle? What are the odds that a plant suddenly materialized on the earth, and got the idea **all by itself** that it could do all this, and then proceeded to do it. Just do it!

The more you study nature, the more you get the distinct impression that there is some lifeforce at work in the world.

A force beyond our comprehension, and certainly waaay beyond our human brains.

Where things are happening out there on a daily basis, on an hourly basis, on a minute by minute, second by second basis, and all these impulses to grow and mature, are co-ordinated, are designed this way. **Life has a rhythm. There is purpose in the world.** There is structure, an order, and an awe-inspiring infrastructure, which all works together in glorious harmony, to support human existence, just as God said it would in the book of Genesis.

Genesis 1:11 Then God said, 'Let the land produce vegetation; seed bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds. And it was so. The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

There is synergy. A combination of energies, all working in harmony, And the author of all this energy, is our Creator. The life force of the universe. **It's the exact opposite to the Wizard of Oz**

scenario. You remember the story, of Dorothy, heading off with her three friends to meet the mighty wizard of Oz, only to discover one small man behind a curtain with a large microphone. It's the exact opposite in nature. Behind every small plant, every drop of rain, every sneeze, every baby animal, every grain of sand, every breath we take, **is an awesome power, far greater than we could ever imagine.** And we, we have been entrusted with supervising this earth with it's amazing variety of vegetation, animals, trees, birds, and critters of every color, shape and size.

Genesis 1:29. 'Then God said, 'I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground- everything that has the breath of life in it- I give every green plant for food. And it was so.

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.

Which brings me back to 'Just do it.' We were designed to grow. Just like all things in nature. We were designed to go through stages of life, and at some point, when we are fully mature, to prepare for the future, by sowing seeds of our own, for the next generation, the next and the next.

Nothing in life is random. Just as I refuse to accept that we are a random collection of atoms that just happened to evolve, living on a planet that just happened millions of years ago to explode at exactly the right time in the space continuum, and at the right angle, at the precise moment in time, when life could become sustainable in an otherwise dark and empty cosmos.

There is intention in life. And we are called to live our lives, naturally. We were not designed to go round and round in circles, overthinking, underacting, and plateauing in general. We were not designed to be couch potatoes, fence sitters, or onlookers. **We were designed to engage in life.** To look for opportunities to grow upwards, just like the plants, growing up to the sun. **We were designed to grow up. Period.**

St. Paul writes in I Corinthians, chapter 13:11. 'When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me.'

And what is at the core of our existence? Love.

That is our source of energy. That is what will propel us forward, leaving the past in the dust. Love will energize us, so that we too, can complete our mission, our purpose on this earth.

Living with love, by love, through love, for love is the greatest gift God has given us.

Love puts life in perspective. Love gives us the big picture

1 Corinthians 13:6 'Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

And in the story of the Good Samaritan this morning, we saw love triumph over doubt, anxiety, practicalities and selfish considerations. A good man, from Samaria, did an outstanding act of generosity, by stopping to help another human being, in a hostile environment, and regardless of others might think.

You see, the people of Judea did not like Samaritans.

They looked down on them. For a Samaritan, even travelling in Judea was taking a risk. But to stop and help someone, Samaritan or Jew, or Gentile, we never find out, was a brave act.

Furthermore, he made provision for that man's future, by taking him to a safe place, and leaving money to provide for his needs.

Going the extra mile. Just doing it.

Campaign in Canada to get people fit... don't just think about it, do it, do it, do it. Participaction!

Get off the couch and into the park.

Get out of the

car and walk,

Get into a boat and row.

Stop what you are not doing, and do something different. Just do it!

We were designed to interact with others. As a community of faith, as soccer team, as a family, as a nation. We were designed to grow. Together.

Have you ever noticed an animal sit down and get out a daytimer, and plan the week ahead? Have you ever seen a plant, close its petals up and keep itself to itself because it thinks the flower next to it is being mean?

If you are powered by love, by good intentions, by trust and confidence in the good Lord, then you just will keep on putting one foot in front of the other, just like nature does... it keeps on keeping on.

Ever seen a weed grow through a crack in the concrete? That is one determined weed. Or a line of ants carry food back to its nest. They march along, up, down, through. No obstacle is too big.

The secret to their success. Teamwork. They work together.

When we work together, we can achieve far more than we can as individuals. That was certainly brought home to me this week, in the Parsonage, with all the help I have received.

One person after another has turned up to replace blinds, to look at my computer, to wash, clean, tote trash, with furniture, lights, food, pots and pans. I have had my own personal Milford army at work this week, and it was all powered by love. Caring for another individual. Putting aside personal considerations. Turning up in the evening after a long day's work. Turning up in the morning in the pouring rain. My sincere thanks to one and all. There would be no sermon this morning without a very determined young man called Steve, who came to help. My own personal Good Samaritan! He even wrote the last word of my sermon for me on a piece of paper. Amen.

We were designed to grow.

We are part of a world that is master-minded by a loving Creator with a meticulous eye for detail, and just like the flowers and the plants, we need to keep growing, in faith. That is our purpose on this earth, to learn, and to grow strong in faith, all the while trusting in God.

Proverbs 3:5-6. ‘Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.’

As we finish this mini-series on flowers and plants, let’s remember that God originally designed man to live on the land and off the land. **Through the language of flowers** we can communicate and reach out to others, in times when we can’t find words to say.

Flowers are a beautiful reminder that God is an artist at work in our world. Some of us are artists, and we bring God pleasure when we create our own works of art. **We reflect His glory.**

Flowers connect us with nature, and we are designed to bear fruit.

To stay connected to the vine of life, and to work together.

To reach out to others, just as some of our vines curl around the garden stakes, for additional strength as they grow.

Our second Scripture reading this morning from Paul’s letter to the Christians in Colossus, talks about the natural result of being a Christian. **Bearing fruit. Making a difference.**

Colossians 1:10 And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints of the kingdom of light.’

In the week to come, I invite us all to look for opportunities to help. To come alongside with a kind word, or to simply be there. It’s perfectly natural. It’s the way God planted us on this earth. We may not have our feet buried in the ground, but we intended to grow, just like the lilies in the field.

Not to grow upwards, not to **the sun**, like the flowers, but to grow towards **the Son**, God’s only Son, Jesus Christ. Trust in him, and he will make your paths straight.

Let us pray:

Heavenly father, each time I see a flower, remind me that I am as precious to you as each petal I see. Remind me that I am connected through nature to You, and that I am to be powered by Love. Help me to set aside selfish ambitions, pride and envy, and to focus instead of what part I

can play in growing your Kingdom of heaven, here on earth. In Your Son's precious name, we pray. Jesus Christ. Amen.