

March 4, 2018 - The Post

John 2:13-22

Today is the third Sunday in Lent and for us that means it is also the third Sunday of this year's "Lenten Movie Series." What are the movies we've talked about so far? (*leave time for answers.. Darkest Hour and Lady Bird.*) Today we will be reflecting on the film, *The Post*. I realize that this movie has not been shown here or in Gull Lake and it is also not yet available for download on iTunes, so I'm sure many of you have not been able to see it. When you get the chance... go ... it's worth the rental or box office fee. This is an exhilarating thriller that will keep you engaged right to the end.

The Post is based on a true story. It is set in the early 1970's when the United States was still involved in the war in Vietnam. The New York Times has just published an article that exposes the lies that the United States government has been telling for years about their involvement in the war. Despite knowing that they could never win, multiple administrations continued to send soldiers to die because none of them wanted to be the one to admit defeat. The New York Times got that information from top secret documents referred to as the Pentagon Papers. They planned a series of articles but their publication was halted by a court injunction.

It was then that the Washington Post got its hands on those same top secret papers. Now *The Post* had to decide whether it would go ahead and publish

despite the possibility that it too would end up in court. The Washington Post was a relatively small local paper and their publisher had just decided to sell shares on the stock exchange in order to raise money to keep their finances healthy. Any scandal could jeopardize the very existence of The Post. Kathleen Graham, the owner and publisher was from an influential family with many contacts in Washington. She knew that by running the article she could lose, not only some of her closest friends, but her freedom, and the paper that was her family's legacy. *The Post* is a film about "freedom of the press." It is a film about having the courage to "speak truth to power" even when the stakes are high.

Jesus also knew what it meant to speak truth even when those in power didn't like what he was saying. Jesus preached a message of justice for the poor, he made a point of spending time with the marginalized and he often ignored the Jewish Laws if they got in the way of his ministry of healing and preaching. We know that the power elite in Jesus' society, those who were colluding with the Roman Empire, recognized him as a threat and began to conspire to kill him. Jesus travelled to Jerusalem knowing that he was in danger and yet he still went to the temple, overturned the tables of the moneychangers and drove both the people and animals being sold for sacrifice out of the building. This was a man who was not only willing to speak his truth, but he was also courageous enough to act on it too.

We are living in both exciting and scary times. Women are finding their voice and telling their stories of harassment and abuse as the #metoo hashtag continues to gain momentum. Our First Nations people shared the devastating truth of their

residential school experience and the Truth & Reconciliation Commission made many recommendations for change. Our LGBTQ community is coming out of the closet and speaking up for the safety and the dignity of our youth. Here at First United Church we are holding Loose Change Suppers that give us an opportunity to connect, share meals and hear some of the stories of the marginalized in our community.

And yet we also live in a time

when the President of the United States makes openly racist statements;
when recent court decisions have deepened the racial divide in our province and in our country;
when people still struggle with the overwhelming burden of poverty; and
when gay teens can still feel so unsupported that they take their own lives.

So what is it that we are called to do? I want to show you a short video with the title, *The Danger of Silence*. It's a TEDtalk by a schoolteacher named Clint Smith. In it he describes his own struggle with speaking his truth. I want to warn you that near the end Clint moves into poetry and speaks very quickly, so don't worry if you don't catch every word... I think you will still get the essence of his poem.

https://www.ted.com/talks/clint_smith_the_danger_of_silence

We are called to speak our truth: to speak up when we know in our gut that something is wrong; to speak up when we know from our own experience that

justice is not being served; to speak up even when we are afraid. Our fears may be many: that we could offend, that we could make fools of ourselves, that we could lose our job, that we could lose face, or that we could even lose a friend. In most cases we won't have as much to lose as Jesus did, or even as much as Kathleen Graham did. But we have to ask ourselves, "How much am I willing to put on the line in order to turn truth to power?"