

Front and Center

Pastor's Blog

January 14, 2020

My children's names are Luke, Leah (pronounced Lay-uh), and Ben. If you have seen any Star Wars movie, you probably make the connection pretty quickly. Over the Christmas holiday, we all went one last time together to see the final installment in the Skywalker saga. While the movie is flawed, I actually liked it a lot, as did we all. If you haven't seen it yet and plan to, stop reading here because spoilers will follow.

What is it about these, admittedly a bit hokey, space movies that has captured my imagination so fully? It's actually the same reason I am a lover of the *Lord of the Rings* and *Harry Potter* books and films. In these stories, a central theme concerns evil and the possibility of good coming out of evil, or of people who seem to be evil recovering the good core of themselves, or of evil being defeated by good. Darth Vader remembers the Anakin within him and saves the life of his son. Kylo Ren remembers the Ben Skywalker Solo within him and saves Rey. Draco Malfoy's mother saves Harry's life. In the books, Harry reaches out to Lord Voldemort one last time to offer him the possibility of leaving evil behind and reclaiming his life. It was so interesting to me that this pivotal scene was left out of the film. Frodo struggles against the evil of the One Ring longer than anyone before him, and in the end is saved by a character sadder and more deranged than evil.

It's the same reason I love the Bible. Story after story speaks of God seeking to bring good out of evil, healing out of hurt. Moses gives Pharaoh many chances to let the enslaved Hebrews go. Prophet after prophet offer people ways to reconnect with God. Mary agrees to bear yet another hope. The crucified and risen Jesus comes to those who denied and deserted him and says, "Peace be with you."

In these dark winter days, in these times of so much struggle, we need to remember that hope, not despair, is our default setting. The waters of baptism that touched us injected the hope into our souls, the hope that comes from remembering stories told about the possibility of good overcoming what is not good. May the Spirit move all of us forward into possibility, into good, into hope, into love.



~ Rev. Shelly Stackhouse
Transitional Minister