

Boldly Go

(A Post-Event Resource for YOUTH2023)



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Youth 2023 Main Stage | July 25, 2023 (evening)

Rachel Billups, Talk 1, “Be Bold” (Esther 4:1-17)

Meet The Speaker

1. *We are talking about “being yourself.” What three words would you use to describe yourself?*

Determined. Competitive. Loving (“I love everybody.”)

2. *We are talking about being “bold”; some of us think of superheroes. Do you have a favorite superhero?*

Wonder Woman. She knows how to fight for the right stuff; she's strong and beautiful.

3. *What might you say today to Middle School Rachel, who felt so small after not being picked to be a leader?*

“You are going to get plenty of opportunities in the future. Hang in there, kid! Let that frustration you feel inside you fuel your fierce for the future because it's going to.”

4. *Being bold can be difficult. What tips, tricks, or suggestions might you share with youth today to be bold?*

First, you will always be afraid; so do it, be afraid. Step forward, afraid. Take that risk, afraid. Fear doesn't go away; you just have to do it.

You never do bold alone. The future is partnership; the future is collaboration; the future is together. A preacher on a stage gives us the illusion of one person - but the preacher has a team of people behind them.

Worship Reflection

Recall what you can remember (or watch the clips) from Rachel Billups's stage talk on night one, July 25.

Rachel retells the story of Esther. Before we read any of it, *what do you know about the story of Esther?*

The key moment of Esther occurs in Chapter 4. Leading up to this chapter, a man named Haman has hatched a plan to annihilate the Jews and manipulated King Xerxes to make an official proclamation. Esther's cousin, Mordecai, is deeply concerned by this; and unable to reach Esther directly, he reaches out to her through servants. This is where we pick up the story:

Read Esther 4.

Discussion

1. What is the bold action that Esther is asked to take?
2. Rev. Billups described Esther as living in a state of fear. Fear can be a debilitating force in our lives. What fears keep you from standing up and stepping out?
3. "Limitation prophecies," according to Rev. Billups, are those words that are spoken to us or over us that have limited our power or potential. Can you think of a time when you received a limitation prophecy? What was the experience like? How did it make you feel?
4. In Esther's story, she had to choose not to let the limitation prophecies she had received define her. Instead, she had to recognize her power. How might recognizing YOUR power change you? Would you live differently?
5. Esther 4:14 says, "For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?" (NIV) Use your holy imagination for a moment and fill in this blank: God is calling me for such a time as _____.
6. God worked through Esther to save God's people in spite of her fear. She surrendered her fear, summoned her faith, and handed her life over to God. Rev. Billups told us, "The time is now to be bold, to put our trust in God, and to surrender our fear." How do you envision this taking shape in your life?

Heroic Connections

In every hero's journey comes what is sometimes called "the moment of truth," a moment when the hero has to take a bold step forward, perhaps leaving something behind. For Esther, that moment of truth was when she was challenged by Mordecai "for such a time as this." Other biblical figures experience a moment of truth where they demonstrate bold trust, too:

- The disciple, Thomas, expresses a bold trust and commitment to staying with Jesus, even though he expects that the angry Jews will stone all of them to death. (See John 11:1-16.)
- The young girl, Mary, is greeted by an angel, a frightening prospect in and of itself, and is told she is specially chosen. She has a choice, and she is bold and trusting enough to say, "Yes, let it be" (Luke 1:26-38).
- Ruth demonstrates a bold trust to stay with her mother-in-law, Naomi, after both of their husbands die (Ruth 1:8-17).

What stories – Bible stories, hero stories, or otherwise – can you think of where someone demonstrated a bold trust to move forward?

Closing

We encourage you to remember Rachel's closing words and let them influence you. Here is how she drafted those words (which may be different from the way she spoke them):

For each one of you students here today: dare to recognize your own power—your unique potential, fully surrender your fear, and boldly trust forward. You and I are made in the very image of God; God wants to use our very best selves to transform the small thinking and brokenness of this world into resurrected life. “So, don’t shrink back, do not limit your potential, don’t quiet your voice, and certainly don’t think that just because you are a student, you can’t be used by God—in the name of Jesus, be bold!

Slogans / #Hashtags / Sticky Note Wisdom

- *Choose to be Bold*
- *But then... God!*
- *Recognize Your Own Power*
- *God Sees. God Hears. God Promises.*
- *Surrender Your Fear!*
- *Boldly Trusting Forward*
- *Bold Trust Propels Us Forward*

Youth 2023 Main Stage | July 26, 2023 (morning)

Bishop Hector Burgos, “Be Yourself”

Meet The Speaker

1. *We are talking about “being yourself.” What three words would you use to describe yourself?*

Introvert. Curious. Risk-taker.

2. *We are talking about being “bold”; some of us think of superheroes. Do you have a favorite superhero?*

I’ve always been impressed and inspired by Spiderman. Peter Parker is an introvert; he’s very curious, smart, and inquiring about things. When you read the comics or see the movies, it’s obvious that fear is very present in his life, as are doubts and questions, but that doesn’t stop him from doing what he feels he needs to do; what is right. He takes risks! I’m inspired by that dynamic in Spiderman. He’s the local neighborhood guy who also saves the world; he has a very down-to-earth idea of who he is.

3. *What is your favorite “bold” flavor?*

Habanero chiles.

4. *What does “living different” mean to you?*

Being ourselves is being different. Claiming our uniqueness in Christ allows us to offer the world who God created us to be. For me, being different is being willing to stand alone if I need to, for what is right. Being different is living in a way that shows people that there are alternative, better ways to live and be. I don’t think about the “great” things; if we can engage in a lifelong journey of claiming and reclaiming who God made us to be, that in itself makes us different; it makes us live in the uniqueness of who God created us to be.

Worship Reflection

Recall what you can remember (or watch the clips) from Bishop Burgos’s stage talk on morning one, July 26.

Discussion

The first is Romans 5:8 – “But God shows his love for us, because while we were still sinners Christ died for us” (CEB). He shared with us, “This passage was critical in finding myself, forgiving myself, and finding my identity in Christ.”

- *We are talking about “being ourselves.” How does this verse speak to who we are in Christ?*

Secondly, Bishop Burgos shared that the second part of Hebrews 12:1 influenced his talk – “Let’s throw off any extra baggage, get rid of the sin that trips us up” (CEB). This verse encouraged him to contemplate what he needed to let go of that kept him from fully being who God wanted him to be.

If he could, Bishop Burgos would ask you,

- *“What is one thing you can think and pray about that you may need to give away to make space for who you are becoming in God? What might you need to let go or change to make room for who you are becoming in Christ?”*

(And then he would tell you that this is the work of the Holy Spirit that as Methodists we call “sanctifying grace!”)

Heroic Connections

Isn’t it intriguing that Peter Parker, whom Bishop Burgos identifies as being like himself – a smart, curious introvert –is also known as the *Amazing* Spiderman? As a superhero, Peter refers to himself as “your friendly, neighborhood” Spiderman. Peter is amazing, with spectacular gifts and powers; and yet he is well-grounded. Peter’s sense of home (in his case, Queens, New York) is an important part of his identity, and he cares about his neighbors.

Whoever you are—and whoever you may be becoming in Christ—is both *amazing* and *grounded* in your identity.

- *What might someone say makes you “amazing”?*
- *How are you grounded? What would you call the “neighborhood” to which you belong? Why and how do you belong there? How do you help others feel that they belong in your neighborhood?*

Closing

May Bishop Burgos’s closing words be a word of benediction and blessing to you:

“God is inviting all of us to claim who God created us to be and what Christ dreams for us to be – people who share love, faith, hope, and mercy and that work for justice in a broken world. My new friends in Christ, be yourselves – your God’s authentic selves. You are perfectly created and precious to God.”

Slogans / #Hashtags / Sticky Note Wisdom

- *Embrace who you are and who you are becoming!*
- *Being yourself is a full-time job!*

Youth 2023 Main Stage | July 26, 2023 (morning)

Victor Cyrus-Franklin, Bible Study: “Nazareth”

Meet The Speaker

1. *We are talking about “being yourself.” What three words would you use to describe yourself?*

Thoughtful. Compassionate. Determined.

2. *We are talking about being “bold”; some of us think of superheroes. Do you have a favorite superhero?*

Miles Morales, *Spider Verse*. I just think that the story about a young person who is discovering his purpose, with resistance; it's a very powerful witness to how heroes come in new and different packages. It is worth the struggle to discover it and live into it, even when folks don't yet understand it. They will, eventually, but they don't get it now.

Worship Reflection

Recall what you can remember (or watch the clips) from Victor's Bible study on morning one, July 26.

What do you know about the town of Nazareth? If you don't know anything about the town of Nazareth, what do you imagine it was like when Jesus lived there?

Read John 1:35-46.

Discussion Questions

1. Recall John 1. Labels were placed on Jesus because of the place where he grew up. Consider the labels that we sometimes place on people. What are some ways that we label others?
2. Have you been labeled in the past? How did it feel? How did you respond?
3. Labels can be baggage that we end up carrying with us. Baggage can also be things like sin, guilt, shame, fear, low self-esteem, and the list goes on. What baggage keeps you from being bold, being yourself, and living different?
4. Hebrews 12:1-2 invites us to “throw off any extra baggage, get rid of the sin that trips us up, and fix our eyes on Jesus, faith's pioneer and perfecter” (CEB). What words of encouragement would you give to a friend who was struggling to “throw off” their baggage?
5. We do not struggle or walk through life alone. Instead, Hebrews 12 tells us that “we have such a great cloud of witnesses surrounding us.” How do you understand this great cloud of witnesses?

6. How do you respond when people doubt you?
7. In John 1, Nathanael said of Jesus, “Can anything from Nazareth be good?” Though people doubted Jesus, Philip invited them to “come and see” what Jesus would do (CEB). What would you invite those who doubt you to “come and see”?
8. Rev. Victor said, “Our purpose, our value, our calling does not come from this world, but it comes from God.” Good can and does come from us! What good do you think is coming from your life? What good do you hope will come in the future?

Heroic Connections

Hearing of Jesus, Nathaniel asked, “Can anything good come from Nazareth?” This question betrays a negative predisposition, the existence of racial or ethnic or cultural stereotypes that existed even as far back as Jesus’ day... and continue to exist. Think about it: what might the “stereotypical” comic book fan from the 1980s who knew Spiderman’s secret identity as white New York teen Peter Parker have thought of today’s Miles Morales, still a New York teen, sure, but whose mother is Puerto Rican and whose father is African American? (Actually, they’d probably argue that Peter Parker doesn’t have parents; he just has his Aunt May, and the loss of his Uncle Ben is a significant part of his hero’s journey; but that’s a comic book nerd for you.)

Whoever you are, and whoever you may be becoming in Christ, you may face others questioning you and/or your value. Perhaps you’ll have a Philip nearby who can challenge those others back, “Come and see.”

- *Are there ways that you feel people misjudge you or look at you through some negative predisposition?*
- *How do you live in such a way that others may “come and see” that you are “living different”?*

Closing

In his closing words, Rev. Victor gave us a word of encouragement rooted in Hebrews 12: “We don’t go through Nazareth by ourselves. We have a great cloud of witnesses that we can claim.” May those who know you well and love you be like Philip, inviting others to “come and see” how you “live different.”

“I can endure all these things through the power of the one who gives me strength.” Philippians 4:13 (CEB)

Youth 2023 Main Stage | July 26, 2023 (every day)

Theon Johnson III, Main Stage Host

Meet The Speaker

1. *We are talking about “being yourself.” What three words would you use to describe yourself?*

Extrovert. Happy. Hopeful.

2. *We are talking about being “bold”; some of us think of superheroes. Do you have a favorite superhero?*

Jean Luc Picard, captain of the Enterprise (D), because his life is defined by being on the move, moving among the stars and species of the universe. He is unbound, unafraid, and boldly going forward.

3. *What is your favorite “bold” flavor?*

Cherry Coke.

4. *What does “living different” mean to you?*

Opening one’s self, one’s heart, and one’s mind to the possibilities that exist within ourselves; to become more than what we have been. And reckoning with the reality that the world that is is not the only world that can be.

Discussion

Rev. Theon led our worship experiences from the stage with his characteristic joyful energy. If you encountered him in the halls, he may have asked you questions about your experience, your life, and your faith. If you had the gift of a conversation with him, you heard from a thoughtful, caring perspective.

In one such conversation, Theon shared a little bit about the experience of hosting this event. Our last big event, YOUTH 2019, was just before the experience and changes of COVID; and this event, YOUTH 2023, is coming after we’ve mostly returned to a new normal. We’re making space here for one another that is both similar and different, recognizing that we’ve had difficulties, but also knowing hope.

The prophet Jeremiah experienced a very difficult time, as one of many who was held in captivity in Babylon. While he was there, he experienced a word of hope from God that may be familiar to you:

READ JEREMIAH 29:10-14:

10 The Lord proclaims: When Babylon’s seventy years are up, I will come and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place. ¹¹I know the plans I have in mind for you, declares the Lord; they are plans for peace, not disaster, to give you a

future filled with hope. ¹²When you call me and come and pray to me, I will listen to you. ¹³When you search for me, yes, search for me with all your heart, you will find me. ¹⁴I will be present for you, declares the Lord, and I will end your captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have scattered you, and I will bring you home after your long exile, declares the Lord (Jer. 29:10-14, CEB).

- *What do you think “a future filled with hope” looks like?*
- *How can we help one another know hope for the future?*

Rachel Billups, Talk 2, “Bust Your Limits” (2 Corinthians 5:16-20)

Meet The Speaker

1. *What is your favorite “bold” flavor?*

I really don't like a lot of bold flavors.

2. *You talk about negative thoughts. What is your favorite way to break that cycle?*

Number one, I take a deep breath. I center myself in prayer. I go to 2 Timothy 1:7 (God didn't give us a spirit that is timid but one that is powerful, loving, and self-controlled, CEB); God did not give me a spirit of fear but one of power and love.

I speak a big fat, "no," inside of me. No, you *are* capable; no, you do not need to be afraid or anxious.

I try to enjoy the people that I encounter and be present in the moment I have.

I work to always put positive thoughts inside of me. I have positive stickers on my laptop and water bottle. Surrounding yourself with words of life (and people who speak them) is really important.

Worship Reflection

Recall what you can remember (or watch the clips) from Rachel Billups's stage talk on night two, July 26.

Rachel describes what it is like to be a “new creation” in Christ. What does this mean to you?

Holding on to the old might be like hanging on to an old pair of shoes that we've outgrown. It can actually do damage to us. Think for a moment about something that you are holding on to. Could it be doing damage to you? Could it be doing damage to your relationships?

Discussion Questions

1. Rev. Rachel helped us to understand that we are often tempted to speak out of our pain and our hurt. When have you been tempted to do this?
2. Our words are powerful and can hurt others when we speak out of our pain and our hurt. Have you ever experienced pain and hurt because of the words of someone else? Did that experience change you and how you live?
3. Rev. Billups discussed two words that limit us all, “always” and “never.” Have you been limited by these words? What did it feel like to be limited in this way? Have you limited others with those words?

4. When we hold on to old hurts, they can cause hurt and do damage. We have to learn to let go and embrace the new life God calls us to live. What is difficult about letting go? What keeps you from letting go?
5. Rev. Billups said that we are all a “work in progress.” We are all being made new by God. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, “So then, if anyone is in Christ, that person is part of the new creation. The old things have gone away, and look, new things have arrived!” What does “being made new” mean to you?
6. Think for a minute about being new. What do you think God is making new about you? What is different about you because you have a relationship with Jesus?
7. God is making us new. Because we are made new, we have new possibilities. 2 Corinthians 5:20-21 goes on to say, “We are ambassadors who represent Christ. God is negotiating with you through us. We beg you as Christ’s representatives, “Be reconciled to God!” (CEB) What does it mean to you to be Christ’s ambassador or someone who represents Christ in the world?
8. New possibilities can be scary and exciting. How can you face your fear, nervousness, or anxiety and do the thing that God is calling you to do?

Heroic Connections

In the 2019 film *Captain Marvel*, Vers is held back by the limitations other people place on her. Physically, they place a chip in her neck to dampen her powers; emotionally, they tell her she isn’t good enough to lessen her confidence. In her heroic moment of truth, she discovers who she was and who she is; Carol Danvers is a new creation, Captain Marvel, a hero made in the past and still in the making!

- *What hero stories might encourage you to be bold and embrace who you are becoming in Christ?*

Closing

We encourage you to remember Rachel’s closing words and let them influence you. Here is how she drafted those words (which may be different from how she spoke them):

YOUTH2023, I don’t know what limitation prophecies have been spoken over you! I don’t know your “always” and “never” go-tos, but I want to be one of the ones who opens the doors for you into the new. You are boldly anointed students; you are gifted leaders. God has a profound and prophetic picture for you. There will be moments you and I may want to shrink back to the old, but God says, “I am making all things new, and that includes you!”

Slogans / #Hashtags / Sticky Note Wisdom

- Speak Words of Life over one another
- You are New and Being Made New
- You are a Work in Progress
- Open the Door

Youth 2023 Main Stage | July 27, 2023 (morning)

Youth 2023 Main Stage | July 27, 2023 (morning)

Tripp Gullledge, “Being Different”

Meet The Speaker

1. *We are talking about “being yourself.” What three words would you use to describe yourself?*

Thoughtful. Authentic. Ambitious.

2. *We are talking about being “bold”; some of us think of superheroes. Do you have a favorite superhero?*

Not a typical superhero, but I'd go with Obi-Wan Kenobi. He is a noble guy who believes in the good in the world and trusts in it.

3. *What is your favorite “bold” flavor?*

Pineapple on pizza.

4. *What does “living different” mean to you?*

Doing what is uniquely you and using what is uniquely yours to bring people together and reflect the image of God.

Worship Reflection

Recall what you can remember (or watch the clips) from Tripp’s stage talk from Thursday, July 27.

Discussion

The portion of Paul’s letter to the Corinthians that Tripp is talking about is 1 Corinthians 12. Let’s read it and see what we think:

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12:1–11

- *How does this connect to Tripp’s comment that “different doesn’t mean I’m worse or better, just different”?*
- *Paul lists a number of “gifts” that are given to people “for the common good.” What does it mean to be giving something “for the common good”?*
(Paul shares that these gifts are wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, the ability to tell spirits apart, tongues, and interpretation of tongues (c.f. 1 Cor 12:8-10, CEB).)
- *These are not all the gifts that Paul writes about, just some of them. Do you think you might have any of these gifts? Which one(s)?*

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12:12–27

Please listen carefully to verses 26 and 27, and then reflect on this: **You are necessary. You are an important part of the body of Christ that is your church. You are connected to others, and they are connected to you, and you matter. Your church is not fully what God hopes it will be without you!**

- *How do you feel as a part of your youth group and/or church? Do you feel important or needed? What gifts might you bring to your group and/or church that would benefit the rest of the body?*

Heroic Connections

Despite their amazing gifts, Mr. Incredible and Elasta-Girl didn't fully save the day in *The Incredibles* until their children joined them. Likewise, *The Avengers* all have different gifts and are stronger together. Whatever *Spider verse* they may be in, Miles Morales, Peter Parker, and Gwen Stacey are better when they work together.

- *What's your favorite superhero team-up, and why?*
- *How is a superhero team-up kind of like the "body of Christ," as described by "Uncle" Paul?*

Closing

Tripp asked us to leave you with these final words: "Be bold because the world won't be whole without you."

Youth 2023 Main Stage | July 27, 2023 (morning)

Victor Cyrus-Franklin, Bible Study: “We Multiply”

Meet The Speaker

1. What is your favorite “bold” flavor?

I'm from Nashville, so I'll say whatever the concoction that is "Nashville Hot Chicken."

2. What does "living different" mean to you?

Two things: (1) It means living in God's purpose when the world doesn't understand it; and (2) It means being open to change. Theologically, I would root this in sanctification. If the Holy Spirit is perfecting us, that means we are always becoming; and “living different” means to be in a space of always becoming in Christ. Our tradition would say, "I am not what I used to be, and I am not what I'm gonna be." Being different means being open to the leading of the Spirit in our becoming who we are in Christ.

Worship Reflection

Recall what you can remember (or watch the clips) from Victor's Bible study on John 6:1-9 from morning two, July 27.

If you had to summarize the study into two sentences, what would you say was Rev. Victor's main point?

Read John 6:1-9.

Discussion Questions

1. On days 1 and 2, we talked about getting rid of our baggage, the things that keep us from being bold and living different. Recall Hebrews 12:1-2, “Throw off any extra baggage, get rid of the sin that trips us up, and fix our eyes on Jesus, faith's pioneer and perfecter” (CEB). One of the ways that we can get rid of that baggage is through confession. Confession is an opportunity to acknowledge our failures and struggles and ask for God's forgiveness.

John Wesley recommended that Methodists meet weekly with approximately five people in a band, where they would confess their sins to one another. He said the bands followed the command of God to “confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another that ye may be healed” (James 5:16).

*In worship, small groups, and anytime we choose, United Methodists confess our sins before God and one another. When we do, God forgives us and we receive strength to be, in the words of Wesley, “more and more dead to sin, (and) more and more alive to God” (from **The Scripture Way of Salvation**). –Courtesy of Discipleship Ministries*

What may be difficult about confessing your sin? Individually with God and in a group with others?

2. In John 6, there is a limitation or a problem: the people who have gathered around Jesus are hungry, and there is no food. It illustrates to us that God can take us where we are, with the gifts that we have; and we can be a people of purpose and blessing for all creation. What gifts do you have that could be used for God's purpose and be a blessing for all creation?
3. To use your gifts for God's purpose takes boldness. Can you think of someone in your life who has used their gifts for God's purpose and whom you consider to be bold? What makes them bold?
4. Rev. Victor said that "boldness multiplies." Have you seen boldness multiply in your life? In your church?
5. The mission of The United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Rev. Victor said that "the world can only transform if we multiply." How do we make disciples? What role might you play in multiplying our church's mission?
6. In all things, we are called to trust God. Consider what in your life you need to trust God with. Take a few moments for silent reflection.

Heroic Connections

Victor references a line attributed to late comedian Robin Harris and from the film *Bebe's Kids*: "We don't die, we multiply." In many ways, this encapsulates the hero's journey: not to shrink from challenge, not to run from difficulty, but to come through it triumphant. Heroes make the choice to grow stronger, to go further, to stand bolder, despite the obstacles they might face.

- *How might "We don't die, we multiply" encourage you the next time you face difficulties?*

Closing

We encourage you to remember the following words from Victor, and let them encourage you to be bold and "multiply":

When you bring what you have in your boldness, you might come out wrong, you might come out strong; but when you bring what you have in your boldness, God takes what you have and multiplies it, so you can live in God's purpose for our lives.

We fix our eyes on Jesus, and we multiply in hope.

We fix our eyes on Jesus, and we multiply in justice.

We fix our eyes on Jesus, and we multiply in peace.

We fix our eyes on Jesus, and we multiply in love.

Slogans / #Hashtags / Sticky Note Wisdom

- More living, less judging. (Victor's T-shirt)
- When the world sees problems, Jesus sees potential.
- Jesus looks beyond our faults and sees our needs.
- We don't die; we multiply.
- The world can only transform if we multiply.

Youth 2023 Main Stage | July 27, 2023 (evening)

Rev. Jeff Campbell: “I Am... [Your Name Here]”

Meet The Speaker

1. *We are talking about “being yourself.” What three words would you use to describe yourself?*

Introvert. Creative. Pastoral.

2. *We are talking about being “bold;” some of us think of superheroes. Do you have a favorite superhero?*

Batman. Because he has no superpowers; he's using his intellect (and his riches); he's driven.

3. *What is your favorite “bold” flavor?*

Buffalo wings/sauce. Cholula. Any kind of hot sauce, really.

4. *What does “living different” mean to you?*

Despite the darkness or the struggles in the world, daily we wake up and decide to do the opposite; we choose to do good, to bless others, and to go counter to what often seems so negative and destructive in the world's understanding.

Worship Reflection

Recall what you can remember (or watch the clips) from Jeff Campbell's stage talk on night three, July 27.

Discussion

Sometimes others help us identify who we are. Consider this:

READ MATTHEW 16:13-16

Jesus' invitation to the disciples gives them a moment to reflect back to him who he is in others' eyes. Like Moana's grandmother's reflection back to her, sometimes hearing who we are from another empowers and emboldens us to be ourselves and live different.

- *Whom do you trust to answer the question, “Who do you say I am?” Whose opinion do you value about your identity?*

Heroic Connections

In her hero's journey, Moana looks to the sea with yearning. She loves her island; she loves her people, yet she feels just a bit distant from the others. Something is at work in her. With her grandmother's whispered wisdom, the discovery of hidden ships, and the relentless call of the waves and surf, she is finally able to boldly sing, “I am Moana!”

Whatever call or longing is on your life, whatever you may struggle with, you are a blessed child of God, gifted and unique. So consider your own journey and what it might take for you to crest the largest wave and move out into the ocean that is your journey of life.

- *If you were to overcome the doubts and obstacles and cry out, “I am [your name!],” who would you be describing?*

Closing

We encourage you to remember Jeff’s closing words as a blessing on your journey to answering the question, “Who am I?”:

In your life, you are going to face difficult decisions, difficult situations . . . and at times, it might seem insurmountable - inevitable. Like Moana’s grandmother says, “Sometimes the world will seem against you. Sometimes the people you love will hurt you. . . ”

Someday, and I hope for you it comes sooner than it came for me, . . . someday, you will look in the mirror, you will look into your own eyes, and you will be proud of everything reflecting back at you. A beautiful creation - a child of God – beautifully made.

Rachel Billups, Talk 3, “A Bold Rebellion” (Mark 14:43-52)

Meet The Speaker

1. What does “living different” mean to you?

I think living different is a combination of living with your eyes wide open and living with empathy and love 'cause we live in a world of competition and hate and divisiveness.

Worship Reflection

Recall what you can remember (or watch the clips) from Rachel Billups’s stage talk on night three, July 27.

Early on, Rachel shares that “BOLD fights for the right stuff.” When asked who her favorite superhero was, she shared that it is Wonder Woman because “she fights for the right stuff.” *What would be the “right stuff” for which you would take a stand and join the fight?*

Discussion

1. Rev. Rachel in her talk said, “If boldness is something that we hoard for ourselves- to make us seem bigger or better or to make ourselves famous...that breed of bold isn’t bold at all.” Have you experienced someone hoarding their bold? Have you witnessed someone being bold for the wrong reasons, like fame or power?
2. Why is doing the right thing and being BOLD for the right stuff difficult?
3. Being BOLD can be costly. Has acting in this way and doing the right thing ever been costly to you? If so, what was the cost? What was it like to experience this?
4. Jesus boldly entered the city of Jerusalem to take a stand for what was right. Jesus’ boldness is not necessarily what the people expected. What was the difference between what the crowd expected and Jesus’ approach?
5. In Mark 14:48 Jesus says to those who are going to arrest him, “Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me?” (NIV) Rev. Rachel suggested that Jesus was, indeed, leading a rebellion. How did she describe that rebellion? What makes it different from what you may imagine a rebellion to look like?
6. Jesus invites us to be a part of this rebellion or revolution. We are called to offer our gifts, our graces, our time, our talents, and our service to Christ’s revolution in the world. How do we boldly participate in Jesus’ revolution? What are the challenges of being a part of it? What are the joys of being a part of it?
7. Rev. Rachel said, “God is declaring you were made for this—to be a sign of Jesus’ love-soaked rebellion...” How will you BE BOLD: be yourself and live different because of what you have heard and experienced at YOUTH 2023?

8. What will you leave behind in order to BE BOLD? What will you take with you and offer to the world?

Heroic Connections

Can we remember for a moment the amazing hero that is Princess Leia from the very first *Star Wars* (aka *A New Hope*)? Princess Leia is not some hapless damsel in distress, even if she is captured by the Evil Empire's menacing enforcer Darth Vader. Leia is a strong, determined, fully capable leader in and of herself, and she is a key figure in the Rebel Alliance, leading a rebellion against the evil, injustice, and oppression of the Galactic Empire.

Did you know we are not just invited, but we actually *join* a similar rebellion? Whether we were baptized as infants, with our parents answering the questions on our behalf, or later in life. When people are baptized into the church, the liturgy in our *United Methodist Hymnal* actually asks a question about rebellion! The first two questions in our liturgy are:

- *Do you renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of this world, and repent of your sin?*
- *Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves?*

Those questions sound like an invitation to rebellion, powered by the Holy Spirit!

Closing

We encourage you to remember Rachel's closing words and let them influence you. Here is how she drafted those words (which may be different from how she spoke them):

In our faith tradition, we believe that Jesus is the hope of the world and that means something—for all people (and all means all).

We believe that God through Jesus Christ ignited a bottom-up rebellion that was a clarion call to all who are beaten up, broken down, oppressed, weary, and worried. "Come, and I will give you life," – a life that changes brokenness, a life that changes you, that changes me, that has the power, that's right - the real-life power to change the world!

God is declaring you were made for this—to be a sign of Jesus' love-soaked rebellion for bystanders to scratch their heads and ponder God's love in us with awe and wonder!

Slogans / #Hashtags / Sticky Note Wisdom

- There is BOLD within each of us!
- Step up and into the fight!
- Jesus' love for the good and bad is spellbinding!
- For Heaven's sake, be rebellious!