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Scripture: 2 Samuel 6:1-5,12b-23

Sermon: *Let me see your funky chicken*

What is your Lotto 6/49 happy dance??

That was the question posed a few years ago at the beginning of each commercial by Lotto 6/49, Canada's largest national lottery. The commercials showed the reactions of supposed winners; people who had just become millions of dollars richer. Needless to say there was a lot of twisting and jumping and fist pumping, high pitched screaming, and even some strange thrusting moves. It was not pretty, but as I watched I certainly could not judge, for were I in that situation I have no doubt that for all the history of the English language there would still be no words to capture the type of awkward appalling "dance" moves that my body would be going through.

So, what is your Lotto 6/49 happy dance? Would you twist and shout? Jump and jive? Break dance?

In our text for today it says in verses five and 14 that David "danced with all his might." In fact not only David but all the house of Israel danced with all their might because the ark of God was being brought to Jerusalem. Why was this so exciting? First it is necessary to understand what the Ark of the Covenant was. One speaker I have heard referred to it as "God in a box" (Jamie Howison). It was the physical and visible sign of God's presence among the people of Judah, it reminded them of the covenant made between God and them and perhaps it even stood as "a national symbol" a way unifying the people [David F. Payne. *I & II Samuel*. (Westminster Press: Philadelphia. 1982) pg 184)]. I don't mean a national symbol in the way that the beaver is Canada's national symbol; this goes well beyond Canadians reverence for the beaver. It would probably almost be as important as Canadians love for hockey.

In 1 Samuel chapter 4 the Ark is stolen by the Philistines yet eventually it comes back to Israelite soil because God cursed any enemy who had it in their possession, however it still remained under Philistine control. For decades the ark stayed there on the outskirts of Israelite territory until finally David was able to retrieve it. Imagine being without hockey for decades and then suddenly

have it returned, I have a feeling there would be some serious celebrating not to mention a lot of dancing going on in our country.

Another reason this was so exciting was that the Ark was being brought to Jerusalem. Jerusalem was already the political capital and with the ark David would make it the religious capital as well. It was all a part of David establishing his kingship over God's people. Jerusalem was about to become the Holy City. (Rumors magazine, July 5 2009) No wonder everyone was excited.

So the people danced, and at the forefront of the dancing came David, King David. The king was dancing, can you imagine a king dancing. And as you might have picked up from Fred and Ruth's reading of the text, not only did David dance, he danced so vigorously that he, as Michal his wife points out, exposed himself. This is one of those juicy tidbits in the Bible that comes along every once and a while and redefine what this diverse book can throw at you. Some people love this kind of stuff while others pretend its not there. But it is right there, Michal says very sarcastically "How the king of Israel honoured himself today, uncovering himself today before the eyes of his servants' maids, as any vulgar fellow might shamelessly uncover himself!" (2 Samuel 6:20)

How is it possible, your asking, for one to expose oneself whilst dancing? The clue we are given is in verse 14 where it says that David was dressed in a linen ephod. Historians know that an ephod was a priestly garment, and they guess that it probably looked something like an apron, covering just the front part of his body. So before this becomes too graphic for the pulpit I will stop and let you figure out the rest.

So it is clear that David had exposed himself and that Michal his wife was not too pleased with his behavior. But David's response to his wife is the really interesting part of our text. "Haha!!" he says, "it was for the Lord that I was dancing. I will make myself even more contemptible, even more shameful, even more despicable than this because my celebration is for the Lord, and that brings me honour."

David's dance was a form of worship, an unrestrained form of worship. Free from the accusations or judgments of others, David danced without inhibition and indeed worshiped without embarrassment. How nice it would be to dance

without embarrassment, and how nice it would be to worship God without reserve, the way we are able to worship when no one is around.

When I was younger I attended Camp Valaqua. At camp I learned a song called “Let Me See Your Funky Chicken.” It was a sort of call and response and it would start with the leader screaming “let me see your funky chicken” and the crowd responded “what’s that you say?” “I said let me see your funky chicken” “what’s that you say”... And then everyone would proceed to break it down in their own version of the funky chicken dance. Next came the spastic worm dance, then the John Travolta, then the Elvis Presley. It was a time to let go of any fears and just dance! It was very silly, and it is easy to think of it as serving no other purpose than to get the kids riled up and get them moving, yet it might have been doing more than just that. When I danced the funky chicken I didn’t have a care in the world; it didn’t matter who saw me or whether my version of the funky chicken was any better or worse than the boy or girl beside me, all that mattered was that I was free, free to dance, free to sing and free to worship without the worries that I often feel when doing such things. The funky chicken taught me about being free, truly free; free from the labels our society puts on what a person should act like.

You see much of the world finds dancing quite strange, especially when it does not take place on a stage, or in a studio, or in a club. A couple years ago a few friends and I were in an airport on a long layover. Since we couldn’t leave the airport we were getting bored so we decided to have some fun. We dared one of our friends to put his iPod headphones in, go to a more populated area of the airport and slowly start dancing as he supposedly got more and more into the music. Pretty soon he was getting all kinds of strange looks; people were stopping and smirking, some were even pointing and laughing. According to our society this type of celebration of emotion is embarrassing; in fact it is downright foolish. And foolish things are only done by strange people. And of course, the last thing any human being should want is to be considered strange.

David’s dance, though foolish in the eyes of his wife, was a perfect example of his love for God, a love that sometimes, according to the eyes of the world, caused him to act strange. David had a countercultural way of living.

Jesus calls us to embrace this countercultural mentality in his sermon on the mount. He says all kinds of things that sound foolish, even insane: “ohh the hungry are so fortunate,” “the poor people are the ones who are blessed,” “lucky you, you’re unemployed,” and “I pity you because you have a job and you are content,” “curse those who are successful.” Jesus really said these things, but what was he talking about? Not our world! For in our world the poor and unemployed are to be pitied while the successful and content are to be praised. Jesus is talking about God’s world, God’s Kingdom; but not God’s kingdom in heaven, rather God’s kingdom here on earth. God protects the poor, loves the unemployed, and saves the sick, what use does God have for the successful and the rich.

Although he doesn’t say it I also think Jesus would say blessed are the strange and foolish for they shall be free. Blessed is the person who praises and worships God as if no one is around to see. Blessed is the person who dances for joy in the market square and does not care what others think. Blessed is the person who shouts for joy and does not hold back.

David was criticized by his wife. “Why did you act so foolishly?” she asks. He answers “I danced for the Lord who chose me to lead his people.” David was far more concerned with properly honoring the gifts of kingship and the Ark of the Covenant that God had bestowed upon him than caring what others thought of him. Michal was concerned for his dignity; after all he was a king, and kings shouldn’t dance, especially not to the point of exposing themselves. Apart from the father son combo of King Louis the 13th and 14th of France, both reigning in the 17th century, there are very few other records of any king dancing in history, and these two were not dancing out of celebration but for a love of ballet. Even King Arthur in the comedy “Monty Python and the Holy Grail” one of the most ridiculous films in history, avoids the antics of Camelot because with it’s singing and dancing is, and I quote “a silly place.” David was well aware of why his risqué dance was concerning to his wife but he did not care. He said “I will make myself even more contemptible than this,” in other words, “if my actions in worshipping God have been seen as shameful or despicable, than I will make myself even more shameful and even more despicable because nothing the world says or thinks will keep me from worshipping my God.”

If David, the king of a nation, is willing to risk his own dignity, not to mention the respect of all his people in one act of worship to God how much more willing should we be to place our own dignity and respect on the line for our Lord. As Christians we are called to live as Christ demands us not as the world demands us. In some respects we have become a reserved people fearful of doing things that could be labeled strange or foolish.

In Acts chapter 17 we read about the church in Thessalonica being attacked by a mob. This mob screams “these people who have been turning the world upside down have been coming here also.” I really like that, turning the world upside down. They were living as if Christ had the ultimate power and authority not humans, as if it was God’s approval that mattered more than their neighbours

In some ways we are already doing things that seem strange or foolish. We are already turning the world upside-down.

Christians tithe. The world responds: Now that’s a dumb idea if I ever heard one. How is someone supposed to become successful and rich if they keep giving away the money they make. The government already takes so much. Foolish!

Some Christians spend their holidays helping others. The world responds: What a terrible idea!! Vacation is meant for relaxation and rejuvenation not being busy doing hard labor. One should help themselves before they help others.

We forgive those who have wronged us. The world responds: Well that just seems like you would be setting yourself up to be hurt again. Forgiveness does not make any sense. That’s strange!

We love our enemies. The world responds: This is the weirdest one of all. Christians seek to love everyone the same, even the people whom they do not get along with or the people who hate them. You should love your friends and hate your enemy, that’s how the real world works!

Tithing, helping others, forgiving, loving; these are all ways of living for the kingdom of God and not the kingdom of earth. I urge you to do these and more. God wants us to worship Him without inhibition, without reserve, God wants us to live for his Kingdom without caring about what the worlds thinks.

God does not just want to see your Lotto 6/49 happy dance,

God wants to see you dance for Him with all your might; to turn the world upside-down.

God wants to see your funky chicken, will you let him?