

April 1, 2007 - PARADE OF THE FAITHFUL

I love a parade. It doesn't have to be fancy or long. Just a group of folk walking down the middle of the street is alright with me. Add some noise, a band, a bit of colorful characters and we are ready to go. It doesn't hurt to have a message that is visible and can be easily interpreted. I love to watch...or, even better, be part of a parade.

This week while packing and moving, my daughter brought in an old pair of shoes that had been put away nearly 30 years ago. Those shoes had become part of the routine of boxing important items and bringing them along. This time, they did not make the move. "What are these?" she asked.

"Those?" I responded with a slightly embarrassed answer that sounded like an unsure question. "Those," I continued, "are my platforms. I bought those back in the 70's." The fact that I had ever bought them in the first place is sufficient evidence I was not in full control of my good sense back in the day. Now, as she confronted me with them meant I didn't have the good sense to destroy them; instead, I kept them and could have brought them with us to this place.

Those shoes were worn in my first parade. It is hard to believe that I actually had them on for several miles as we walked through the streets of Seattle. Amazing! Those platforms were the symbol of a bygone era that also produced bell-bottom pants and outrageous hair. I wore them with pride and strutted my style in the city's big parade.

Jesus didn't wear platforms as he rode into Jerusalem. His choice of a foal or colt was perhaps more shocking. It was the fulfillment of prophecy. He created a parade and the people came out. His entry was loud and spectacular. It was a great, one-man show. It was a parade of the faithful. Can you imagine a parade with just one entry and it wasn't even a float?

It was so powerful, the crowds started shouting. Jesus provided hope and excitement as he paraded through Jerusalem. Imagine the possibilities of what we could do as people of faith making a public scene.

One thing about a parade is that it calls everyone to come out and see what is going on. For just a moment, anyone who participates in a parade is the center of attention, the main event. Passing in front of the grandstand, all eyes are on the performers and marchers. Jesus became a parade although others were also passing through town at the same time. There was something special and different about him that caused other people to take notice.

Perhaps, there is a parade just waiting for you. Maybe there are people who are longing to see and hear what you have to offer. Jesus knew what he had and what he was about. He offered himself to the world and pointed the way to God. What will we do with what we have?

Anybody ready for a parade?

-Pastor Art Cribbs