

## Hakuna Matata

Scripture: Genesis 3:1 – 5, Romans 8:31 – 39, & Luke 12:22 - 31

Does anyone know what Hakuna Matata means? (pause) Hakuna Matata means 'There are no troubles'.

Boy, in today's time of social and political unrest, Hakuna Matata – 'There are no troubles' seems a pipe dream. In today's time of high anxiety and fear, Hakuna Matata – 'There are no troubles' seems an alien concept. What has caused this feeling and situation? What word sums today's feeling and fear? The word is DOUBT!

Doubt was the first tactic Satan used to separate humanity from God. In our scripture reading from the Book of Genesis, Satan says to Eve in the Garden of Eden – 'Did God actually say that you shall not eat of any tree in the garden?' Eve responded – 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the Garden but God said that we should not eat of the fruit of the tree in the middle of the Garden, the Tree of Knowledge, or we shall die!' But Satan wanted to play upon Eve's doubts so Satan responded – 'You will not die for God knows that if you eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge in the middle of the Garden, you will be like God!'

Adam and Eve were living in a very close relationship with God. They were like neighbors living next to each other. They walked in the Garden of Eden together. But then the thought of being like God crept into their mind. They doubted God's power! They doubted God's love for them! Doubt! And they had a fall from grace and were expelled from the Garden of Eden.

God sent Jesus to be our permanent connection. Let me repeat that – God sent Jesus to be our permanent connection. Through Jesus, we can approach God with our questions, our confusions, and our concerns. Even doubt can not separate us from God. In our reading from the Book of Romans it says – *For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor power, nor heights, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation; will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.'*

Sometimes understanding is elusive, but God will use even that elusiveness to draw us closer. The answers are less important than our answer seeking. We draw closer to God when we are propelled onto our knees. We draw closer to God when we are propelled into conversations with other believers.

When questions arise, do not look at them as barriers but rather as stepping stones. When doubt arises, do not look at them as separation from God but as a way for us to spend time talking to God in prayer. Even if you do not know what to pray, God's Spirit is nearby to help you. Even doubt can not separate us from God!

Our Gospel reading from Luke today is a tough one to understand. Jesus tells his disciples and us not to worry. How? With everything going on today can we follow Jesus' words? How? I am not a bird and I am not a Lillie in the field. I am a man living in today's world – How can I not worry? I am a father with three sons, one in the military – How can I not worry? I am a grandfather of one beautiful grandson who is in 1<sup>st</sup> grade – How can I not worry? I am a new pastor of a church looking for growth in a vacation/retirement community – How can I not worry? I am a 60-year-old man who had surgeries to take two glands out of my neck and face which was not cancerous – How can I not worry?

I am sure you can add your own personal statement and then ask yourself – How can you not worry? Think for a moment and offer your own statement – followed by – How can I not worry? (pause)

You are not a bird and you are not a Lillie in the field. You are a person living in this modern world – How can you not worry?

In preparing for this message and the beginning of our time together in shared ministry here at Bethany Beach Christian Church, Jesus' words spoke to me and brought me to remember the movie and Broadway play 'The Lion King'. Hakuna Matata was one of the big songs in the story of Simba. So, listen to these words from 'The Lion King' – Hakuna Matata *Hakuna Matata! What a wonderful phrase. Hakuna Matata! Ain't no passing craze. It means no worries for the rest of your days. It's our problem free philosophy. Hakuna Matata!*

Oh, let me change the chorus to the song 'Hakuna Matata' - Jesus Christ! What a wonderful name. Jesus Christ! Ain't no passing craze. Jesus means no worries for all eternity. It's a freeing faith in God's glorious grace. Jesus Christ!

In my 30 years in ministry, there are two undeniable facts that I have learned – There is a God and I am not God. So, as we start our shared ministry as your pastor, I am not promising you Hakuna Matata – 'There are no troubles' ahead for us. But I do promise you that there is no doubt that God sent Jesus to be our permanent connection. Even doubt cannot separate us from God. I promise you that each Sunday I will stand up here and tell you about Jesus, our permanent connection to God. I will stand here and tell you about Jesus' love and compassion for all people.

I will also be out here with you in your lives helping you to cope with the troubles of this world and life. I promise to stand with you in those times of trouble and share with you that there is not doubt that can separate us from God. I will be with you to talk about our permanent connection to God – Jesus Christ. I will pray for you and pray with as we seek the love and compassion of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Oh yes, there will be some troubles ahead for us but *I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor power, nor heights, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation; will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.'*

Let us pray:

Omnipresent God, help us to remember your continuing presence even when we do not feel it. Transform our doubts into opportunities to learn more about you. AMEN.