

Big Picture WEEK FOUR March 15 2026 *The Choice*

SCREEN: Wizard of Oz

This weekend our school children are presenting the musical The Wizard of Oz.

I saw it on Friday evening and loved it, and a few tickets are still available at the door.

Has anyone heard of the Wizard of Oz?

Who hasn't?

I remember watching it on TV when I was just a kid.

The Wizard of Oz tells the story of a young girl from Kansas named Dorothy.

After a tornado magically transports her to the land of Oz, she faces a series of challenges which test her in unimaginable ways.

Ways which force her to discover talents and strengths she didn't know she had.

For example, Dorothy uses her kindness to make friends who accompany her on her journey.

She finds the courage to face down the wicked witch of the west.

And she uses her brain to figure out how to get home.

I think one reason why this story is so timeless is because

deep down we like to root for the underdog -

the unlikely person who triumphs over adversity.

Which means that on a certain level,

we all want to be like Dorothy:

taking on a mission that matters and succeeding against all odds.

SCREEN: Big Picture main screen

This is Week Four of our Lenten message series titled, Big Picture.

The scriptures we're hearing reveal to us

God's great plan

to save humanity from sin and death.

Why did God need to make a plan?

Well, all through the Old Testament - beginning with the Book of Genesis-

we see a pattern of negative behavior on humanity's part

which God kept responding to.

So back on Week One we heard how in the Garden of Eden God provided all of Adam and Eve's needs,
then they disobeyed Him.

In spite of their sin, God kept loving and caring for them.

Last week we heard how in the desert the Israelites complained and doubted God, but He kept loving and caring for them.

This pattern was repeated over and over up to the time of Jesus.

To accomplish His plan, God chose some unlikely individuals - all of them underdogs -

like Abraham and Moses and the young shepherd boy named David in today's first reading. They overcame tremendous odds to succeed in their mission.

Let's dive into David's story.

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But first, a little background on leadership in the Old Testament.

Before the Israelites had kings to govern them, they were ruled by a series of men known as judges.

The very last judge was a man named Samuel.

Today we heard how God instructed Samuel to make his way to Bethlehem, to the house of a man named Jesse, to anoint one of Jesse's sons as king.

Now Jesse had 8 sons, but he only invited 7 of them to the banquet with Samuel.

David was the youngest - the runt of the litter -

and in Jesse's mind there was no way God would ever choose David.

But when Samuel discovered that young David was out tending the sheep, he called for him to be brought before him.

How did Samuel know to choose David as king?

Here's what God told him:

SCREEN: Do not judge from his appearance or from his lofty stature....

Not as man sees does God see,

because man sees the appearance

but the Lord looks into the heart.

*Man sees the appearance,
but the Lord looks into the heart.*

This is something we see played out again and again in the Bible.

God chose the unlikely, the unworthy, and the unprepared to accomplish his mission.

God looked beyond outward appearance,
past things most people would consider to be disqualifications,
and instead seeing a person's potential for greatness.

I'm mean, think of it: Abraham was an elderly man with no children when God chose him to become the father of a great nation.

Moses was a Hebrew baby floating in a basket in the Nile River who was rescued,
raised in Pharaoh's household,
and then chosen by God to free the Israelites and lead them into the Promised Land.

That young shepherd boy named David who didn't even get invited to the banquet went on to establish a house that would give the world its savior.

And all three of these individuals were flawed and imperfect.

Abraham had moments when he doubted God's plan.

Moses had a speech impediment and didn't always trust in the Lord.

After David became king he committed adultery with Bathsheba, then had her husband killed so he could possess her.

There's a really powerful message here that we need to get and it's this:

SCREEN: God doesn't call the qualified, He qualifies those He calls

God doesn't call the qualified, He qualifies those He calls.

And as that was true for Abraham, Moses and David, it is true for us.

God has chosen us to be part of His big picture of faith and build his kingdom today.

Here at St. Pius our goal is for every one of our members to actively live their faith as committed disciples.

And yet any time we ask parishioners to take their next step in faith -
to serve in a ministry, to give small groups a try,
to invite someone to church - here are some of the responses we get:

I couldn't do that. I don't have anything to offer.

I wouldn't know what to say or do.

I'm not holy enough. My faith isn't strong enough,

Maybe you've felt these things, or are thinking them now.

If so, you're in good company with the individuals God chose.

Abraham, Moses, David,

the Samaritan woman at the well,

even the man born blind - they all felt unworthy,

and ill equipped to accomplish God's mission.

And still God chose them.

And God chooses us - He chooses me and he chooses you.

God sees past your weaknesses, your flaws, your past

and instead sees what you can be.

God sees your inner strengths and your potential for greatness and service.

And God is not waiting for you to become perfect or pious or prepared.

God is calling you right now, today, and asking you to trust, to believe

and to rely on his grace.

SCREEN: Big Picture main screen

So how can you put yourself into God's big picture of faith this Lent?

Well, the first step is to figure out if there is something holding you back.

Something that is keeping you from going deeper in faith or taking the next step?

Is it feelings of inadequacy?

Is it shame about your past?

Is it a sense of not knowing what God wants you to do?

Figure this out first, then let it go.

We can waste so much time and energy disqualifying ourselves

when God has already looked past it and chosen us.

Let it go so you can allow God to use you by putting God first in your life.

How might God use you?

Maybe by stepping into a parish ministry or activity you've heard about

and have thought, *I could probably do that.*

If you've had that thought - and I know many of you have -

don't ignore it, don't push it aside, don't disqualify yourself.

Just summon up the courage and take the next step.

Maybe there is someone you can invite to join you at church this Easter.

SCREEN: Wizard of Oz

As a young boy watching the Wizard of Oz,

the character I most related to was

the Cowardly Lion.

I wanted to be brave and courageous but at the age of seven I was just the opposite - shy and insecure.

Watching him change gave me hope that one day I'd be bold and confident, and look at me now.

God has a plan for your life and

a vision of who you can be.

So your goal in life is to align yourself with God's vision and plan.

And when you do, you'll discover your purpose in life.

And you will find the meaning and the joy you seek. Amen. +