

Yesterday was a fun, fun-filled day. We were at Lake Okoboji and I was doing a wedding for a friend of mine. I've known this friend for 25 years. We used to work together in a bar, is where we met. We were both in grad school, working our way through grad school. We spent a lot of time debating things. He was Political Science, and I was in Human Development, and so a lot of times our ideas clashed. But we always found ways to talk about things. We didn't just focus on his idea was right, my idea was right. Sometimes they are the same. Sometimes, most of the time, they were different, but we were able to have conversations together.

So, we're on this boat in the middle of the lake, doing the wedding ceremony, and there's this one guy, you know, there's always that one guy, whenever you go somewhere. Well, this one guy is walking around, and he comes up and he's like, hey, you've known Clint for a long time. I said yeah, He's, like, well, when you knew him, he was probably still a Democrat. And I just kind of pause, and I'm like, no, he wasn't. Actually, why does that matter? Well, you're a pastor to UCC Church. Yes, Well, so you have to be liberal. I am like, I don't have to be anything. I would say our church is progressive. If we were in Des Moines, yeah, we'd probably be more liberal than others, but we are open to conversation, which clearly you are not. And he kinda huffed off and left. And then he circles back around later.

His whole job at this wedding was just to cause trouble. He had given himself the opportunity to be right about everything. He'd given himself the idea that he knew better than anybody else on the boat about anything on the boat. Because there's always that one guy.

Well, you're driving back last night, and I look at Alyssa and I am like, somewhere in my life, I started getting angry. Because I don't like those guys anymore. There always has to be somebody causing trouble for no reason other than to cause trouble. Sometimes, that's me. I recognize that, and sometimes it's most of us here.

But we do it for different reasons. Right now, in the world, there are a lot of people that feel that they know what's best, and they want everybody to do it that way. Somewhere we've forgotten what it means to simply be human, to be, and just let everyone else be.

But I was in Kansas City at General Synod. I kept getting told that I was wrong because I'm a middle-aged, white, straight man. And I asked them, why does that make me wrong? Just because I haven't lived the same lives that other people have. Why do I have to be wrong? Why does anybody have to be wrong? The point of being progressive is that we can all talk to each other. We can all share our ideas, and we're willing to have conversations. We don't have to be right or wrong. We might not agree, but we have the ability for compassion.

Many people believe that you have to be a certain way. In today's reading, they make a very big point that Jesus was made the high priest because of God. During this time, the only people that could be high priests are male and they had to be Levite. They had to be of the tribe of Levi. They had to be priests, their entire life. They had to be from the same family lineage. They had to have been chosen that whole time, and that was the idea that everybody had. You could not be the high priest if you were not born of this family. You could not do these things. If you were not here.

We separate everybody out. So often, you're only allowed to do certain things because of who you are or where you come from or what you look like. And the reading is saying God didn't mean for it to be that way. He didn't mean for us to have to separate ourselves because we think we need to. He doesn't care about any of that. He doesn't care where you were born,

or what color you are or what gender you are. What he cares, is that you love one another. You get to share his love because he put it on us.

God gave us two things that we can never fully comprehend. We can never fully understand what perfection is because we can never attain it, And we can never fully understand what love is because he wrote it on our hearts, so we don't have to figure it out. He gave it to us as a gift like he gave his son to us. He came here to be with us to see what we have to go through. By Jesus being born a commoner, being able to come up and live a life like the average person, he can understand and appreciate more than any high priest before him, with the exception of the one, I'm not going to name. And the reason is because he was high priest by God before anything happened. He was Abraham's friend, and he just kind of became the high priest. And then, as the tribe separated out, they decided that that one tribe was going to be the priests. They decided that they knew better than God. None of us know better than God.

They gave us the tools we need to be great. And unfortunately, sometimes we choose to not use those tools. We choose to ignore the love that they imprinted on our hearts. We set ourselves up to fail. But we can choose not to. We can choose to share that love, and we can choose to stop hindering ourselves. So, when that guy comes up and tells you that you need to do this, or you need to stop doing that, you don't have to listen because God didn't tell that person to do that, they chose. We chose to listen, and we don't have to. God has given us the tools to be great, And we get to choose to use those every day, and that is something you should all be proud of. Let us pray.