

Matthew 14:22-33

August 6, '17

“THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MOANA”

A FEW YEARS AGO, DISNEY HAD A GREAT ONE-WORD-TITLED ANIMATED MOVIE ABOUT SNOW & ICE – “FROZEN.”

NOW THEY HAVE A GREAT ONE-WORD-TITLED ANIMATED MOVIE ABOUT SEA & SUN AND IT’S CALLED “MOANA.”

THERE ARE SOME WONDERFUL LESSONS IN “MOANA” – ENOUGH THAT WE CAN CALL IT “THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MOANA.”

BUT WHEN I THINK ABOUT THOSE LESSONS, I THINK WE COULD ALMOST CALL IT “THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO PETER” BECAUSE A LOT OF THOSE LESSONS CONNECT WITH THINGS WE LEARNED THIS WEEK AT VBS ABOUT PETER.

THERE ARE SO MANY WONDERFUL ADVENTURES & EXCITING THINGS THAT HAPPEN IN “MOANA” THAT WE CAN’T POSSIBLY TALK ABOUT ALL OF THEM, SO I’LL JUST TELL YOU ABOUT THE ONES THAT MADE ME THINK OF SOME OF THE LESSONS WE LEARNED THIS WEEK AT “SONROCK” VBS.

THE MOVIE STARTS WITH GRAMMA TELLING THE STORY OF HOW THE MOTHER ISLAND TE FITI HAD THE POWER TO CREATE OTHER ISLANDS WITH HER HEART – A LITTLE GREEN GEMSTONE ENGRAVED WITH A SPIRAL.

THERE WAS A DEMIGOD MAUI WHO USED HIS MAGICAL FISH HOOK TO SHAPESHIFT INTO ALL SORTS OF DIFFERENT CREATURES.

HE BECAME A BIRD & FLEW TO TE FITI AND STOLE HER HEART – THAT LITTLE GREEN GEMSTONE, ENGRAVED WITH A SPIRAL.

BUT WITHOUT HER HEART, TE FITI BEGAN TO FALL AWAY & WAS OVERCOME BY A TERRIBLE DARKNESS.

AS MAUI FLEW AWAY, HE ENCOUNTERED A LAVA MONSTER NAMED TE KA WHO ROSE FROM THE SEA LIKE A VOLCANO & SENT MAUI'S FISH HOOK & TE FITI'S HEART INTO THE SEA & NEITHER MAUI, HIS FISH HOOK OR THE HEART HAS BEEN SEEN FOR A THOUSAND YEARS.

AND NOW, UNLESS SOMEONE CAN TRAVEL BEYOND THEIR ISLAND'S REEF AND FIND TE FITI'S HEART & THEN FIND MAUI SO THAT HE CAN RESTORE THE HEART, DARKNESS WILL SLOWLY CONTINUE TO COVER THE OTHER ISLANDS UNTIL THEY WILL ALL BE CONSUMED BY THE DARKNESS.

WHEN GRAMMA FINISHES TELLING THE STORY, ALL THE LITTLE CHILDREN WHO ARE LISTENING ARE TERRIFIED – EXCEPT ONE.

LITTLE MOANA IS EXCITED TO HEAR THE STORY BUT HER DAD – THE CHIEF - COMES IN AND SAYS THAT NO ONE SHOULD EVER GO BEYOND THE REEF BECAUSE THEY HAVE EVERYTHING THEY NEED RIGHT THERE ON THEIR ISLAND.

WE SEE WHY MOANA IS EXCITED BY THIS STORY BECAUSE SHE WALKS DOWN TO THE SEA & WADES IN & WE LEARN THAT THE SEA LOVES MOANA.

IT'S ALMOST AS IF THE SEA IS CALLING HER.

THE SEA RISES UP TO HER – IT PARTS FOR HER TO WALK OUT ONTO IT.

IT EVEN PLAYS WITH HER & SPLASHES HER & TIES UP HER HAIR IN A LITTLE TOPKNOT.

THE SEA HAS CALLED HER & ACCEPTED HER.

THAT'S A LOT LIKE WHAT WE LEARNED ABOUT PETER IN BIBLE SCHOOL.

JESUS CALLED PETER & ACCEPTED HIM.

MOANA WASN'T ANYONE SPECIAL & NEITHER WAS PETER.

BUT BOTH OF THEM WERE CALLED AND ACCEPTED.

THAT'S TRUE FOR YOU, TOO.

YOU MAY NOT FEEL AS THOUGH YOU'RE SPECIAL BUT GOD CALLS YOU & ACCEPTS YOU, JUST LIKE MOANA & PETER.

WELL, BACK TO MOANA.

WHEN SHE'S IN THE SEA, SHE FINDS A BEAUTIFUL LITTLE GREEN GEMSTONE ENGRAVED WITH A SPIRAL, BUT SHE LOSES IT IN THE WATER.

LATER, WE LEARN THAT GRAMMA PICKED UP THAT GEMSTONE & SAVED IT UNTIL IT WAS TIME TO GIVE IT BACK TO MOANA.

MOANA – AGAINST THE WISHES OF HER FATHER WHO DOESN'T THINK ANYONE SHOULD GO OUT INTO THE SEA – GOES IN SEARCH OF MAUI SO THAT HE MIGHT RESTORE TE FITI'S HEART BECAUSE THEIR ISLAND IS FALLING INTO DARKNESS LIKE ALL THE OTHER ISLANDS.

HER GRANDMOTHER POINTS OUT A FISH HOOK CONSTELLATION IN THE SKY & SAYS THAT'S WHERE MAUI WILL BE & MOANA HEADS OFF ON HER LITTLE CANOE WITH THE LITTLE GREEN GEMSTONE ENGRAVED WITH A SPIRAL, TO FIND MAUI.

NOW MOANA DOESN'T REALLY KNOW HOW TO SAIL & HER BOAT CAPSIZES – THAT MEANS IT TURNS OVER IN THE WATER – AND SHE'S WASHED UP ON A ROCKY ISLAND.

SHE'S REALLY ANGRY AT THE SEA FOR NOT HELPING HER WHEN SHE NEEDED IT BUT SHE'S HAPPY THAT SHE STILL HAS THE LITTLE GREEN GEMSTONE ENGRAVED WITH A SPIRAL – THE HEART OF TE FITI.

BUT THEN SHE NOTICES HOOK-SHAPED MARKS ON THE ROCKS & SHE REALIZES THAT THE SEA HAS NOT ONLY PROTECTED HER FROM BEING HURT, BUT DELIVERED HER RIGHT WHERE SHE WANTED TO GO – THE ISLAND WHERE MAUI LIVES.

THIS IS A LOT LIKE ONE OF THE OTHER LESSONS WE LEARNED ABOUT PETER IN BIBLE SCHOOL THIS WEEK, ISN'T IT?

REMEMBER WHEN PETER SAW JESUS WALKING ON THE WATER, HE STARTED WALKING ON THE WATER HIMSELF.

BUT THEN HE GOT SCARED & HE STARTED TO SINK BUT JESUS REACHED OUT HIS HAND & PULLED HIM TO SAFETY.

HE PROTECTED PETER, JUST LIKE THE SEA PROTECTED MOANA. IT'S JUST LIKE GOD WILL DO FOR YOU.

WHEN YOU'RE AFRAID – WHEN YOU THINK THE PROBLEMS IN YOUR LIFE WILL DROWN YOU – JESUS IS THERE TO LIFT YOU TO SAFETY & PROTECT YOU.

LET'S GO BACK TO MOANA.

LIKE I SAID, THERE ARE SO MANY EXCITING THINGS THAT HAPPEN THAT I CAN'T TELL YOU ALL OF THEM.

BUT MOANA CONVINCES MAUI TO GO WITH HER ONTO THE SEA TO TRY TO FIND HIS MAGICAL FISH HOOK SO THAT HE CAN RETURN THE HEART OF TE FITI & RESCUE ALL THE ISLANDS.

AT FIRST, MAUI TRIES TO GET RID OF MOANA BY THROWING HER OVERBOARD BUT – AS ALWAYS – THE SEA KEEPS PROTECTING HER & PUTTING HER BACK ON THE BOAT.

THEY ENCOUNTER ALL KINDS OF DIFFICULTIES & IT'S ALMOST AS IF YOU'RE READING A BOOK LIKE "THE ODYSSEY" OR LIKE C.S. LEWIS'S "VOYAGE OF THE DAWN TREADER."

FIRST, THEY HAVE TO DO BATTLE WITH THE KAKAMORA COCONUT CREATURES & THEN THEY SET SAIL FOR THE REALM OF MONSTERS & ENTER THE LAIR OF A GIANT CRAB NAMED TAMATOA, WHO HAS MAUI'S HOOK BECAUSE HE LOVES TO COLLECT SHINY & VALUABLE OBJECTS.

THEY END UP GETTING MAUI'S HOOK BACK BUT IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE HE USED IT THAT HE CAN'T SHAPESHIFT INTO THE CREATURE HE WANTS TO BE.

JUST WHEN IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S THE END & MOANA & MAUI WILL BE DEFEATED BY TAMATOA, THE SEA GATHERS THEM INTO A GEYSER & SHOOTS THEM BACK TO THE SURFACE.

THEY ARE SAVED BY THE SEA.

THIS CAN REMIND US OF SOMETHING ELSE WE LEARNED AT BIBLE SCHOOL THIS WEEK.

REMEMBER THAT WE LEARNED IT WAS PETER WHO WAS THE FIRST ONE TO SAY "JESUS IS LORD."

WE LEARNED THE VERSE (AND YOU SANG THE SONG) – *"IF YOU CONFESS WITH YOUR MOUTH THAT JESUS IS LORD & BELIEVE IN YOUR HEART THAT GOD RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD, YOU WILL BE SAVED."*

JUST LIKE WITH MOANA & MAUI, NO MATTER HOW DIFFICULT THINGS SEEM TO BE IN LIFE, JESUS IS ALWAYS THERE TO SAVE US.

NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, GOOD OR BAD, JESUS IS THERE FOR US & WILL BE WITH US FOREVER AND HELP US THROUGH HARD TIMES – JUST LIKE THE SEA HELPED MOANA & MAUI.

BACK TO THE MOVIE – MOANA & MAUI ARE NOW ON THEIR WAY TO RETURN THE LITTLE GREEN GEMSTONE ENGRAVED WITH A SPIRAL – THE HEART OF TE FITI.

BUT THEY HAVE TO GET PAST TE KA – THE LAVA MONSTER.

THIS IS A HORRIBLE MONSTER – BREATHING FIRE AND COVERED IN DARKNESS.

THIS IS THE MOST DIFFICULT MONSTER THEY’VE ENCOUNTERED YET!

THEY HAVE TO GET PAST TE KA BUT THEY CAN’T DO IT & MAUI’S FISH HOOK IS ALMOST DESTROYED IN THEIR ATTEMPT.

MAUI BLAMES IT ALL ON MOANA & FLIES AWAY, SAYING HE’S FINISHED WITH HER.

AND THEN MOANA GETS ANGRY WITH THE SEA & SAYS SHE DOESN’T KNOW WHY SHE EVER STARTED THIS JOURNEY.

SHE BEGS THE SEA TO CHOOSE SOMEONE ELSE & SHE THROWS THE LITTLE GREEN GEMSTONE ENGRAVED WITH A – THE HEART OF TE FITI – INTO THE SEA.

BUT THEN SHE SEES A VISION OF GRAMMA & SHE DIVES DOWN TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA & RETRIEVES THE HEART & IS GIVEN BRAND-NEW STRENGTH.

HMMM....THIS REMINDS ME OF ANOTHER LESSON WE LEARNED ABOUT PETER THIS WEEK.

REMEMBER WHEN HE DENIED EVEN KNOWING JESUS, JESUS FORGAVE HIM.

MOANA TURNED AGAINST THE SEA, BUT SHE WAS FORGIVEN & SHE FOUND NEW STRENGTH.

THAT’S WHAT HAPPENED TO PETER.

WHEN JESUS FORGAVE HIM, HE FOUND NEW STRENGTH.

THAT CAN HAPPEN TO US, TOO.

WE’RE JUST LIKE MOANA & JUST LIKE PETER.

WE SOMETIMES DO BAD THINGS & WE SOMETIMES EVEN GET MAD AT GOD.

**BUT GOD WILL ALWAYS FORGIVE US & GIVE US NEW STRENGTH.
BACK TO MOANA.**

**SHE GOES BACK TO TRY & GET PAST TE KA – THE LAVA
MONSTER – BUT A GIANT WAVE KNOCKS HER OUT OF HER BOAT AND
SHE’S ABOUT TO BE HIT BY A BLAST OF FIRE WHEN MAUI RETURNS &
GIVES HER ENOUGH TIME TO GET TO THE ISLAND OF TE FITI.**

**BUT WHEN SHE DOES, SHE FINDS THAT IT’S GONE – NOTHING
LIVING REMAINS.**

**BUT THEN, SHE LOOKS BACK & SHE SEES A SPIRAL SYMBOL ON
THE CHEST OF THE LAVA MONSTER, TE KA.**

SHE SEES THE TRUTH.

**SHE HOLDS THE LITTLE GREEN GEMSTONE ENGRAVED WITH A
SPIRIAL – THE HEART OF TE FITI – AND SHE RAISES IT UP FOR TE KA
TO SEE.**

**THE SEA MAKES A PATH FOR HER THAT’S MORE MAGNIFICENT
THAN EVEN CECIL B. DEMILLE COULD CREATE & SHE DARES TO
MEET TE KA FACE TO FACE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SEA.**

MOANA TELLS TE KA THAT THIS IS NOT WHO SHE TRULY IS.

**SHE’S NOT MEANT TO BE A HORRIBLE LAVA MONSTER & MOANA
PLACES THE HEART BACK WITHIN THE SPIRAL ON TE KA’S CHEST.**

**IT’S ONE OF THE MOST HEARTWARMING SCENES YOU’LL EVER
SEE & FOR THOSE WHO HAVE SEEN “E.T.,” IT REMINDS YOU OF A
MEMORABLE MOMENT IN THAT MOVIE.**

**ALL THE LAVA FALLS AWAY FROM TE KA TO REVEAL TE FITI,
LUSH & GREEN ONCE MORE.**

**AND THIS REMINDS ME OF YET ANOTHER LESSON THAT WE
LEARNED FROM PETER IN BIBLE SCHOOL THIS WEEK.**

AFTER THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS WHEN PETER BECAME THE LEADER OF THE CHURCH, HE MIRACULOUSLY HEALED PEOPLE. HE WAS LIVING FOR JESUS.

MOANA HEALED TE FITI AND SHE BECAME THE GREAT LEADER OF HER PEOPLE THAT SHE WAS ALWAYS MEANT TO BE.

WE, TOO, CAN LIVE FOR JESUS.

WE, TOO, CAN HELP HEAL PEOPLE WITH OUR LOVE & OUR CARE.

WELL, AT THE END OF MOANA, MAUI ENDS US WITH A NEW FISH HOOK & MOANA A NEW BOAT & WE FIND HER SAILING BACK TO HER OWN ISLAND WHERE EVERYTHING HAS BEEN RESTORED AGAIN.

SHE IS RE-UNITED WITH HER PEOPLE & SHE HELPS THEM LEARN HOW TO BE GREAT VOYAGERS ONCE AGAIN.

SHE HAS GRAMMA & MAUI FLYING BESIDE HER AS SHE SETS OUT TO SEA.

I TOLD YOU WE LEFT OUT A LOT OF THINGS THAT HAPPEN IN THE MOVIE, BUT THE NEXT TIME YOU WATCH IT, REMEMBER THAT MOANA CAN TEACH US HOW JESUS ACCEPTS US, PROTECTS US, SAVES US & FORGIVES US AND HOW – IN EVERYTHING WE DO – WE CAN BE LIVING FOR JESUS! AMEN.

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