

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Fourth Sunday in Lent — March 10, 2024

“...that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.”

– John 3:15 –

“You put your right hand in, you put your right hand out, you put your right hand in, and you shake it all about, you do the hokey pokey and you turn yourself around, that’s what it’s all about.” We all know the song; it is a favorite childhood game and is often danced at special events. Everyone stands in a circle and follows the instructions; the verse ends with everyone clapping while singing, “That’s what it’s all about!” The song continues with the other hand, and then other parts of the body.

It is a silly game, but the question at the end has become the focus of many philosophical discussions. What if the Hokey Pokey really is what it’s all about? This leads to the question, “What does Hokey Pokey mean?” After all, if that is what it is all about, we should understand what it means. There are many references for background information, but few agree on the origin of the song.

The question is not new. The great philosopher Jimmy Buffett asked in a song, “Maybe it’s all too simple for our brains to figure it out. What if the Hokey Pokey is all it really is about?” Research into the Hokey Pokey is humorous and interesting. Some think that it is a good thing, that an eternity in heaven doing the Hokey Pokey would be a joyous existence. Others think that it would be more like hell.

We want a reasoned answer for everything, beginning from a very early age. Every child is apt to drive adults crazy with the “phase of a million questions.” These questions are not always easy, but we can usually find an answer and teach a lesson. As we grow older, our questions become harder. We spend a lot of time discussing and debating the deep things of life and we often come up with very different answers. We disagree with our neighbors about so many things far more important than the Hokey Pokey. Sadly we make the questions of faith so difficult that we miss the truth of the Gospel.

Jimmy Buffett’s answer might be funny but the truth of life really is very simple and it has nothing to do with a silly dance. The answer to our deepest questions is Jesus Christ. He is really what it is ALL about.

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