

The Mouse and the Light By Lisa Suhay
Told by Erin Wheeler, Seminary Intern at Salem United Methodist Church
as Part of the Sermon for Christmas Sunday, December 27, 2015

In the center of the most beautiful garden in the world stood the Tree of Wisdom. From this great tree there grew many branches and leaves. It spread its roots throughout the land. The tree was a place of comfort. Creatures would often come to it and sit in its shade and feel its great truths.

For many years there was harmony. Then one day a shade from one long branch decided that it was not happy.

The shade did not wish to give comfort or shelter.

"Fools," cried the shade as it spread beneath the tree. "I know more than any of them. I am not made to serve. I should rule over everything."

And so it was that in pride and hatred the shade tugged and pulled and stretched itself until at last it was able to break its attachment to the great tree.

It became the first shadow.

Instead of using its power to give shade, it created a cold darkness that blinded all those it touched to the truth.

Instead of using its voice to impart great truths to those around it, The Shadow whispered only lies.

The Shadow crept away from the Tree of Wisdom and drifted far into a barren place where it crawled into a hole in the sand. It sank deep into the earth.

The Shadow grew and plotted. It would wait beneath the surface until a sad or doubting creature came near. Then The Shadow would rise up and overtake the unsuspecting creature and blind it to truth and bend it to its will.

Over many years and many miles the shadow created an underground army. Then the army of The Shadow began to strike without warning bringing fear, sadness and hate to innocent creatures.

"You cannot fight. I will win," it lied.

Some began to hide and fear the very light of day, for they thought that it was the cause of The Shadow. Others began to hate and fear all the shade of the world, not being able to tell the difference between shade and shadow.

It came to pass that creatures began to feel anger toward all things different from themselves. They even became afraid of their own shadows. They stayed in their homes. When they went out they didn't go far.

One day a field mouse went to the Tree of Wisdom, shook its small fist and shouted, "How could you create such a terror upon us? Why is this allowed to continue?"

The great tree bowed its huge trunk. It shook and leaves fell like tears. But it did not answer.

Then a voice spoke from all around, "I created light and darkness. I made creatures great and small. To one and all I gave the power to build or destroy, bring joy or pain. One among you has chosen darkness and pain. This is not my wish."

Though dazzled by being in the presence of this great power the Mouse was still angry. "Why do you not stop The Shadow?" cried the Mouse.

"Because I have given that power to those The Shadow harms. The Shadow has grown through the lack of caring in creatures. Now it is your job to stop it," the great voice answered.

The Voice told the mouse how to win.

"You cannot live in fear. Fear only makes The Shadow grow. To be rid of darkness - shine a powerful light of truth. To be rid of cold - bring only warmth wherever you go."

The Mouse answered, "I will go out and tell the others what you taught me. I will remember not to hate, because hate makes The Shadow stronger."

But Mouse worried, "I am only one small being and the shadows are now many. How can I ever hope to succeed?"

Suddenly Mouse was surrounded in a beautiful golden light and warmth, "You will know that as The Shadow began with one small dark being; now the light will grow with you, my small messenger."

So it was that one tiny creature set out into the world. With every kind word and every truth it spoke, the world around it healed. Others joined the mouse and soon the light grew and the shadows faded. One by one, The Shadow's followers fell before the mouse and the light. The Shadow sank back into its hole in the earth, vanishing like drops of water in the burning sands of time.

This story is dedicated to the children of the world who have seen the shadow. With this story you are given the power of the light. Go out and shine!