

Sermon Nov 4th All Saints Sunday

God Breathes New Life Into Us

When we see tragedies like the shooting at Tree of Life synagogue last Saturday. We are once again reminded of the unfortunate reality that comes with living in a world where violence, hatred, division, disease, natural disasters, and death exist. We are all impacted by suffering.

We stand with the victims at Tree of Life synagogue knowing the impact suffering has on our lives. We weep with them. We are deeply moved or in other words angered by the destructive forces that death has had on their lives. We pray that they will experience healing and new life.

Today we recognize All Saints Day. Today we remember those people in our faith tradition who have faced persecution, suffering, for believing in Jesus and his vision for the world. Today, we also remember all those people across our globe who are killed for believing in God. Who suffer for living out their faith, whether they are Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Sikhs, Hindus, or people who believe in Indigenous Spiritualities.

Living in a world where violence, hatred, division, disease, natural disasters, and death exist. We all have been impacted by suffering.

In our gospel this morning, Mary finds out Jesus has come to pay his respects to her brother. She is heart broken. Her grief overwhelming. When she encounters Jesus, she shares her frustration. "Why didn't you come sooner so you could have saved my brother?" Or in other words, a question we often ponder when facing suffering in our lives: Where are you God?

Mary begins to weep. In the Greek biblical language, the word used here for weep is *klause*, which means to wail. So, here is Mary, kneeling in front of Jesus wailing. Sobbing. Tears gushing down her face. In response to her insurmountable grief, the people who have come to comfort her also begin to wail.

So, here is Jesus, standing in the midst of all these wailing people. Hearing their pain. Watching as one of his closest friends is too hurt to even stand. Jesus can't take it anymore. Jesus is deeply moved. Which is better translated as he is angered at the destructive force of death and how it is

impacting his closest friends. Jesus begins to weep. The word here in the Greek is different. It is *dakryo*, which means shedding a tear.

So, Jesus is so overwhelmed by the suffering we experience that he can't hold back the tears any longer. Or in other words, God is so overwhelmed by our suffering that God can't hold back the tears any longer.

So, in answer to the question where are you God? Jesus is saying. I am here weeping with you. Through our faith in Christ Jesus we believe that God is there with all those impacted by the shooting last Saturday weeping with them. God has been and is there for all people who suffer for what they believe in. Weeping with them. God is here with all of us in the midst of our suffering. Weeping with us.

At almost every funeral I have officiated at the eulogy brings me to tears. I think all of us who come to show our comfort and support experience this during the eulogy. We feel so deeply moved, angered by how death has impacted this family we care about that we can't help but cry with them.

We are created in God's image. And no better example of this then when we are there to support people as they face suffering in their lives.

We all have been impacted by suffering. We find comfort knowing that God is walking with us. We find comfort when our friends and family walk with us. But, we often get to a place where we want more. Where we want to experience healing and new life.

What I love about our readings here this morning is that the common theme throughout is God doesn't just weep with us. God does something to impact our lives. Or in other words, God breathes new life into us.

Isaiah is talking to a community of people who are living in an exile where their land, their homes, their food, their relationships, their worship space has been taken away. They have nothing left. Except faith. So, Isaiah comes with news of a promise that one day they will experience new life. That everyone will return from exile. Everyone will be invited to the banquet. God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. This promise gave them hope to endure. Gave them life. We hope this promise gives hope and life to the people of Tree of Life synagogue during this time.

John reiterates these words to a persecuted Christian community that is struggling to hang on to the vision Jesus has in store for them. One day death will be no more. God will wipe away your tears. God will dwell among you. These words gave the early church hope to persevere. Empowered the church to keep healing and breathing new life into people despite facing persecution. And we continue to see this hope lived out today where the church is persecuted.

In our gospel, Jesus responds to Martha and Mary's plea. He asks Lazarus to come out of the tomb and he does. Jesus breathes new life into Lazarus and his grieving family. Giving us all hope that even though we face suffering, God will breathe new life into us. God will empower us to keep breathing new life into others. Keep living Jesus' mission out in the world.

So, God weeps with us. God gets angry at death. And is moved to action. Breathing new life into us. Helping us heal from the suffering we face in our lives. Encouraging us to hold on to the promise that one day suffering will be no more. That God will dwell among us. Wiping away every tear from our eyes. Empowering us to live our lives healing and breathing new life into others.

Let us pray, comforting God, we lift up all those who have been victims of violence and hatred in our world. We give thanks that you walk with us in our suffering. Encourage us to hope in your promise that even though we suffer on our crosses, we also rise to new life. Participating in your healing and redemption for the world. **Amen.**