

Jeremiah 31:1-6
Acts 10:34-43
Matthew 28:1-10

Sermon April 9th, 2023

God Breathes New Life into Us

For three years, Jesus heals the sick. Feeds and proclaims good news to the poor. Calms the storm. Challenges the authorities when they act in ways that are oppressive and exclusive to others. Forgives the sinner. And shows hospitality to the rejected, the outcasts, the vulnerable people in his community.

For three years, Jesus teaches those who follow him how to be active participants in this movement. How to say and do what Jesus says and does. Even in the face of persecution.

For three years, Jesus' movement grows across Galilee and Judea.

Then something happens to stall the movement. The guards show up in the Garden of Gethsemane, and arrest Jesus. The disciples flee. Only a few remain at a distance to watch what is about to take place. And one of them denies Jesus on three different occasions when someone tries to call him out as one of Jesus' followers.

The Jesus movement seems all but dead. Especially when Jesus is convicted, and faces the ultimate punishment for defying the Empire. Crucifixion (**Image One**: Jesus on the cross).

For the disciples, they are confused. They are in despair. If Jesus was the Messiah, why would he suffer the fate of crucifixion? The disciples are afraid that the guards will come for them next. The disciple's future is all of a sudden filled with uncertainty. If Jesus wasn't the Messiah, then when will the Messiah come to liberate them from this oppression (**Image One**).

In Greek, we like to call moments like the passion story a Kairos moment. A sudden moment in time that stands out from the linear time we are used to. A moment that inflicts change. A moment that often pulls us through a period of uncertainty.

For the disciples, they are standing in a Kairos moment that they probably didn't see coming when they entered Jerusalem a week ago. The movement was looking stronger than ever as people were waving palm branches, and declaring Jesus their King as he rode in on his donkeys.

And now, they are in hiding. Wondering what just happened (**Image One**)?

Like the disciples, we get engaged into ministries or movements that we feel passionate about. At first, we too, see the fruits of these ministries/movements. But like the passion narrative, we too, find ourselves facing Kairos moments. Moments where

something happens to challenge the ministry or movement. Leaving us to question everything we felt so certain about just a minute ago (**Image One**). Often times, challenging us to change.

These Kairos moments can happen in our relationships as well. For example, when we meet someone, whether a friend or an intimate partner, we carry with us a lot of passion for the relationship. We are filled with energy to spend time together. To get to know each other better.

Then something happens. A Kairos moment that challenges the strength of the relationship. A death in the family, a big fight, a stupid mistake, hurtful words, a sudden dose of insecurity. Leaving us to question everything about the relationship (**Image One**).

When we come across a Kairos moment that challenges the ministry, movement, or relationship we have been so invested in. It can be hard to keep believing in this ministry, movement, or relationship. It can feel scary to find ourselves standing in the uncertainty that a Kairos moment brings (**Image One**). We long for something or someone to breathe new life into the ministry, movement, or relationship.

For the disciples, the resurrection is this breathe of new life for them. The resurrection, though it could be interpreted as another Kairos moment, is where God affirms for the disciples that Jesus is the Messiah. The Jesus movement isn't dead. It is very much alive in the resurrected Christ, in the disciples, and in all those who choose to join this movement going forward (**Image Two**: Resurrected Christ).

Now, the movement will not look exactly the same as it did before. Jesus is passing the leadership of this movement on to his disciples who will lead this movement in their own way, with their gifts.

Kind of like when you welcome a new pastor. This pastor will not lead you in the same way that the pastor before led you. This pastor will bring their unique gifts to the ministry, shaping it in a new way.

What we see as we reflect on this resurrection narrative is that God works in and through our Kairos moments to breathe new life into us. To breathe new life into the ministry, movement, and relationships we were once passionate about (**Image Two**).

These ministries, movements, relationships, will not necessarily look the same as they did before, but when we experience this new life, we are re-energized. We are ready for the path ahead. We are ready to keep healing the sick. To keep feeding and proclaiming good news to the poor. To keep being a calming presence to those who are standing in the midst of the storm. To keep challenging the authorities when they act in ways that are oppressive and/or exclusive. To keep forgiving. To keep showing

hospitality to the rejected, the outcasts, the vulnerable peoples in our community. We are ready to participate in this Jesus movement in a new way, with our unique gifts.

We are in the beginning of the Easter season. For the next fifty days we will hear how the resurrected Christ appeared to his disciples on more than one occasion to re-energize them (**Image Two**). To motivate them to keep this movement going.

We will see in the book of Acts, that from these experiences of the resurrected Christ, as well as, the reception of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the disciples keep this movement going (**Image Two**).

And though the church itself has experienced Kairos moments again and again over its 2000 years of history, including the Kairos moment we are experiencing presently, as the church deals with the outfall of the pandemic, as well as, the shifting cultural landscape that has in some ways pushed the church to the margins of the community, the church continues to keep this movement going in the 21st century, as the resurrected Christ, the reception of the Holy Spirit, continues to breathe new life into us. Changing our church in new ways (**Image Two**).

Let us pray, loving God, when we are rocked by Kairos moments open our eyes to see where the Resurrected Christ is present breathing new life into us. **Amen.**

© copyright, 2023, Wallace Bornhuse. All rights reserved.