

Sermon March 22nd, 2020

Jesus Reveals Himself to Us in the Midst of Our Chaos

In our gospel this morning, we hear about one of Jesus' miracles as he heals a blind person. Giving this person the ability to see for the first time in their life. What this person sees with their newfound sight is a community that is falling apart around them over this miracle.

In Jesus' day people were so integrated in community life that everyone took notice when someone's life changed so dramatically. This person went from a blind beggar living on the margins of society to a person who now fits into the normal of society. Whatever that may look like. If this Jesus person could do this for this blind person, could he do it for everyone else in the community who has been limited by their physical or mental health? And what would that do to the community?

This is a significant change to the community this person lives in. So, the people react the way we generally react when our community faces major change. People argue with each other as they try to grasp with what has happened and how this might change their community. When they look around for who sparked this change, so they can get some answers, Jesus is nowhere to be found.

Then the leadership of the religious community gets involved in the dispute. Now things will settle down as they will give us some answers. No. Instead, they argue with each other as they wrestle to understand what has happened and who this Jesus person is.

Then the parents of the blind person are invited into the conversation. Now everything will become clear. We will hear what actually happened from the witnesses. Except the parents don't want to be accused of the same things their son is being accused of so they defer.

Finally, the Pharisees go back to the person who can now see, to get clarification. The Pharisees don't like what this person has to say and throws them out.

Let's try and piece this all together, because there is a lot here. After many years of not being able to see, which led to this person sitting on the curbs

of pathways begging for money. This person now is able to see, and what they see is people unable to cope with their new normal.

As I was putting this homily together for today I was listening to Christmas music believe it or not. Why? Because I wanted to remember a time before chaos hit our community. A time where we lived with some sort of normalcy. A time where things were more peaceful, and where we could gather together physically as community, family, and friends.

Now different from the blind man's experience, what we are dealing with is not a miracle. It is not the transformative healing of someone we know well in the community. It is an illness that has taken many of us by shock as we try to figure it all out.

We have seen over the past few weeks a lot of change in our community that has left us feeling as confused as the people who witnessed Jesus' miracle. Some of us have scrambled through the grocery stores looking for whatever we can store away for the inevitable moment of self isolation.

Some have taken this lightly, thinking everyone is over reacting. Trying to carry on with their lives as was. Others have said we are not taking this seriously enough pushing for stronger measures.

Different governments are choosing different ways of dealing with it. We watch as loved ones are impacted by this illness not only directly but also indirectly. Job losses. Mental health challenges. Not able to access the essential services they need.

When our leaders talk we hope to get some answers, but end up feeling like we are left with more questions. We are going through such a radical change in our society that we are calling it our new normal. Except I don't think any of us have really had an easy time accepting this term.

And now the only way we can really connect with each other is through the technologies we have created, which we are all grateful for. If we didn't have some way of communicating with each other, self isolation and social distancing would feel that much worse. But, still, it isn't the same. And not everyone has access to these technologies.

So, in our gospel story this morning we hear a person who has been given a miracle, and probably should be celebrating. But, instead, is struggling,

because everyone is reacting negatively around them. The people just don't know how to adapt to this major change in their community.

For us, we are dealing with a very frightening virus that we have little knowledge about. The opposite of a miracle. But with the same result. We too are struggling, because we don't know how to adapt to this major change in our community.

Change does this to us. Whether positive or negative, it can have a dramatic effect on our lives. Especially when it happens so quickly.

As the church we are called to reflect Jesus' love in our community during these most difficult changing times. For the blind person, who has been kicked out of the community again. Jesus appears, and helps this person see that Jesus is there in the midst of their chaos. Jesus is there shining God's light of hope and love in their community. Jesus is there lifting this person's spirits up by stating that their healing is a gift. Not a curse.

For us, Jesus reassures us through this story and many others in our gospels, that Jesus' love is very much present in the midst of our chaos. Jesus is here with us revealing himself to us in the loving kindness of our neighbor who goes and buys groceries for us while we sit in self isolation. Jesus reveals himself to us in the researchers who are getting that much closer to finding a medicine that can protect us. Jesus reveals himself to us in the sisters and brothers here at All Saints that give us a phone call to let us know they are thinking of us. Jesus reveals himself to us in the actions of people who choose to self isolate when sick knowing that this action will protect the lives of others.

Jesus reveals himself to us in the Words we hear through our computer screens as we gather together to worship and support one another. Jesus reveals himself to us in the promise we hear in our gospels and throughout the Scriptures that says God turns death into new life. Though we suffer today tomorrow we will experience joy. Though our Lenten journey has become so real and long for us today. Tomorrow Easter will come.

For us, like the blind person, Jesus is pointing us to the redemptive work Jesus is doing in our lives in the midst of all this chaos we are facing. Giving us hope that like all those that have gone before us who have faced their own versions of chaos, we too will endure, through this pandemic. We

too will continue to be the church in the world finding new and creative ways to reflect God's love to others.

Let us pray, comforting God, we are struggling right now as a community. We are terrified, anxious, lonely. We are wondering when this will all end. We miss gathering with one another. Please give us patience. Calm our hearts with your peaceful presence. Provide for those in need. Help us be good neighbors to one another only taking what we need and helping others get what they need. Be there for all of us who are impacted both directly and indirectly from this illness. Shine your light in the midst of our chaos and confusion, and point us to your Word. Giving us hope that you are here with us. Loving us. Comforting us. Redeeming us. In Jesus name we pray. **Amen.**

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