

The Way Is Before Us...Let Us Begin Again:

"Risk and Revelation: Living Courageously"

Psalm 27; Luke 13:31-35; The Gospel of Mary 3:1-9

March 17, 2019...Second Week of Lent

Teaching to Gospel of Mary:

So last week we noted that Mary of Magdalene had a very significant place in the master story, especially in key moments,

and yet her role has been downplayed...in part by the culture (of her time...and our time?) and in part by early Catholic Bishops...why do you think?

She was not a prostitute but most likely a wealthy widow.

Her gospel is written concurrently with Luke's and was recovered in the 1940's in Egypt along with many other manuscripts.

There are several stories of her with Jesus recorded by the gospel writers...Most of her writing is based upon her experience of the Risen Christ. Remember, she was the one who encountered Jesus in the garden on Easter morning.

She focuses on the humanity of Christ

and the amazingly positive nature of our humanity. The more we embrace our humanity, the more self-awareness we attain...then more compassion and kindness we can show ourselves and, importantly, others.

The more fully human, the more divine we become...like Christ. Heaven is here and now.

And, sin is an illusion...it is not part of our nature or universal design and the way through life is to embrace of our true nature. Our Mary reading today talks of just this.

In regards to our reading in Luke, understand that Jerusalem was not only a city, a powerful one...but is also a metaphor for what is powerful in us. Our internal seat of power.

We travel to our own Jerusalems...just like Jesus did. Internally, yes, as well as actually to the national powerful cities around us. Luke tells of Jesus longing to protect us for others and ourselves...

Both Luke and Psalms are laments. Jesus laments Jerusalem.

The psalmists wants protection and comes to know that ultimately we must wait for the lord...slow down and let God catch up to you!

“Risk and Revelation: Living Courageously”

So, we have moved through Bethlehem noting a newness born in us coming to life. We journeyed on, knowing our path would have us revisit old truths but from a new perspective and so find deeper truths.

The way goes before us. We begin, again. We go together and yet journey alone. It will be difficult but we have the power to set our intention and go in love and know joy.

We travel to Jerusalem. Jerusalem...a place of confrontation with authorities...inner and outer authorities in our lives.

It is the place of confrontation, death, and resurrection.

Letting go of what no longer works well and finding new life and energy for being that new human being,

We travel together this Lent.

It will be risky. There will be revelations.

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JESUS LOVED JERUSALEM.

There is no doubting that. Why else did he weep as he approached the city?

He loved her people, too. Why else had he "longed to gather her children under his wings"?

His words to Jerusalem are a reminder, a warning, a dare to be different.

The city, its religious institutions and government, had become a false mother who lured her "children" away from their true humanity...nature.

Away from true worship, turned their heads from justice, no longer expecting them to give first fruits to caring for others.

This city and its people were sandwiched in the middle of kingdoms east and west, north and south.

Traders and Invaders had to go through her to get anywhere.

Maybe they had become a little paranoid or cocky then?

Certainly they had become so ego-centric that Jerusalem ...Milwaukee...you...did not expect the arrival of a Jesus who would threaten their self-image and upturn the status quo.

Mary says, "Good/God came into your midst, coming to the good which belongs to every nature, in order to restore it to its root. ...you have become sick and die (daily) for you love what deceives you."

So Jesus, in deepest lament, denounces the city...actually what he says is your house will be left to you...you will suffer the consequences of your short-term goals, your own choices right where you live, in the everyday of your life.

It is not because he doesn't care but because he loves so deeply that he tells the truth! And stays the course till the opportune time!

It is no coincidence Jesus compares himself to a hen and calls Herod a fox. The threat is real and obvious. Isn't it?

I know you know the biggest threats to your well-being and integrity. This not a secret from you, a mystery to be solved. You know the internal hen and external fox.

You know what you know. In Mary, Jesus says, "One who understands, let him/her understand."

What are you willing to do with what you know?

Jerusalem, Jerusalem...the heart of the nation, the center of power...a symbol/metaphor for our heart and power...

how Jerusalem...and we...kill off the prophets...the truth rather than deal with it. Leaving us to our own desolate, desperate houses.

The closer to the heart of things you get, the more courage it takes not to kill off the good news that life could be different, but you have to let....let your heart have courage.

You have that much power...as to choose. It is not our weakness that we fear, it is our own power that we most fear...

fear using it...and reshaping a new destiny...which feels so risky...is it though?
...more risky than living the way you've always lived?

The children of God are vulnerable to the powers of the world. You are vulnerable...at home, here, at work, in the community, as a nation...

when you kill the messengers, the prophets, who challenge you to take a good look at the choices you are making daily and challenge you

to hold them up to what you say you believe and what you say you want for yourself...

knowing what we most deeply want for ourselves is what God wants for us...and there is a way to begin to get the life you want to live.

Stay the course...begin again...release what has been and breathe in the whole of your humanity...all the way to and through your heart center...love's courage...hope's energy.

Jesus' description of a hen longing to gather its chicks under its wings is both tender and strong.

He is not chicken...running away.
He is a mother protecting with strength.

Even knowing what he knows, Jesus longs to gather the people and will not reject Jerusalem...he does not reject you no matter who you are or what you've done.

There is shelter from life's torments and challenges if we will but come into the fold...become part of that living, holy, one breath...begin again together, on our own, on that path!

Just like today's psalmist who sees life's threats as real and laments them, Jesus laments!

And just like the psalmist, He finds strength and takes courage and stays in his heart...in his ministry...in his call. He stays on the path...willing to begin again and again and again!

Maybe saying out loud these few sentences of lament, releasing sadness and stress, is what gives Him the courage to stay in his heart.

What are your real laments? Will you say them out loud?

They just may lead you back to the courage that's awaiting you in your heart....releasing passion and compassion.

Passion is the better side of anger...it's anger's energy released and recycled to do good vs destroy and strike out. (Inwardly it would be experienced as depression. Depression and Anger both stemming from sadness that has nowhere to go.)

Maybe to find your passion you have to go through your anger and lament the loss, frustration, unfairness, before you can boldly move forward in faith and life. What do you think?

Lament is an important aspect not only of Biblical literature but of faithful living. There's no need to pretend!

What a waste of energy!

Lament is not whining and complaining!

It is a trust in God's love so profound you can be honest with all of your feelings, crying out to God in pain, fear, frustration—even anger.

Calm in the reality God hears your cries and is with you... in fact, is doing something right now beyond what you can know or understand.

Whining and complaining is spinning your wheels, avoiding the truth.

Lament embraces truth and spirals us forward into our faith.

So wait for the Lord! Slow down...slow down so God can catch up to you and guide you.

Slow down so you can think, head in heart! Take heart.

Don't be so sure of your sense of direction that you refuse to use a map...the Master Story. Deceive yourself into thinking you can go it alone...no other travelers or directions!

Don't deceive yourself...don't push away
the very one who has come to rescue you!

What are the things in your life that cause you to lament?

Where are the places and who are the people who can shelter you while you gather yourself up and take heart?

What is it you, like Jesus, must do...even knowing what you know?

...maybe exactly because you know what you know?
That first hardest step close in?

God calls us to deep purposes without self-deception.

God longs for us to stay on the Way.

It is not easy to keep on keeping on in the face of a culture that tries to convince us
we don't know how to be on the journey,

can't trust ourselves...and others,

and it's too dangerous to go anyways!

It takes courage...hope energized...living life with the whole of your story...all your
wisdom...every moment

so you can remember from where you've come
and where you are going!

It is a courage that comes from powerful love...God's to you and yours for yourself
and others!

A love so strong it sees clearly and has to respond and will not leave you alone on
the path.

It is a courageous love that does not judge you but invites you...to do it over, keep
going, you can do it, I've got cha'!

Yes. It is a dangerous world.

But, you are not in a faith crisis...you are in a trust-of-world crisis.

And it requires some creative thinking and strong community to be able to provide
compassionate ministry to each other and into the world.

But this is not a new thing!
And you are not asked to do it alone.

In fact, you need not worry about how to keep going on that path, how to be brave,
how to stop all that's going wrong,
fix what is wrong.

All you are asked to do is to let yourself
be gathered under God's wing.

All you are asked to do is to walk in love's courage.

If you find the love place in your heart,
it is amazing what courage awaits you there...

~to say things you would never have said before,
~to make choices you have not yet been able to make,
~to look inward rather than focusing outward,
~to judge less,
~to be less afraid of the new reality God offers.

So, live courageously. It is amazing how different your life looks as you walk your
talk, stay on the path with self-awareness and courage...

refreshed and energized by the simplicity and clarity
of Holy love...for you!

**~Because much has been revealed, you can risk.
~Because you risk, much is revealed! The Way through...**

And the first revelation will be...self-awareness!
And the second, courageous living from the heart!

That sounds risky! Yep!

But when do you want to live more fully?
How long are you willing to wait?

If not now, when?

Isn't the point...arrival...and traveling not just to our Jerusalems but through
them to renewed life?

This is the opportune time.