

Crossing Over to Loving Kindness

*“A Cross Over Moment...Come On
Down!”*

Habakkuk 1:1-4, 2:1-4; Luke 19:1-10
November 14, 2021

This is the time of year: an invitation to let go,
let go of fear.

As the leaves' true colors appear, the trees
bare themselves with no regret. No regret.
And we come to understand something
marvelous of ourselves and life's eternal
cycles. So much more life is possible....*yet!*

So much more is possible, even in these
times in which we feel we are falling
apart, falling down, falling over, falling
for the wrong stuff. If we fall hard
enough, we may just get to that place
within where we have no choice but
to...

fall to our knees. Our truer selves laid
open, calling us to cross over...cross
over into kindness even though the
world invites us to withdraw, defend,
deny, react.

Calling us to cross over the great divide
between what “is” and what “is yet”
possible.

Crossing over into loving kindness...of
self, others, this gorgeous world of
ours...just as we are, they are, the world
is. Ripe with possibility!

We are to embody loving kindness and
trust in the “more”. And boldly! There
is nothing timid about autumn. Its

daring trusts that which is needed most
will come.

We let go of our fears...facing the world
with kindness instead of anger,
discouragement, hopelessness, or a
well-planned defense.
If not now, when?

The Gospel Reading:

Jesus entered Jericho...and was passing
through it...

**Think of a place you just “passed
through”. What is the difference between
passing through and staying?**

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing
through it. A man there named Zacchaeus;
he was a chief tax collector and was rich...

**How are you also rich...and so, disliked
by some?**

Zacchaeus was trying to see who Jesus
was...

**Do you remember a time when you tried
but were prohibited from seeing?**

Zacchaeus was trying to see who Jesus was,
but on account of the crowd he could not,
because he was short in stature...

**Think of a time you knew you were
different than others in the crowd.**

So Zacchaeus ran ahead...

**Have you run ahead of the crowd before?
Run toward or away from something?**

So Zacchaeus ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him...

What is it you desire to see?

So Zacchaeus ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because Jesus was going to pass that way.

What are the trees you're willing to climb to get a better point of view?

When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today."

If you were summoned to come on down from the tree which you've gotten yourself up...out of a crowd by Jesus, how would you respond? Would you let Him in your home?

So Zacchaeus hurried and was happy to welcome him. All who saw it began to grumble and said, "He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner."

Whine! Whine! Whine! When have people in your life whined to you that things just didn't seem fair? When was the whiner, you?

Zacchaeus stood there and said to Jesus, "Look, half of my possessions I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything..."

We have all had to justify-apologize to someone for something. How did you feel before and after you stood on solid ground seeking to right by your relationships?

"and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much. Then Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham."...

**Has there been a time when you became acutely aware
of your heritage...your heritage as a Christian?**

"For the Child of Humanity came to seek out and to save the lost."

Save us...help us to put things back in the right order.

Then and now...hard times.

Violence! Habakkuk says...and asks,

"Why do you make me see wrongdoing and look at trouble?"

Wicked surrounds the righteous —
therefore justice is perverted."

We too often feel desperate...about world peace, climate change, pandemic safety, un- and under-employment, the state of the elections, the state of our city...gosh, our families.

We are in despair over the trouble that is brewing in our midst and may feel helpless.

We're worried about the bigger picture. We're worried about the budget...all of them! ...and begin to doubt.

Habakkuk lives in such times...as do we!

And, he doesn't seem to be the least bit afraid to confront God, talking straight and true about his feelings.

Are you...able to confront God with your real-est feelings?

And, God's response to Habakkuk?

God sure seems calm about it all.

Talk about a non-anxious presence!

God isn't in denial about the state of things.

God's perspective and God's sense of timing seem to equip God to deal with pain and grief and fear differently than we often do.

Yet we are made in God's image...so we can...
approach life differently...
cross over differently and if not now...

Gee, will we cross over?

Do we know how? Will we seek out the "how"?

What's your mind set today?

Would you approach life differently?

Would you stand at your watch post looking to see something new unfolding...be still, wait for it?

climb that tree to experience for yourself what it's all about?

Station yourself on the walkway?

Host Jesus in your home?

Not so sure? Look to Habakkuk and Zacchaeus.

Habakkuk opens to God and so finds patience *within* his faith *based upon* his trust in God's future for us. The invitation is to live by faith...not doctrine...faith.

And Zacchaeus finds new life perspective, when he finally puts himself in a position to really take a look at himself,
for himself...

changes his point of view, from a new vantage point...
seeing the bigger picture...

admitting to himself he is short...that he comes up short
in lots of different ways...just like we do!

Admitting he is short, he gets himself to a place where he can finally see. Everything changes.

Get to a place where you can finally see...
everything then changes!

Jesus walking by, sees Zacchaeus, and knows his name.

And so matter of fact-ly calls him down and says I am coming to your house.

And Zacchaeus so matter of fact-ly faces his own "sinfulness", brokenness, owns it...almost joyfully...

maybe that's relief in not having to cover it up
or defend it any longer.

Zacchaeus has a conversion experience right on the spot...probably not his first or his last.

He got the right spirit in him....that's the phrase
from Habakkuk.

He met no condemnation from Jesus...no guilt producing judgments...just an invitation to be with Jesus...

talk and eat with Jesus...and let himself be different.

Jesus was not too busy for him...for you.

Are you too busy for Jesus?

And, don't you have to wonder what Zacchaeus' wife said when he gave away half of what they owned and repaid his wrong doings times four?

What would you say? Allow?

Support...if someone in your life found their right spirit and that was going to change everything?

Would it be about the money?
Or, about freedom and integrity?

Might she have, would you try to convince him/them
to give...or to give up less?

Are you willing to give up something, anything...
for justice and right relationship?

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The world is full of so much suffering.
And we want to know why!
Habakkuk wants to know why.

He, in a vision, comes to realize his focus is not to be on the "why" ...neither is ours.
Not even on others.

His focus is to be on himself, his own faithfulness.

God invites us to faithfulness to accomplish the vision, as part of the answer to our
own anguished prayer.

It will take some time to bring the vision to fruition
because the timing depends on us...not only God.

Habakkuk is to write his vision on tablets large enough even someone running may
read it.

Someone in such a hurry, they normally wouldn't be able to see the truth right before
their eyes. Write it big, Habakkuk.

Live it big!

God says the pain and suffering of the world is not all right!

That the time is coming when the faithful...their *timing*
will at long last align with my *timing* for them!

They will cross over!

Broadcast this clear and loud! Keep the faith.

Do something beyond being angry, beyond complaining, beyond blaming...be faithful!

I wonder how I, how each one of us are short-sighted, coming up short in the faith that it can be different?

I wonder where is the watch post...or that tree...
a place where we have fallen to our knees...and look at life with a new point of view...
and come to grips with what's really going on in us and around us? Find that right spirit?

I wonder what tree each of us needs to climb *in order*
to get a better perspective on life
and the alternative life Jesus offers?

Do you need to climb the tree of your own anger and look again?
The tree of trusting others?
The tree of sadness or fear or grief?

As Christians, we believe...we believe something of God (Divine light and love) surely comes. That's our future!

**And because we believe in God's future for us,
we act differently *now*...
we don't act as the world acts,
we act as the faithful act. Pro-actively!**

So, I wonder, that day, how many other people in the crowd were trying to see Jesus.

How many trees there were along the way?
Why everybody wasn't up a tree??

**Maybe, deep down, they were afraid...
didn't want to really see him...be seen.**

The question for us is:

Will we be situated in our lives in such a way we will see God passing right in front of
us...coming to us...

or will we be in that crowd of people pushing to get close
but not willing to be seen or called out?

"I would like to buy \$5 worth of God, please...

not enough to explode my soul or disturb my sleep,
but enough to equal a cup of warm milk
or a snooze in the sunshine.

I don't want enough of God to make me love an enemy or pick beets in the garden or
give a buck.

I want ecstasy, not transformation.

I want the warmth of the womb, not a new birth.

I want a pound of the eternal in a paper sack.

I would like to buy \$5 worth of God, please.

Make that to go!"

It's time to remember the future.

It's time to reclaim the vision....in big and meaningful ways.

a vision of the future so clear and powerful that all
who are running by will be able to read it!

So many of us are just running around.

So few of us stand still, remember, reclaim the vision
and cross over...to a courageous, loving kindness.

It's time to come on down out of that tree, reclaim the vision and write it big with your
life!

Now is a chance to reclaim a right spirit....to see your fears about giving and trusting
for what they are: fears.

Beyond your fears, enable the vision!

Empower the future God so deeply desires for you....for us!

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we come to understand something marvelous of ourselves and life's eternal cycles. So much
more life is possible....*yet!*

If not now, when will you cross over?

Let us come on down and turn toward our God!