

“Time After Time”

“An Opportune Timing of Self-Awareness!”

**Deuteronomy 26: 1-11, Luke 4: 1-13, Sirach 4:20,
Romans 13:11, 2 Corinthians 6:2**

February 14, 2016 First Sunday of Lent

What time is it? It's time for....

Time's been good to me
Running out of time
Timing
Time for a change
Time for a break
What time do you have Do you have time
The present time
Timing is everything
I'm timing you
Wrap around time
Time for a good time
Tummy time
Time for a change
Time is up
Time is going by
Time is going slowly
Time is going quickly
Now is not the time
Make time
Spend time with me
All the time
None of the time
For a long time
Another time
A second time
Time of need
Just in time
Time is running

Time after time, all the times of our lives, God's time!

Every time of life an acceptable time for a do-over.

Salvation...the salve that heals what is broken in us... so often saving us from ourselves.

Salvation moment to moment: not an end of time, not a one time happening. A perpetual process! We have the power to make this very moment the opportune time! A time that saves!

Even hard moments. Especially the hard moments... opportune for saving us?!

God uses every moment for your good.

Meets you where you are and offers an acceptable moment for you to save yourself!

And you know, you and God have a pretty good track record together

“On particularly rough days when I'm sure I can't possibly endure, I like to remind myself that my track record for getting through bad days so far is 100%...and that's pretty good.”

Lent: a time when we reflect on how Jesus journeyed along the Way, (and so we ourselves can journey). Like Him...how we can make every day choices which bring our epiphanies, our relationship with God/self/others into clarity, into reality

...no more thinking! No more over thinking which exaggerates feelings including resistance. Action!

He risked this is the acceptable timing, the opportune time...to bring to an end the old life stopping ways and start choosing more life giving ways of being....

and not for His own good only...but for the common good. A marker for us!

And in today's wisdom teachings we are reminded...

Milk and honey...easy/pleasing times in life, come and go. Here today and gone tomorrow.

I wonder if that's a matter of perspective?

If what really is happening...is that when in the land of milk and honey, we are tempted to forget it is “God” (loving kindness and oneness in the common good...a perspective indeed!) who brought us through and sustains us. Instead thinking it is we ourselves!

Now living in such a land and time, the Hebrew people stop to remember their story...from where they came, how God provided when life did not, and that the story isn't over. Together they find strength in the story and together they rejoice in the moment.

Confessing their faith, not their sins, they give freely their first fruits to God in support of helping others, and then live abundantly enjoying the remaining fruits of their labor. And there is enough to do both!

There really is enough!

Can you tell the story? ...our story? Not just our faith story about Jesus or God, but our story here, the Tippe story...at least the part since you've been here?

It's your story now, too...are you aware what's been happening in you and how your story is unfolding differently.... since you first came here...

have you noticed what's happening in others as well?

This place changes lives. If you have any doubt about that...ask the person sitting next to you today.

And everything that has happened here...blessings and woes, easy times and challenging ones, all the feelings and situations of our time together over the years, before and since my presence here... makes this a powerful reality so....

Here leaders (the elders and deacons, the ministry team members, you and I) are not afraid of the past times or the future times because all we have is this moment in which to truly be alive.

We navigate time, the moment, together in this tippe canoe of ours.

We know together we can go to God's new horizon for Tippe... because we know deeply this ministry changes lives and it starts with each of us becoming aware and seizing the moment!!!!

And we have enough, more than enough to continue to do the little and big great things God calls us to do....time after time, all the time.

So...Have you connected yourself to the Tippe story yet in ways so powerful that it brings the depth of your faith to the tip of your tongue....
the bend in your knee,
the look in your eyes,
the angst in your soul and the fold in your wallet? ...like the Israelites so long ago?

This isn't about money, this isn't about Tippe, this is about you...your well-being!
And your ability to fully grasp your well-being is intricately tied to the well-being of all...the common good.

Want to feel better...less depressed, less complaining, less emptiness, less stress, less hopelessness?
Invest in the common good!

You see, everyday is a wilderness, dessert experience for us. Hard situations come up. Hard choices have to be made.

If you do not know who you are in the story of believers and stand firmly in the times of our faith and God's presence,

if you do not let yourself be all in the faith in the-this moment...

the "devil" will tempt you to question your identity
...and try on false ones.

To think you can go it alone!

Temptations surround you. And temptation is more likely to come in the seemingly innocuous.

Temptation rarely expresses itself in a form obviously evil.

If someone came to you saying, "Wouldn't you like to make a wreck of your life and bring shame to all who know you by stealing, committing adultery, or destroying your health with drugs or food?"

You would say, "No thanks, I'm not interested."

But temptation usually cloaks itself in something seemingly harmless, even virtuous...
pride, a sense of entitlement, skills, hard work, self-sufficiency, frugality
.....leaving destructive consequences.

You see Jesus was, and we are, often tempted in the places where we have relative strength.

A poor person wouldn't be tempted to flaunt their wealth.
A very ordinary person won't be vain about their appearance.

**It is in our places of relative strength
where the misuse of our gifts, abuse or manipulation show up, often with a pious, righteous face....
a devilish face.
Evil tempts you to forget your place in the greater story of life and the faithful.**

Evil tempts you to question God and question your own identity.

**Evil tempts you to think you don't need to be involved with the common good and that life should
always be comfortable...comfort a goal vs love.**

Evil tempts you to blame someone else.

Evil tempts you to think getting in the tippe-canoe is riskier than staying home, going it alone!

So....do you know who you *really* are, where you are?

This is a key moment, a time that calls out for self-awareness.

During desert, wilderness time, the tippe-canoe times, the times you feel time is running out on you...when the life around you feels a disaster...

when you're feeling intimidated and alone, when you can't remember who you are...do you remember who you are, our story,
and that now is the perfect time
and there draw near to God?

Such intimidating/tempting/alone making times are of great danger.....and the greatest hope for renewal.

Jesus knows who he is.

He knows his identity is in God....his identity is *not* as a teacher or carpenter....

your identity is not as a director or retiree, an engineer or a nurse, a mother or father.

Jesus' identity is within God. And so is yours!

He draws on God for his identity and he calls upon God, literally, for help in these tough desert times.

**He calls upon God and He puts himself into the story of the faithful citing scripture and remembering,
remembering, remembering:
He is more than He is...He is in God!**

God never lets you go out into the desert days alone. Never runs out of time and attention for you.

The Spirit is with us just as it was with Jesus.

In fact, at times, it will indeed seem as if the spirit is leading you into some pretty unsafe places. Yes. When following the Spirit, you will go to unsafe places cause that's where life is lived and help is needed...your help...your first fruits...for others...as well as for yourself. (Like we say in the Lord's Prayer)

The faithful see the unsafety of the world and go right into the world, knowing who they are, living within God's grace moment to moment.

Raging storms, rough waters don't capsize your tippe canoe when you go with God. Stay in the boat when hard times or easy times tempt you to go it alone rather than with us!

Jesus holds on to His identity placing Himself in the context of the story of His faith. And draws strength!

We are to know ourselves/self-aware, know our own stories, the stories of our faith and community, the stories of God's provision in our own life stories.

We are to call on God, and use the words of faith to protect us and give us courage.

Courage: grace under pressure. "Help me Lord!" is a prayer! But you have to say it! You have to *stay* it...*stay in the moment*...in the tension, go toward the tension. Counter-intuitive!

You have to say "Help me Lord!" whether it's said from desperation, anger, lightheartedness, confidence, fear, or joy.

In this first week of Lent, Jesus comes to grips with his all too real human nature. The line between goodness and evil blurs.

He becomes fully aware of Himself and aware of his faith...it is then He can move out into the rest of his life.

Knowing Himself that He changes the world.

Until we know who we are, we are not truly able to live our lives, change our lives or this world of ours. See, truly we are just like Him!

I think this morning's gospel story is an invitation to use these 40 days, wherever the spirit meets us or leads us, to look at our faith, to test our assumptions and our convictions, to find ourselves...in the story of God's people and draw strength from our past to live bravely in the moment, creating a new future.

How do you remember who you are when all around you is in chaos?

When you face life's many temptations, do you do what is easy instead of what needs to be done?

IT's time...time at long last to open your perspective, your point of view, point of reference, lift up...and seize the moment...fully aware. Time after time...