

"Time After Time"

"An Opportune Timing of Self-Awareness!"

Psalm 27, Mark 13: 31-35, Sirach 4:20,

Romans 13:11, 2 Corinthians 6:2

February 21, 2016 Second 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, every time of life an acceptable time for God to provide a do-over moment.

Salvation moment to moment: not an end of time, not a one time happening. A perpetual process! Usually a process of awareness that saves us... from ourselves!

In awareness...with courage, we have the power to make this very moment the opportune time! Even the hard moments. Especially the hardest moments... opportune times for saving ourselves!

God invites you to use each and every and any moment for "good". Will you?

Well you know, you and God have a pretty good track record together.... On particularly rough days when you're sure you couldn't possibly endure, remind yourself your 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).

Lent: a time when we are released from over thinking which exaggerates feelings including resistance. It is a time of action!

Jesus tells us 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 only for your own good, but for the common good.

A marker for us! For it is within what's good for all that we find what is indeed good/best for us!

And in today's wisdom teachings we are reminded... JESUS LOVED JERUSALEM.

There is no doubting that. Why else did he weep as he approached the city? He loved her people. Time after time he so "longed to gather her children under his wings"? He... our God, sees clearly what is and what is at risk in our continuing to do what we're doing the way we're doing....

Calls us out on it. Acknowledges how threatening it is for us to think of doing life differently....

and so, time and time again...like a mother hen, offers protection along the way, never giving up on any one, any city, our world!

Jesus' words to Jerusalem are a reminder, a warning, a dare to be different in the moment.

The city, its religious institutions and government, had become a false mother, more a fox, who lured

God's "children" away from "faithing" ...from living the faith, turned their heads from justice, using anxiety and division to subtly coerce or seduce them...(sound familiar?)

so they would no longer live from a place of trust and abundance, freely giving of their first fruits in caring for others. Not just money, but care!

Foxy ways of raising anxiety, fostering a go it alone mentality of survival or denial, or a crowd/glob mentality of brutality.

Bowen Friedman Theory, a lens to view yourself and your ability to be in relationship with others while maintaining a good sense of self, offers a "Continuum of Self-Actualization."

The continuum puts on one end isolation/going it alone... You know *that* spot...my way or the high way, being a maverick (even for a good reason) but not available to learn or grow or stop and think, or isolating oneself out of a low self esteem, withdrawing from others, or in denial.

One end of the continuum.

On the other end, globbing. Globbing: going beyond a healthy sense of belonging into an undifferentiated mass reacting in lock step with each others/not thinking. Sorta' more like mobbing.

But mid point is that sweet spot, that holy space, times when we are able to find a right balance in our individuality and our belonging, a place of self-differentiation.

Times when we feel a sense of belonging deeply but have healthy individual boundaries even while acting as part of the larger whole... acting on behalf of the common good.

A place where we belong without co-dependency, rescuing, blaming, shaming, and act with the long view in mind....toward the common good.

But this city, Jerusalem and its people had become so self-absorbed, so anxious about their own individual survival...above caring for others, so fearful, that Jerusalem...Milwaukee, Tippe, you at home... could not appreciate the arrival of a Jesus who would point to misperceptions and fears, isolation or globbing that is often outside of our awareness

pointing to it so we would be saved from *what is* and released into the true freedom of *what can be*.

Why did they resist hearing? Why do you?

Because the prophetic voice upturns the status quo. And that leads to challenging times indeed!

We, now-looking-at those folks from this distance in time, we can see that. And see what Jesus is up to!

BUT when we are the ones hearing the prophetic voice, when a Jesus shows up on our lives sharing truth... will we hear and see a saving time is at hand?

A time for change or will we just continue to play the game? Will we let ourselves be gathered or be left to our own cities, homes, churches?

Will we go it alone or glob? Or will we see the fox, be gathered by the hen and belong...in time?

Hmmn.... So Jesus, in deepest lament, denounces the city...actually what He says is your house will be left to you.... I won't give up on you but the reality is.... you will suffer the consequences of your own choices right where you live, in the everyday of your life if you don't take some time to do life differently.

It is not because He doesn't care but because He loves

so deeply that He tells the truth! And stays the course...right now!

Even with the possibility, the probability, that He would get nailed for it!

That's what the world often does to folk who tell the truth in kindness and stay the course!

(But we know, nothing keeps truth, integrity, and love down....they resurrect!)

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

And a hen responds to threat very differently than a fox! I know you know the biggest threats to your well-being and integrity. This is not a secret from you, a mystery to be solved. And, you know it's time! What are you willing to do with what you know? Will you be as a fox or a hen?

We are vulnerable to the powers of the world.

But we're able to be smart hens...to know the rhetoric for what it truly is, see the lack of civility.

We see how others cleverly isolate us, pit us against the other, even encourage us from caring about all people, distancing us from the common good.

You are vulnerable...at home, here, at work, in the community, we as a nation...vulnerable to being frozen in time as if there isn't enough time or this isn't the right time...

Vulnerable when we try to go it alone or glob/mob.

So vulnerable that you too will be tempted to kill the messengers, the prophets, who challenge you to take a good look at the choices you are making daily.

Prophets: Those who point out your longing...reflect it back to you as a loving challenge.... believing there is a way to begin to get the life you want to live! And, it's time!

Our self-awareness now needs love's courage.

Love's courage?

Truth telling with compassion, living in grateful grace no matter what is done to you or you have done to others... taking and offering do-overs, living life with the whole of your life story and not just some part of it! This is love's courage! 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 courage. He does not reject you no matter who you are or what you've done.

God loves us for who we are and are becoming, not what we can do or have done!

There is shelter if we will but come into the fold!

Together we know so much more than anyone of us can know on our own...there is a shared wisdom and therein lies our protection.

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

And just like the psalmist, He takes courage and stays in His heart...in His ministry...in His call.

And I wonder....maybe if it is in owning His feelings and saying sentences of lament outloud, releasing sadness and stress, I wonder if it is this process which gives Him the courage to stay in his heart's energy and courage.

What are your real laments? Right now...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 anger's better side....it's anger's energy released to do good.

Maybe to find your passion you have to go through your anger and lament the loss, frustration, unfairness of life, 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 and time! 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.

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

So, wait for the Lord! That would be: slow down so God can catch up to you and guide you. Slow down so you have time to think! Take heart. Choose wisely....

Don't, like a drowning person, someone wishing it just wasn't so, someone running away....

don't push away the very one who has come to gather and protect you!

The prophet...the one standing next to you, seated at table or in car or at meeting with you...sharing what they see. The one you/we often kill off in the very heart and thick of things...for speaking truth!

Jesus sees us and pleads we do life differently!

There are places and people who can shelter you while you gather yourself up and take heart...right here!

What is it you, like Jesus, must do? It is the second week of Lent. And, it is not easy to stand against the current of culture. It takes strength...a courage that comes from powerful love.... God's for you and yours for yourself and others!

A love so strong it sees clearly.

It's time in your self-awareness... to step out in courageous love... to say what you mean and mean what you say, to turn toward the things you can change and begin where there is a beginning! With each other!

It is a dangerous world. Full of foxes.

When times are tough and you're tempted to think you're in a faith crisis...don't fall for that!

Tough times call out for faith and doubt to walk together! You need not let others rob you/glob you of the love in your heart, trick you into being less than who you are.

And, yes, it requires some creative thinking and strong community to be able to provide compassionate care and ministry to each other, into the world... in all the times of our lives. But this is not a new thing! Every moment, every time along the way, others are with you... then as now.

Today, tomorrow, and the next day.

No matter what the times of our individual lives, we can be for each other and with each other and truly live!

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

Time after time...

All you are asked to do is honor the love in *your own* heart and use the courage *you do have!* If you take time to live from a place of loving kindness, 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! It is amazing how different life looks as you appreciate all the times of your life. Acknowledge your self-awareness and courageous love.... in the past into the present...

All you have to do is see this is indeed **the opportune time.**

It's time... time at long last to open your perspective, your point of view, see your patterns, your resistance ...and seize the moment... fully aware, living from your courageous heart.

Time after time...