

“The Story Continues”
“Come and See...and Live Your Story!”

John 1: 29-42, Psalm 40: 1-11
January 15, 2017

The Star shines...wonder and wisdom. It continues its journey across the skies, it journeys now with us...for we are indeed the Wise Ones.

~~~

The storyteller's perspective. How would you describe that?

It is powerful. It sees, even when talking about the self, what might otherwise not be seen.

Pulling back to get a different perspective is a storyteller's tool...but importantly also a spiritual practice as well as a practical life skill.

Detachment from outcomes, not from emotion, is part of Ignition Spirituality and involves that ability to pull back, out of the drama,

and see the moment in ways that make it possible to be present to your own life differently.

**Each day a life. Your whole life each day.**

Each day...be a non-anxious presence to your own life!

The storyteller's perspective!  
Opening up powerful choices to “Come and See”, to follow, to know more of what it is you exactly are looking for!

And so be re-named. And so have a new take on a new version of your life worthy...of going to print!

That's what John the Baptist was doing.  
Stepping back, seeing the moment with new eyes, making new awareness possible. A teller of a new story!

John refers to Jesus as the Lamb of God.  
We've heard it so many times it sounds normal to us, even though it may rub us wrong or is hard to wrap our heads around.

It has antecedents in Jewish experience: marking the doorways with blood to be safe just before the exodus, lambs used as sacrifice to appease/please God.

But when John proclaims it referring to a person, Jesus, it was unprecedented and shockingly absurd.

Here's the thing....  
The people of Israel, like most people throughout history who suffer imperial oppression, longed for a powerful heir to set them free...a king! (Don't you!) They wanted someone else to get it all straightened out for them. (Don't you!)

So when John announces Jesus is the one who comes, calling him the “Lamb of God”, it is about as far from people's expectations as you could get. We get the metaphor now...but to them, a lamb?

They wanted a lion!  
To get the impact, imagine John proclaiming in the face of great oppression,

“Look, the bunny rabbit of God!”

Not the king of the jungle, but a defenseless, harmless creature.

Calling Jesus “Lamb of God” announces God's  
power  
is utterly different  
from the world's power.

It is not great violence,  
but self-giving love that conquers evil and  
darkness.

Sacrificial “lamb”?  
God does not want to “sacrifice” Jesus by killing him....what parent would do that?

God's desire stated many times is to put an end to sacrificing once and for all!

Jesus life was the ultimate NO! to the violence and corruption of the world!

It was the world who sacrificed Jesus, not God.

We do it, each time we become anxious, frozen in time, resist knowing the truth, play the martyr without changing a thing about ourselves in the situation.  
Burning up and burning out!

Burnt offerings is not what God wants.

**What God wants is a good relationship with each of us that empowers us to live the “just law of right relationship” found in our hearts...and with delight!**

**God wants...to share the glad news of salvation in the great congregation so that we don't stay hidden....living small lives!**

**God wants us to slow down, so God can catch up to us,  
so we live with God in powerful ways that bring joy!**

God does not sacrifice Jesus...

But in Jesus's resistance to access power in the usual ways even unto his death,  
God in Jesus shows us nothing this world can do to us  
can keep us from God or God from us.  
Jesus later in the story himself says,  
“I desire mercy, not sacrifice.”

Do you know what this means? Mercy? Grace? Compassion...

...when you are arguing at home? Mercy.

...when you are full of judgment here at church? Mercy.

...when you are second guessing friends and leaders? Mercy.

...when you are in the process of making assumptions about people? Mercy.

...when you have charge over others who make mistakes? Mercy.

...when with family, friend?

...when you engage in social action?

Where is mercy? Grace?

**No one is to be sacrificed.**  
Do you know what it means to be yourself  
the “Lamb of God” in the face of the oppression  
of your world and our times?  
For we have been gifted such power!  
Do you know?

If Jesus turned to you right now and asked,

“What are you looking for?” Do you know?  
If you don't know, you won't know when you find it.

When Jesus says to you, “Come and see.” will you slow down and go find out what opportunities lie right before you?

Will you wait for the Lord...slow down and be caught up?

Will you live into a new life in the life you already live?

**Let the storyteller in you embrace the notion  
that radical personal and social justice requires  
self-awareness, mercy for self and others, healing, rest, yoga, centering, physical activity, threshold  
singing, ministering in DI and ASLC.**

Don't burn out or give up.  
Take care so you can slow and come and see and be!

Try this, O Storyteller, YOU:

1. Start where you are and take one step at a time. When the distance between you and the Promised Land seems really, really far, start where you are and take one step at a time.

Get involved...in life. Do the good you can, in the place where you are, with the tools and the people around you.

Try not to become overwhelmed or paralyzed.

Take tiny concrete action to make a difference, even if it's a small difference.

2. Cultivate a spiritual practice. We need a horizon in our lives that is larger than the day's headlines or most pressing problem. Look for the Spirit to open up horizons and give a bigger perspective.

We need to lift our eyes from our smartphones and facebook and toward the hills through spiritual practice. Your practice might literally be taking yourself out to the hills for a hike.

Or it might be a mindfulness meditation that radically grounds you in the present.

Or maybe you study and pray on scripture, anchoring your life in another worldview.

Maybe you simplify your schedule and just sit on the couch.

There are lots of practices.

What they all have in common is that they add a little eternity to the relentless temporality of our lives...and so offer a different perspective...a storyteller's perspective..

3. Whatever you do, don't make the journey alone. We have much more wisdom together than we have on our own. There is a healing in community that is like none other.

We lift each other up,

we are sustained by each other when we cannot sustain ourselves.

With care and kindness, we hold each other accountable.

Rev. David Eaton says, "The church is that institution whose primary purpose is to help people discover (truth), create and maintain hope in their lives. When people have no hope, they discover hope together. When they cannot discover hope, they create hope together."

The operative word is "together."

Together we sing and pray.

Together we organize and march.

Together we light candles in the dark.

Together we bless our children and remember our dead and provide sanctuary to the vulnerable.

Together we remind each other who we really are and encourage us to live a new story day to day.

We play, pray, and stay...together!

Rev. Robert Hardies and Pastor Karen

Friends...RECEIVE. If we give and give and give, we have less and less and less -- and after a while, at a certain point, we're so weak and worn, we hoist up the flag of surrender.

We can then surrender to the worst side of ourselves (self-pity, spite, pre-occupation, control, laziness, apathy, domination),

OR we can surrender to God and the store of gifts that is within each one of us waiting to be called forth so we can live a new story.

On this the weekend of the celebration of the life of Martin Luther King, Jr., let us, storytellers all, bring the dream to life, that all God's children reach the mountain top claiming all their gifts and powers freely given.

Let us celebrate our God who offers all of us Lack-Nothing Lives!

Let us tell ourselves a new story and let's help each other live this newness side by side!

Star of Wonder, Star of Wisdom shine upon us!