

"The Story Continues"

"Following Into A New Story!"

Psalm 27: 1, 4-9, 11, 13-14, Matthew 4: 12-23,

1 Corinthians 1: 10-18

January 22, 2017

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

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The storyteller's perspective.

It is powerful. It sees, even when talking about the self, what might otherwise not be seen. More objective than we often find ourselves being in the midst of things.

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 Ignatian 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.

To let go of outcomes and be in the moment...on this page!

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

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

The storyteller's perspective! Going to print with it!

So....really....

All he said to them was "Follow Me".

Sounds more like moonstruck than Star of Wisdom!

And they went.

They dropped what they were doing...fishing...and followed.

...Now we want to be mindful that they as fishermen were under the auspices of the empire just as much as those endured land servants.

The empire taxed those who worked the seas just as much as it taxed the land workers...essentially, slaves all.

We are called to be mindful that this call to follow Jesus was not a sweetsy mission of healing and teaching

but a call to stand up against injustice where it exists and so help people find wholeness and meaning in their lives. They wanted oppression to end, they followed!

John baptized so those who came could survive the oppression. Jesus baptized so you are empowered to resist the oppression, no longer succumbing to it, a victim no longer but a powerful force for justice one person/one story at a time.

God and Justice are not separable. Church and state are,

religion and political involvement are not! We sure don't like hearing that, do we? Geeze...

They followed and still....

**~I wonder how many people along the beach, along the way, he stopped and invited to follow.**

**~I wonder how many he had to ask till he found those first two....who were not so caught up in their own nets...that they could follow.**

**I wonder of all the ones that possibly followed, ~how many dropped away...you know, good intentions/tender heart ...but no staying power**

...when the going gets tough, the tough go ...shopping...for an easier sale.

**~How many might have dropped away....till there were only 12 and the women and children?**

**What was it in them that allowed them to step into a new story?**

Certainly, most everyone Jesus met was taken with him, at least that's what we take from the stories we have.

But to stop living the way you do and  
being who you have been,  
to follow a new way of relating to yourself,  
to others, to the world, to God

...not many of us humans would be willing to follow,  
no matter how taken we might be with him

...and yet we easily follow, give ourselves to so much in this world that is **emptying, alone making, stress producing, competitively edgy** --  
seems easier initially but in the end  
is so much harder on us!

He's still asking/inviting, you know.

We're still asked today...Jesus is asking you today: follow?

...but the ask has been modified, simplified....  
you don't even have to leave home, these days, to do it ... and still...so many of us aren't able....  
or just simply won't....

**we're too caught up in our own nets,**  
**fishing in all the wrong places**  
**for anything except the only thing**  
**that will really help us find peace and joy**  
**in this life that is our one story to write/live.**

Oh, we want to follow the star and often start out with him....so many Sunday mornings we leave inspired and want to do even one thing differently/new in our lives.

And we can't seem to stay the course even one day,  
yet alone as long as the 12 did.

Here's the question of you this day:

\*\*Will you keep focus on that star of wisdom and wonder?

Will you keep focus on the issues at hand/ your core values without getting hooked by the distractions of life....

distractions that hold you back from making those  
change reactions that truly set you free and  
open up a new storyline?

Will you connect the dots of possibility making new meaning from your life **as** you live a new storyline?

By....

Responding to the spouse/kids instead of yelling,

assessing the thing most needed/helpful in a situation instead of pushing your agenda,

seeing more than one right way to do something rather than thinking its my way or the highway,

really reflecting on if how you're reacting in a situation brings you what it is you really want from life....

As if doing things the way you've always done them, hoping doing them more or trying harder

will bring different results from the choices you make.

These are some of the ways we get distracted,  
telling ourselves the same old stories over and over again.

I know you want to follow Jesus! I do, too.

How?

How, Oh My Gracious and Great and Powerful God, how do we do it?

~I think it has something to do with Paul's message. It has something to do with being in active faith community regularly and well...

and going out to live into the rest of life together, connected to each other....different chapters in the one holy story!

**We are made to need each other and help each other....Jesus called the disciples in pairs!**

**And we are reminded...wherever two or more are gathered, there also am I.**

It's not a coincidence that AA works through pairs to bring life to individuals.

**\*Who are you paired with?**

Is he or she here this morning?

**\*\*The art of following may be spiritually linked to your developing right spiritual relationship with another....a spiritual friend.**

And opening yourself to each other's stories.

Being able to follow has something to do with who you hang out with and how often!

...with letting someone help you along the way, **help you see clearly and keep your focus** where God calls it to be for your own good.

**A spiritual cheerleader of sorts!**

Paul says...be of one mind...we are to head toward the same horizon even by different paths,

never losing focus or taking our eyes off the target/the thing most needed/the more/God's compassionate and strong love for us,

taking in the power of Christ...being the body of Christ today....

and living as the body into an interfaith, intercultural, world.

**Paul says we are to be united in the same mind and the same purpose.** I would say it be of the same spirit!

**We are not to be quarreling about matters that dilute our energy and water down the power of our gathering**

and so be able to help each other on the way....**you know ...matters like** the color of the carpet, whose in and whose out, whose right and whose wrong, whose turn it is, which church hosts and which doesn't, which school or library opens and which closes, being Republican or Democrat...

**as if this is what God would have our focus be!**

...stuff that divides us and takes our focus from the thing most....helpful, needed. Keeps us stuck in the story!

**You see, we follow little Jesuses all over the place....maybe Kevan or Kelly or I,  
or your Session members,**

**or a well-spoken advocate for a cause, your boss, your spouse, your pocketbook, your party's leader, your kids'schedules....**

follow, instead of following Jesus the Christ into the Master Story of possibility.

We dilute the power of our faith by getting caught up in the net of human details and human power plays.

We get tangled in the net of deceit...usually deceiving ourselves, and no one else.

And so, the story doesn't change!

Jesus simply says, "Follow me."

To follow you have to stop and change direction.

You have to slow down and wait for the Lord...let God catch up to you. Believe in the goodness of God in the land of the living!

To let your heart take courage: meaning to live each moment of your life with the whole of your life's story.

Follow.

Can you hear Jesus voice above all the other voices competing for your attention?

Who is it in your own life right now, in your family or friends or here at worship, who is called to follow right alongside you and make the way clearer and surer for you?

Will you let them?

Will you be there for them?

Do they even know you need to connect to them right now and again later this week?

Or, will worship and faith only be a Sunday morning event in your life?

There's only one thing keeping you from following Jesus to a peaceful, joy-full storyline for life.

*You.*

With the Master Story of our faith to guide us,

let us celebrate our God who offers a new way to live,

a new perspective...

the storyteller's perspective...

to guide us in wonder and wisdom.

So 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 shines upon us!