

## Lent 2 Year B 2012

Reflecting on this morning's Gospel passage brought up a question for me. What is it about life that God is hoping we will grasp, that we will take hold of ..... and in so doing begin to live from an amazing and authentic place of being? I suspect there could be a million answers to that question but I'll tell you what my best answer is. I think that God gave us Jesus in the hopes that we would discover how to be all that we can be. And as a species and a planet how can we support one another in that venture? God is hoping that we will grasp the depth of our human potential as seen in the person of Jesus Christ.

John Shelby Spong writes that, "Jesus knew who he was. He possessed the freedom and the courage to be. A man that knows who he is, is free to be what he shall be. Such a man can walk steadfastly toward his destiny, toward the Jerusalem moment of truth, where he is fully revealed. Such a man knows how to choose, how to avoid those activities which dissipate his strength and blur his vision. He knows how to cling to those moments which lead to the goal of the realized self—full, free, and capable of living. He knows how to escape the guilt that plagues an uncertain person who wonders and worries every time a decision is made lest it be made wrongly. He knows how to make loneliness positive instead of negative.

This was the power of Jesus of Nazareth that excited, attracted, and compelled a response. This power lay behind the words with which the first century sought to communicate this life.

The secular, modern spirit can make contact with this Jesus, for we seek the very quality of life he possessed. We have life only when we are grasped by a purpose. We need a vision, a destiny to call our deepest self into reality. We only exist until we know ourselves and chart our path, discover our Jerusalem where we

are revealed, and set our faces steadfastly to walk in that direction.

Without a clear vision of our Jerusalem beckoning us, we stumble and stagger from one ego trip to another. We experience the despair of our humanity.

Lacking the security of being, we search for status, for the approving word, the moment in the sun, always afraid to bear the loneliness that marks the man of destiny who marches to the beat of a drummer that no one else seems to hear.

This loneliness of being was the mark of the one who was called the Christ. It will, therefore, be the mark of a Christian. When understood it is a welcomed privilege and not a dreaded specter.

Imitate the Christ, then, we are told.

That does not mean trying to be “little Jesuses” or seeking to become just like the Christ. That leads only to legalism, to life-killing, religious piety. To imitate Christ means rather that as Jesus became all that he was capable of being, so we— touched by his life, called in his power— seek to become all that we are capable of being. It involves daring to be free, to dream, to fasten onto that which is our Jerusalem and allow it to draw us down that lonely path to itself. We discover in the process that as our Jerusalem draws us to itself, it also draws us to ourselves.

We begin to live: accepting ourselves, loving ourselves, and being ourselves.

We begin to know our depth and to realize that we are not alone, for the source of life, the ground of being, the holy God is with us. In his power we can live, love, rejoice, and care as we never dreamed possible before. Standing here we listen to Jesus anew, and begin to appreciate how it was that two thousand years ago men could not write of him without calling him the Christ of God.”

Last Sunday as we began Lent I said that God invites us to begin where we are and the Church gives us this time of Lent, as

time to be on pilgrimage. Bishop Spong talks about this journey as discovering our Jerusalem moment of truth and what that means. To follow Jesus leads us on a passage to Jerusalem. The images given in the Gospel this morning are of setting our minds on divine things by understanding that God's ways may not always appear victorious according to the ways of the world. There is indeed something bigger going on that we can be part of if we are willing.

During Lent you have been invited to pick up a rock as you enter the sanctuary. When you come forward for communion you can offer something of your journey to God and place your rock in the font here at the altar. Offer up a prayer, lay down a burden, seek direction and discernment, offer your grief or gratitude, ask how you might forgive and be forgiven, ask to be drawn into the heart of God. Consider how it is that you follow Jesus.

I want to invite you to take a minute right now and look at the sunrise on the front of our bulletin and ponder these words from a web site [preachingpeace.org](http://preachingpeace.org). "Every day the sun rises on us, the dawning of the reign of God also occurs. Every day is a new chance, a new opportunity to walk away from the darkness into the light and life of the gospel of the God of Jesus Christ." Amen.

*Excerpts taken from Synthesis*