



ST. ANDREW'S IN THE PINES EPISCOPAL CHURCH

SERMON
2-5-12

There are two sentences in today's gospel reading that catch my attention. But first – have any of you heard the story about Bill and Claudie Meyer's experience with their daughter Sandy? Claudie is one of our long time parishioner's who is now homebound. She tells about the time one summer morning when Sandy, then about 8 years old, told her mother that she was going over to a friend's house to play. Her mother said OK and thought little more about it until she remembered that that family often went up to Fremont Lake on summer mornings to swim and hang out. When she checked on the family, they were indeed gone. But Sandy hadn't returned back home. So Claudie went and looked around the neighborhood and checked with some other possible friends but Sandy wasn't about. By noon, Claudie had Bill out searching for Sandy. With no luck, they notified other friends and church members to help search. Claudie remembers that Marlene Wise climbed a telephone pole and scanned the whole area with no luck. It was late afternoon before Sandy returned home and by then the level of panic was very high and in relief and anger, Sandy received a spanking for leaving and not telling them where she was. She was quite outraged by their reaction for she had spent the day at a Vacation Bible School in a nearby church. Upon not finding her friend, Sandy met some other friends who invited her to come to church with them for the day. She had had a great time doing so, and would never understand why she received a spanking for attending church!

Of course, we as parents can understand the reaction of her parents. The message is caught in the sentence; "Everyone is SEARCHING for you!" said by the disciples of Jesus. Everyone is looking for you. I'd guess we can identify with the emotions of that kind of situation – of not having things go as planned, of having the situation out of your control, of having the unknown fill us with all sorts of unpleasant imaginings. We get scared, we feel helpless, we want a conclusion to our search. That is how it goes for those of us who are searching, but not sometimes, for the one being searched for. Jesus knew what he was doing and he was fine. He needed time apart to pray. So also did Sandy know what she was doing, and she was enjoying herself. So also are the situations when kids come home late because the roads were slow, or a friend needed assistance, or the program or project ran late. They were fine, they knew what they were doing, but the searchers did not.

And so we come to that fine line between respecting the actions and decisions of others and balancing how those choices affect our lives. Sometimes the situation to "everyone is searching for you!" is "well, that is their problem. I am fine." And sometimes the response is one of remorse for not considering the needs and emotions of the ones doing the searching. And sometimes the one being searched for really needs to be found, and the search is fully appreciated.

So, the situation here is that Everyone was searching for Jesus. That is my first sentence and the other sentence really ties in to the first sentence. It is the sentence that says, "And the WHOLE city was gathered around to door." OK, that might be an exaggeration, but even so, it must have been A LOT of people gathered around the door wanting to see and hear and touch Jesus. The whole city! Think of the needs and emotions of those folks. They wanted to be set free from their suffering, they wanted peace or greater understanding in their lives. They wanted healing, they wanted to see great deeds of power that amazed them, they thirsted for God or some solid foundation for their life. O my, the needs and emotions of those folks. And all of them directed towards Jesus.

Moms, bosses, anyone with some sort of authority can relate to Jesus at that moment. Sometimes it seems like EVERYONE wants a piece of you. Mom, I need you! Boss, what's the answer to this problem? Teacher, I can't figure this out. Therapist, you have to solve my problems. Pastor, I feel so afraid. Doctor, what's going on with me? And so it goes, until you are drained, until you have to lock the bathroom door and tell everyone to go away. Until you have to go away!

And what happens when you go away???? Usually everyone demanding your time survives. They adapt, they make do, they try something on their own. Slowly, hopefully they learn that you aren't the only answer to their needs and problems.

For years I have wondered a bit about Jesus not healing everybody. About why Jesus would walk away from the folks in Capernaum after he had just been present with them and doing such wonderful stuff in their midst. Why didn't he stay around and do more teaching and healing? Why did he go off to a deserted place away from everyone?

I can relate a bit to his desire to escape but like the crowds I want to look to Jesus for the answer and in this example I have to consider that in his walking away from Capernaum he is letting us know that when he comes among us with his miracles, with his deeds of power – he is teaching us about how to live our lives by building our own solid foundations of faith, looking to God and the Holy Spirit for all power and authority and looking also to Jesus as part of the Trinity and one who teaches and models and sends us forth to do likewise, as his Body in the World.

This story seems to be an example that you can't grow in faith unless you push yourself, try things with your resources and with those in your village – that the handholding isn't needed, it doesn't help.

Like the message in 1st Corinthians today; Jesus came to be all things to all people – never belonging to just one group of people, never stopping with only one message or way of doing things. His power was to be shared with all, and he came to proclaim the message to all. It was all for the sake of the gospel – traveling about, bringing more and more people into a life of faith.

It is our message also.

Thanks be to God.