

Sermon

From Homesick to Hope

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Homesick. I'm very familiar with this particular topic. When I was a child I dreaded school because I loved being home with my mom. So much so that in kindergarten, my kindergarten teacher, whose name was Miss Valentine and she was the sweetest lady in her little high heels I still can see her now, because I would come in every day bawling my eyes out, she would walk me over so sweetly to this little poster that was on the wall of a smiling face and I would have to touch the face so that I would stop crying and eventually I did but then kindergarten was only a half a day so I probably only spent about 30 to 45 minutes of class not crying. And then I remember in fifth grade, we were required to go on a five day camping trip. I was overwhelmed by the thought of being away from my mom and dad for five whole days. But I had no choice I had to go and I do remember lying in my bunkbed looking out and seeing a street lamp that looked just like the street lamp that existed in front of my house at home and on one side it made me sad but on the other side it made me imagine that I was home in my own bed and it got me through.

Home. For me home was and may always be in some respects 3129. That's how we refer to it in my family. My family home at 3129 Eggert Road where I lived most of my life and my parents lived until they could no longer live on their own. So we owned that house for probably about 50 years. And it's still there and it still looks pretty much the same from the outside but on the inside it's completely changed. The person who bought it flipped it and removed the ceiling in the living

room opened up every wall put stone in there everywhere and it's just is unrecognizable inside. So I know that my "home" there is no more. That house, that place that I went to find safety, to find love and peace where my mom and dad were – well, that no longer exists-- not for me. But I absolutely have a home I'm blessed with a beautiful house filled with people and animals and chaos and noise and I love it but to find that piece that safety that comfort that that five-year-old child was seeking in kindergarten class that doesn't really exist for me here. Because now I am mom And I give the comfort and I give the peace.

Today in 2021 we find ourselves two solid years into a place we don't recognize. The things that brought us comfort before do not exist today. Yes we can gather, yes we can be together some what, but it's not the same. In the back of our minds we might be wondering are we safe to do this. And we're left wondering what will God do next. The Israelites were taken from their bondage in Egypt and on their route they were starving, they were thirsty and they were angry and frustrated. They questioned Moses they questioned God about what is going on, losing their patience with the situation. And then within that frustration and within that desperation God shows up and separates the waters and allows them to go through and keeps their enemies behind destroying them in their path. And the Israelites end up in a new home. Just like me and just like you, we can't go backwards time doesn't work that way as much as we want to go back to the way things once were for us we cannot. And this is true for our lives always ---always we are moving forward..

Yet in our Gospel of Luke our scripture is taking us in a different direction where Jesus is talking about end times as we start our backward journey step by step back to the manger.

Time is not always as straightforward as it seems. From the perspective of those living in the western hemisphere for example today is already tomorrow on the other side of the earth. Anticipation of a joyful event time moves quite slowly. On the other hand a dreaded end can arrive far too quickly. There's never enough time or always too much.

Jesus in Luke 21 reminds us that God is not constrained by the chronos time represented by calendar and clock the sort of time that keeps everything from happening at once, and God's Kairos time, past and future I woven together for the sake of today. We are desperate to look for signs that things are improving that we can move back to the way things once were, but even in the spring drought or frost can kill new buds and plants and flowers-- fires raging through forest and woods --- things do happen that interrupt our hopes for future times. And then here in our scripture Jesus is sharing some of this apocalyptic Vision that even in the face of devastation, whether it is caused by nature's fury or by humans, the reign of God will not be impeded. Amen hallelujah. No matter how much it appears the world is coming undone God's way endures.

Last week Laura talked about the kingdom and whose kingdom is it. Do we expect our human desires to always be served by God. Or can we accept that God is speaking and we must be patient and wait to hear gods voice for us, for us as a church for, us individually for our families and for our world. Advent is a time of anticipation. A time where we anticipate Christmas, we anticipate a beautiful Christmas Eve service with candle light and family around us. But last year it was taken away from us --we were unable to have our Christmas Eve service last year-- I don't know if any of you recall that, I think some of you I think recall it quite clearly. We did the best we could with online worship but the reality is that is a service that is incredibly important to people because of what it

represents. That feeling that a five-year-old girl was looking for when she walked into the classroom touching the happy face, she was looking for home. And we who come here to this church and our fellow brothers and sisters throughout our community throughout the world, they too are looking for home but not a home, they are looking for God because only God brings that kind of peace to our lives.

Our psalm today says

”To you Lord I lift up my soul. Oh my God in you I trust. Do not let me be put to shame, do not let my enemies exalt over me. Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame, let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.”

The song is not reacting to a single happening but is more of a reflection on the events that have shaped the life of the one praying. That is the Psalm is not about a single moment in time or in life but is about the totality of life lived with God. During this time, this season, it is so important for us not to look at our lives by human time with a calendar and a clock, but to envision our lives in God’s time. Our lives are not just the last two years or even the years prior to that, our lives are in its totality of experiences and God will continue to carry us to whatever the next season is. Because advent celebrated isn’t just about this Christmas or just about the first Christmas. Advent is about the churches faith that all of life, Past present and future, is lived in the presence of God. Advent is about trusting the promise even while waiting for the promise to be kept by God.

So as we walk this journey together you and I from where we are right now to a Manger, let us not worry about which week of advent it is... let’s just walk together one step at a time and we will find our home, our new kingdom with God. Amen