

“Sharing”

Job 1:1; 2:1-12

Mark 10:2-16, Hebrews 1:1-4, 2:10-18

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“In many and various ways God spoke.” That phrase struck me, thinking about God speaking in many and various ways. God wants to communicate with us, with you and I, through the prophets, and when it seemed that we are having a hard time in the way the prophets spoke, God sent another, his own Son. I was thinking. If I were an invisible person and I wanted someone to know I was present, what would I do? Well, I might speak; I might hope that I could be heard. I might find somebody who would accept that I am really there to speak for me. That’s kind of what God did. It then describes how Jesus was a mirror - makes me think of the old Dracula movies (in reverse!). You know, Dracula could never be seen in a mirror. In this mirror God is seen. It’s only through the mirror, in the mirror. Or the imprint of God in Jesus.

I think about how sometimes walking in the woods you’ll look down and see a print of a deer or a mountain lion (and that makes it more interesting!). Jesus is the imprint of God. By the print we know that animal was here. Through Jesus we know that God is here. It’s God’s way of communicating with you and I, being present. He comes to share who He is and to share in our lives.

One of the best ways to communicate with someone is to have a shared experience. If I share an experience with someone we can refer to it. It can be part of who we are together. In fact, trying to talk to someone when don’t share the same experience can be kind of frustrating. I was thinking if I was at my mother’s house and I started talking about the U of I they wouldn’t think of the University of Idaho; they would think of the University of Iowa. Here, we also think of the U of I as the University of Idaho. We have that shared experience.

God comes to share in our experience and to be present with us, partly so we can understand who God is, to see in that shared experience how he is communicating with us. Sharing is a wonderful thing. We all were taught by our parents to share, right? Well there’s some times where we may not want to share. As you hear me hacking and coughing and sneezing you may not want me to share that with you! And yet as Jesus comes to share in our lives, he comes not just to share the joys we have, but the hard times as well, to share the very depths of human experience and to know who we are - what we face. It is a God who comes to share our experience, then speak to us, and show us what he’s doing. And in Hebrews, as the preacher begins this sermon, telling how God wants to communicate with us and do so through Jesus Christ, the one who comes to share the depth of our experience. He begins to point out what God is showing us, what God is doing in Jesus Christ. He’s sharing our experience; he’s bringing to us a reflection of God’s grace, and the Good News for you and I.

And if I can remember all four things that I was thinking about, I’ll talk about them! The Good News is that he comes as the pioneer of salvation - as Eugene Peterson puts it - to guide us, to show us the way, a light that helps us to see the path we might walk. He

goes before us and his words help us see our way. Our way of finding where we need to go through life - the path that's gonna guide us to life.

Now if you're like me, one of the experiences I have, it's kind of hard to follow that path. I think it's because of the sin. Let me describe it this way: Sometimes I make mistakes. It's kind of like calling a friend. I really want to call a friend but then I put it off. And I know I should have done it and now because I haven't done it, it makes it harder to do. Does that make sense? Sometime I think that's how sin works in our lives. It begins to fracture me away. Another way I thought about it is I cut wood. And I put in a wedge in the wood to break it apart. Well, when you're cutting up wood, you want it to break apart; you want those little pieces because they burn easier. Except that sin for us is like being a whole piece and sin begins to fracture us away, away from God and away from one another. And in doing so indeed it makes it easier for us to be consumed by the very society in which we live. It is in that fracturing that Christ can enter our lives... That's what atonement is, basically. I'm not one of those people who can fully grasp what atonement means intellectually. But I think I really have a sense of it viscerally. I know what guilt is like to carry. I know the need for forgiveness. I'm thankful for the intercessor that comes and stands between - that takes out - the wedge, and that leads us towards wholeness and healing, both in our relationship with God and with one another.

Indeed, as Christ comes to share in our lives, he not only shares in our lives, but shows us how God works, gives us God's grace, taking the sin away, helping us see that not only can we live trusting God, but we can die trusting in him. For in him we also see the resurrection, the gift of life, beyond life, life as we know it.

But not only is it a forgiveness that leads us to the hope of the eternal. I believe that Christ also works in our lives to help us see that we don't have to fear death, that in living, we don't have to fear death. There's a word that creeps into our vocabulary that reveals this fear. It's when I say, "I can't do that; I'd be mortified." That fear of death, if I do it, what might happen? It can be legitimate fear of physical danger, but more often than that, it's not. It's fear of embarrassment - "I would just die if I had to do that." That's where we get to trust in what Christ has done, to come among us and show us God's love for us, that God sees each one of us as valuable and unique, calls us each to be his child, to be part of his family of faith. And not as some god far, far away, but a God who comes and lives among us, shares the depths of human experiences, was tested as we are tested, knows what we walk through and walks with us. So Hebrews says "God speaks to us in many and varied ways, but particularly through Jesus Christ, and that my friends I believe is good news. I'm thankful for the Good News of Jesus Christ. Alleluia. Amen.