

COLLOQUIES with Pastor Brian

Let Us Pray

⁴⁴Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.”

⁴⁵Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, ⁴⁶and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

⁴⁸You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.

⁵⁰“Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. ⁵¹While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. ⁵²And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; ⁵³and they were continually in the temple blessing God. — Luke 24:44-53

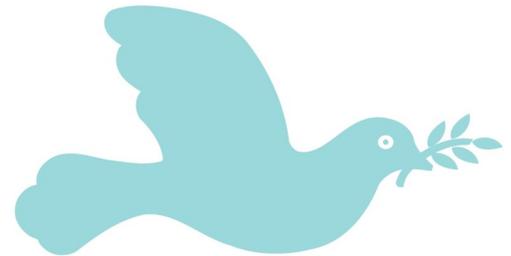
I'm jealous of Jesus and the disciples today. And I'm not sure that's ever been true before. Jesus didn't have a perfect childhood. There was his 'mom traveling during delivery date', 'being born in a barn and manger' things and then the 'death warrant' put out by the king. I was born in a hospital just a mile from my home and mom and dad got telegraphed congratulations (texting in the olden days) from friends and co-workers.

Later, Jesus was boo'ed by his hometown crowd, found followers in the unwashed simple folks who fished and worked in his community and they were all persecuted by the religious leaders - Jesus peers - of their day. I have preached from my home pulpit a few times, have clean and smart congregation members AND am often treated well by a denomination I have been critical of before.

So you see the privileged position I have over Jesus and his disciples, along with not having to die on a cross or carry the burden of humanity's failures. So why would I be jealous of him now?

Just this: They got three really good years together before Jesus was carried up to heaven. But for those of us reading this from wherever we have Sheltered-In-Place, it stings a little. We didn't know the last Sunday before the quarantine was the last Sunday of live, in-person worship. Our Bishop, who spent his last Sunday outside quarantine WITH US IN DULUTH didn't know this was coming. What I do know is when Jesus left the disciples, he traveled a while with them then offered a blessing. It was in the midst of the blessing that he was carried to heaven and the sight and excitement of the event carried the disciples into worship... together... with joy.

So do you feel any pangs of jealousy? Of Jesus or the disciples?



LET US PRAY

I'm jealous of the three years Jesus and the disciples got before their separation occurred. Wednesday marks the one-year anniversary of my family's move into the house on 47 Maple Drive. I remember a crate of milk being delivered by Jon Propp; a wonderful meal dropped off by Shane and Barb; a tour and invitation to learn about our community by Shari. All of this made the move seem friendlier and right at the time.

Today, I feel lost. I was not my 'best self' on a semi-terrible internet meeting with people I care about concerning a challenging opportunity in normal circumstances last Wednesday. Then came the overwhelming silence of Sunday morning worship. Worship that used to be filled with check-ins, prayer concerns, unscripted children's Kingdom Time "blurtings", spirit-filled singing, and healthy announcements showing our heart was beating for God's Kingdom.

And it was at this time I finally understood something. I may have gotten into ministry because God called me and I wanted to follow, but I stay each and every day because of the people. Not just people, but hearts that feel like family because we cry and laugh and tease with one another with God's grace all around. I may have taken it for granted before. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could, sometime in the future, take it for granted again?

So today, I read the story with you of Jesus' ascension and have a new set of questions. When will we be reunited again? What do we do in the meantime? How do we do it? What about when we miss Jesus? What about when we miss each other?

I am thankful that both congregations are going to help start answering these questions into the weeks ahead. They are too big for me. I can't do it alone. I can't do anything alone.

And I'll also do what all Christians do when we have doubts or wonderings or questions. I pray.

Let us pray:

Holy one, staying away from one another really stinks. Because of you, we don't fear death. We might fear being alone. Reside with each of us and help us all find ways to be less alone, more filled with power, and new ways to worship that honor You and honor our Neighbor. But don't be too long. We need you. Amen.

Pastor Brian



He
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up into
Heaven.