

Holy Movement: Sunday July 25, 2021 8:30

Scripture Lesson: 2 Samuel 11: 1-15

Preacher: Kirstie J. Engel

We are continuing with our Holy Movement series; a series designed to identify our next movements both individually and collectively with the guidance of the Holy Spirit; that will inform our work of the reconciling ministry that awaits us.

- So for the past few weeks we have been looking at King David; a fairly new leader and his movements; to inform our work of what to do and what not to do.
- We learned that one of his leadership tasks was to figure out what to do with the Ark of God; that was intended to be carried by the hands of the people.
- David came up with the idea of placing the Ark of God on a “new cart;” in which he quickly learned not to be the best idea; for the cart was unstable and could cause damage to the Ark itself.

- So instead of David doing a Ministry Fair in West Vestry as we are currently doing; a fair that is a first step attempt of not to repeat the same mistakes as David did; by trying to place our own metaphorical Ark on a cart; but instead to place this Ark back into the hands of the people; as the Church and the Ark was originally designed for...the people;
- David instead decided to put the Ark in a shelter; mainly because he did not like the idea of having a nicer shelter than the Ark of God;
- However last week, I posed another theory as to why David decided to put the Ark in a shelter;
- I stated that perhaps David's rationale to put this Ark in a shelter, was from the life experience that I have lived and most of us have lived as well I would imagine; **a life experience** that teaches us that it is not ok to make a mistake.

- **A life experience** that teaches us to avoid making mistakes or that informs us that it is impossible to recover from our mistakes.
- **A life experience** that informs a lot of us; that it is better and safer to stay in the confines of our own bubbles/shelters; so that we might not make another mistake again out of fear of possibly failing again.
- And so our story today informs us that David did indeed put the Ark of God in a shelter or a booth;
- We see this in verse 11 of our story where it says, *Uriah said to David, “The ark and Israel and Judah remain in booths*
- Also just a reminder; God spoke to David through the prophet Nathan and told David as I paraphrase God’s words in our story last week and said; “David I never asked you to put me in a shelter...I was fine with the portable tabernacle; because I want to be where you are David!

- Which informs all of us that we live amongst an active and living God; a God who desires and chooses to be with us in our journeys and in our work;
- But again, David decided to make a different move;
- The Ark of God was placed in a booth;
- Essentially God was placed in a box....
- And now we get to see what happens in our lives when we place ourselves and God in a box;
- **We tend to lose** focus on what we are called to do...
- **We tend to lose** perspective....
- Sometimes **we even tend to get** derailed from our plans altogether;
- Thereby leading me to stay in my giraffe imagery that I shared last week by way of a video that I entitled “Holy Movements at the Zoo;” a little longer; for I have been told that the video

connected with a lot of you; which I am glad...for it certainly connected with me!

- For those of you who did not get a chance to see the video; you can view it on our FB page and website; but the video I took was from an impromptu family trip that my family and I took to the Omaha Zoo close to closing time;
- And so in the video, we captured the giraffes making their way across the walkway, towards shelter so that they could get out of the rain.
- We witnessed that all 4 out of 5 giraffes essentially went over as the zoo keeper called them with the exception of one giraffe; Leila.
- Leila as most of you saw last week, walked halfway towards her destination; sniffed at the entrance to the other side that she was invited to go towards;
- When suddenly she decided that she did not want to go over there and so Leila did an about face and came back to where she started.

- Furthermore, if it weren't for the zookeeper blocking the entry way altogether, I stated last week that Leila most likely would have chosen to stay out in the rain; even though the zookeeper informed us that giraffes do not typically like rain.
- However, because the entry way was blocked, Leila chose to instead enclose herself in essentially a shelter at the entry way;
- Most of us witnessed Leila last week, choose to stay in the confines of this shelter for a while; occupying her time eating on some of the trees; all the while ignoring the zookeeper encouraging her to walk over, so that she could be in a safe shelter.
- And so where I would like to place my sermonic focus a little more on is this question concerning Leila's moves; which I am seeing may inform some of our movements as it pertains to what keeps us from moving forward in our own lives;

- Leila's movement or lack of movement, I am also seeing some connections with David's movement in our story today as well.
- So the questions that I would like us to think about as it pertains to Leila and our bible story today is, what tends to keep us in our own boxes?
- Why is it typically so difficult for a lot of us, to stay on course towards our purpose or destination?
- Especially when in many ways, I believe that most of us subconsciously knows that what lies ahead, could be the answer or hope or transformation or liberation or shelter that we have always been innately seeking;
- So what are the things and situations that tend to keep us confined in our boxes?
- Tying in our story of David; we see that now that the Ark of God is essentially out of sight and some would even say out of mind; locked up in a booth;

- David has definitely done an about face on his own mission and purpose for the people.
- For our story tells us how **David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house** (v. 2).
- Then as he looked from the roof-top **he saw a woman bathing** (v. 2).
- David desired this beautiful woman and, summoned her to the palace and committed the sin of adultery with her.
- This was a violation of the seventh commandment and was a crime punishable by death (cf. Exod. 20:14; Lev. 20:10).
- Not only that, our story tells us that upon hearing that Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah was pregnant from their affair; David's next move was to invite Uriah to eat and drink in his presence and made him drunk;

- Then in the morning David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah. **15** In the letter he wrote, “Set Uriah in the forefront of the hardest fighting, and then draw back from him, so that he may be struck down and die.”
- All of these moves that David has made also should come to surprise for not only the people then, but us now because I stopped by to also name that David prior to this was very successful as a king and leader all in all.
- David had reached unprecedented heights in his drive to build and enlarge the kingdom.
- His unbroken series of conquests had carried him to the place of absolute and unquestioned power.
- However what you and I are witnessing right before our very eyes is the moment when a person’s greatest self-security may become one’s moment of greatest insecurity.

- For somewhere, somehow...David got distracted like out giraffe Leila.
- Was it his ego?
- Was it just being human?
- I guess you and I will never know what exactly made David do an about face any more than why our giraffe Leila decided to do an about face or why you and I may be tempted or have done an about face in our own journeys...
- What I do think is helpful to name though as we consider our way forward both individually and collectively; is how darn easy it is for us to do an about face in our journey.
- It is helpful for us to be honest in our own lives to be able to name that first off that there are many distractions that can get us off track whether we intend it to or not;
- And although this confession that I am naming for us may be self explanatory to most of us; one may

be surprised at how difficult it can be for some of us to admit that there is a capacity for us to get off track in the first place.

- For I stopped by to suggest that perfectionism is a real issue for especially A type personalities such as myself;
- However I also would like to name and proclaim that **our confessions** are not only appreciated by God;
- **Our confessions** are actually what helps us to recover and move forward;
- **Our confessions** are necessary for our holistic salvation in the here and the now and forevermore;
- **Our confessions** are necessary if we wish to even attempt to do the work of Reconciliation;
- So **our confessions** are not to condemn us;
- **Our confessions** are necessary, so that we may be liberated to do better; to live freer and be assured that we have the tools to do this work;

- However, **if we are one** that cannot recognize our faults;
- **If we are one that** do not think we need to be redeemed;
- **If we are one that** do not think we need to seek forgiveness...
- Then **we will stay** stuck in our boxes;
- **We will in fact** be confined to our boxes indefinitely; if we cannot get around the fact that we will make mistakes;
- If we cannot recognize that we do cause mishaps knowingly or unknowingly;
- If we cannot accept on some level that we are indeed broken people on many levels that need to be restored; regardless what we mark on our US Census forms; we all need to be redeemed and restored;

- If some of us can get that through our heads...then I believe that we are well on our way of getting out of our boxes.
- And this is the celebration point that I would like to leave us with in part one of this sermon today;
- The celebration is what happens once we get outside of our boxes....
- Because through our confessions per the John Wesley model of Grace; our confession assures us the second piece that I would like to name in this giraffe imagery; that the zookeeper that I am naming as a metaphor for God not only is still there patiently waiting for us to come on over to the other side for shelter;
- I stopped by to decree and declare that the metaphorical zookeeper **still wants us there!**
- **So in the case of David getting off track with adultery and even murder....God still wanted him there.**

- **In our own lives, I feel lead to share that no matter what has kept us distracted at our own entry ways; God still wants us there....**
- **In fact nothing and no thing that we could ever do, would keep God from wanting us there;**
- **Just like the word tells us that nothing and no thing can separate us from the love of God;**
(Romans 8:39)
- The work that I am inviting us all into explore as you still make your way to consider your next steps in the life of the Church and beyond with our Ministry Fair next door...is that God wants you there.
- Furthermore, I stopped by to name that First United Methodist Church of Lincoln NE...wants you here....
- For our signups are getting full, but there is still room for you here...there is always room for you here...

- For we have opportunities for our youth and children in the area of ribbon dance; where the ribbons provide a rhythmic movement that symbolizes ushering in the Holy presence of God through community.
- We have opportunities in Spiritual Formation, where Terri Storer would like to begin exploring other deep meaningful spiritual practices and prayers that will include labyrinths, singing bowls and sound meditation...
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- So wherever you choose to share your gifts, or if you are more comfortable just observing for now; just know that not only does God want you here....we want you here.
- This is the message of the reconciliation ministry that I hope by now we are beginning to make crystal clear...that we want you here.....
- Let the Church Say Amen!

Holy Movement: Sunday July 25 2021 10:45

First Lesson: 2 Samuel 11: 1-15

Gospel Lesson: John 6: 1-21

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- So wherever you choose to share your gifts, or if you are more comfortable just observing for now; just know that not only does God want you here....we want you here.
- This is the message of the reconciliation ministry that I hope by now we are beginning to make crystal clear...that we want you here.....
- **And where our gospel fits in although I have been indirectly talking about it all along, but our gospel informs us the miracle of what happens when people are able to break out of their boxes and be here;**
- For the High Christology scholar that I am who still sees Jesus as God and Jesus as both divine and human; once thought that the miracle was that 5 loaves and 2 fish fed 5000 people;
- The Reconciling theologian that I am evolving to, is now marveling at the idea of what can happen when we all can be here;

- For our gospel tells us that there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all.
- (v11) Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted.
- Then the Word informs us that as result of them all being there on that day; **they all** were satisfied (v12);
- In my biblical imagination I would like to think that not only were they all satisfied;
- But **perhaps they** were restored;
- **Perhaps they were** renewed;
- **Perhaps they were** even reconciled to this idea of what happens when we step outside of the confines of our boxes and show up together;
- People are fed physically, spiritually, mentally and emotionally;

- Lives are transformed;
- Restoration is proven to not only be possible but even feasible;
- The metaphorical mountains of rejection, oppression, guilt and harm is removed;
- Revealing the true miracle of what happens when we show up and God is able to freely move;
- A Holy Movement is birthed!
- Can you see it....Can you envision it?
- If you didn't here anything else today...know that we want you here....we need you here...for the Holy potential is great..when we come together!
-