

Sunday October 24, 2021
First Lesson: Psalm 34: 1-8
Gospel Lesson: Mark 10: 46-52
Sermon Series: Holy Spectrum Blue
Preacher: Kirstie J. Engel

We are continuing with our Holy Spectrum Series, a sermon series designed to explore the Rainbow that we have invested in on our lawn that has the words, “All Are Welcome Here”; along with the social issues, topics, spiritual growth and possibilities contained in it.

- This week the color of focus is the color Blue.
- So in researching the Blue potential of our rainbow this morning, **blue represents both the sky and the sea**, and is associated with open spaces, freedom, intuition, imagination, expansiveness, inspiration, and sensitivity.
- **Blue also represents** meanings of depth, trust, loyalty, sincerity, wisdom, confidence, stability, faith, heaven, and intelligence.

- Another meaning of the color Blue in the rainbow that I learned of, that I think would be helpful in our conversation today, is discovering that the color blue is also symbolism **for courage**.
- And so this is where I am getting my preaching energy from this morning; it is from this word **courage**;
- And so before revealing why I am drawn to the symbolism of courage this morning, I think it is helpful for me to first off, continue on with a question that I raised last week;
- The question that I invited us all to consider is if “we are willing to be set apart to do the work of justice, repair and reconciliation?”
- For if you remember last week, I raised an underlining concern that I suspect is why so many groups of people in our Reconciliation statement are being sidelined in our communities and our churches, is because of this question of holiness.

- For in the Bible, there are some pretty inflammatory scriptures that have been interpreted in such a damaging way, where certain sections of our society as it pertains to gender, sexuality, economic status, ethnic group, race, age, education and ability **do not feel holy**; mainly because **they have been told** that they are not holy.
- **They have been told** that they are unworthy.
- They **have been told** that they are not welcome.
- **They have been told** these things; **we have been told** these things; not always verbally or even audibly; often times it is nuanced with micro aggressive language and body/facial expressions;
- However, the message for those who have been sidelined in our communities and churches is very clear to those being marginalized; that **we do not belong here**;

- Which is why this work of reconciliation will be that much difficult for churches and communities desiring to repair these relationships with our family members that have been “other-ed” and “benched” indefinitely;
- Because **it is hard to recover** from the stink that these “isms” bring to the downtrodden;
- **It is hard to forgive; it is impossible to forget;** all of the words and the stares and the alienation that comes with being sidelined.

- **And so last week my hope of introducing the Hebrew biblical definition of holy, which is translated to be Qadash; and declare its meaning of holiness to be set apart to do a job;**
- My preaching hope was to begin to stir up an awakening within all of us; that would allow us to detect God's activity within our human every day lives; with a new level of understanding and awareness;
- **To consider that even though** our communities and churches may have sidelined us;
- **To consider that even though** our communities and churches may have "other-ed" us;
- I am stepping up with preaching authority and conviction to name that **God has not sidelined us...**
- **God has not other-ed us...**

- **In fact God's main concern by this Hebrew definition of holiness**, is if you and I are willing to be set apart to do the work of repair toward's God's kingdom.
- **God's main concern**, is if you and I are willing to be set apart to do God's work of justice and mercy.
- So when I am inviting us all; regardless of the role that we might have played in this narrative of how these communities have been cast away and rejected in the first place; to step up to holiness with this new level of understanding; my preaching attempt is to reset and reclaim the narrative, that tainted the Gospel and claimed it as Truth in the first place;
- To reclaim the sentiment behind Galatians 3:28 where it says; There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are **all** one in Christ Jesus.....

- To redefine and proclaim what we really mean when we say all;
- Where in spite of the Book of Discipline not being clear on its intentions of the word **all...**
- And although as a Church we too are discerning what we really mean when we say **all...**
- **The messaging that I am here to proclaim today by way of the Holy Spirit, is that for God...God really means all.**
- For God's grace informs us that **all means all...**
- God's agape love informs us that **all means all...**
- **Furthermore, if we do a mental review of all of the Holy sermon series that I have been preaching this year alone; just to name a few Holy Disruption, Holy Movement, Holy Repair and Holy Spectrum;**
- What I have been essentially asking, is not for a level of holiness that would require perfection for none of us are perfect;

- However under this new level of understanding of what holiness really means biblically; to be set apart to do a job; what I am asking is for willing people who are willing to be set apart; to look at the areas of repair that is needed within our communities and more;
- What I am asking, is if we are willing to be set apart, to begin a systematic movement; that will allow us to do the work of mercy and justice within our communities and more.
- And most importantly when I am asking all of these questions, I really am including ALL in this missional journey together to be a part of this work.
- All....regardless of your past;
- All...regardless of your ability;
- All...regardless of your age, race, education, gender, sexuality and more....

- The invitation and the leadership that I am inviting is intended for all....because in my heart and soul...God really means all...and that is the biblical foundation that I am working from.
- **And so where the color blue comes into all of this for me, is realizing that although this Hebrew definition and understanding of holiness may indeed produce a level of liberation within many of us;**
- I stopped by to also name the reality that once we say yes, there is a measure of courage that will be required from all of us; to make this commitment of rebuilding this Church together.
- And this is where things can get dicey for a few of us I would imagine, because it can be hard to take that first step towards rebuilding especially during times like these;

- For the devastating effects of this persisting virus and its impact on businesses, churches and more has been devastating;
- So it can be hard to take that first step, even if our present circumstances are not where we would like them to be; this is where the old adage of “better the devil you know than the devil you don't know”, comes into play;
- For it will be tempting for some of us to be like Lot's wife and always look back and wish for the days that are no more;
- It will be tempting for some of us to remain stuck, because of not wanting to move away from what we have already done before.
- So as I peek towards our lectionary scriptures this morning; there is something that informs my courage in both of our lessons and inspires me to resist this temptation of hiding in my own shell or

submitting to these temptations that I have named.

- For if you look at our first lesson this morning; the assumed writer David is in a better place emotionally than he has been in a long time.
- For if you remember **when I preached the color yellow**; I named David as possibly experiencing a mental health crisis of depression.
- **When I preached the color green** last week, David seemed to be in a better place emotionally and spiritually; where he felt clothed with splendor and majesty.
- Now in our psalm this morning, you and I are beginning to experience an abundance of power and courage that I have never noticed before in David's movements;
- So much so that in verse 4 of our scripture David says; *I sought the Lord, and he answered me, and delivered me from all my fears.*

- So you see the reason why I am encouraged by this psalm this morning is because when I look over my life as it pertains to areas where I needed courage; I realize that David was absolutely right in his testimony this morning;
- That often times when I have been troubled about something, whether it pertained to my leadership and work at the Church or in my home life; that would require me to be courageous and to move out of my comfort zones, my testimony is that once I said yes and agreed to be set apart to do the task at hand, **all of a sudden**, I did have the courage that I needed, to get the job done;
- **All of a sudden** I did have the words that needed to be said;
- **All of a sudden** I did display the actions that needed to be made;
- **All of a sudden** my prior fears seemed to slip away;

- And this is because when we say yes to this work;
- If we are in tuned with our prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness to God,
- **The Holy Spirit is what gives** us the courage to do the things that we did not think we can do on our own.
- **The Holy Spirit gives us** the confidence to do the work that needs to be done;
- This is why David then goes on to say in verses 5 and 6

5

Look to him, and be radiant;

so your faces shall never be ashamed.

6

This poor soul cried, and was heard by the Lord,

and was saved from every trouble.

7

- For what David is essentially saying to us in today's time is that when he placed his trust in God's hand, it all worked out for him;
- For like the words of Isaiah 41:13 captures the voice of God for us and says ; *For I am the Lord you God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, 'Do not fear; I will help you.*
- This is the same testimony that David is declaring in our psalm today;
- That when we say yes to being set apart to do this work, God will help us;
- Someway, somehow, the Holy Spirit will put the right people, in the right place at the right time and it will all work out....
- The second incidence of courage that I am inspired by is at our gospel this morning, that tells us of a story of a blind beggar who was sitting by the roadside.

- The blind man was essentially sidelined by his community and possibly the Church as well.
- Nevertheless when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”
- **48** Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”
- **49** Jesus stood still and said, “Call him here.” And they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take heart; get up, he is calling you.”
- **50** So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. **51** Then Jesus said to him, “What do you want me to do for you?” The blind man said to him, “My teacher, let me see again.” **52** Jesus said to him, “Go; your faith has made you well.” Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

- The blind man reveals to us the essence behind Matthew 7: 7-8; that will come into fruition when we step into this level of courage;

“Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you.

8 For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

- For if it weren't for the courage of this blind man to speak up;
- If it wasn't for the courage of this blind man to speak out;
- The door would not have been opened for him;
- The fact of the matter is that without this level of courage, the door will not be open for anyone.
- For **the blind man would not have been able to see**, had he resolved to keep mourning the past that was no more;

- **The blind man would not have been able to see**, had he chosen to just stay stagnant;
- So **the only way** the blind man's situation would improve;
- **The only way** the blind man's situation would be repaired;
- **The only way** the blind man's situation would be restored;
- **The only way** the blind man's situation would be reconciled;
- Was for the blind man to be willing to be set apart; to take his rightful place back into a community that has once sidelined him; all which took an enormous amount of courage to do so; nevertheless it was the only way for any real change to come forth in his situation;
- Thereby making this the prayer focus this week I am inviting us all to keep drawing energy from;

- **The prayer is for courage** to use our prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness so that our siblings in Christ are no longer sidelined;
- **The prayer is for courage** to help open doors that have been closed off to communities because of their race, gender, education, ability, economic status, sexuality and more;
- **The prayer is for courage** to be willing to be set apart, to Do all the good we can, by all the means we can, in all the ways we can, in all the places we can, at all the times we can, to all the people we can, as long as ever we can;
- **The prayer is for courage** from the marginalized, to be able to reclaim our rightful stance and take off our cloaks and spring up and take our stance back in our communities and churches, families and more;

- May the Words of mouth and the meditation of this pastoral heart be acceptable in your sight; oh Lord our Rock our strength, the source of our courage;
- Let the Church say Amen and Hallelujah!