

Redemption

John 4: 5-42

This week, we are suppose to talk about redemption. But that seems strange given what's going on in our community and in our world. At least that is what I thought at the beginning of the week as information changed minute by minute, as fear and worry became more real, as the unknown become our present reality. I kept asking myself how in the world am I suppose to talk about redemption in light of all this very real, very present fear and worry, only to discover that now is the perfect time to talk about redemption and its potential to bring us back to life.

You see in faith, we have limited our conversations about redemption to concepts such as being saved, or being rescued, even in some circles to only being about being ransomed for some awful thing we did as humanity.

But as I have lived with this story of the woman at the well, I am realizing that redemption is so much more than all that. Redemption is more than simply coming out of the grave. Redemption is more than simply coming out of the darkness. Redemption is about finding a new way to live, a new way to be, a new way to see and experience the world. Redemption is about coming back to life and not just any life. Rather coming back to life which is filled with God's grace, coming back to life knowing that nothing can ever separate us from the love of

God. Redemption is about coming back to life, rooted in our identity as Beloved Children of God. For us as people of faith, redemption is about coming back to life and becoming active participants in the bringing about of healing and wholeness for all of God's people.

Or let me say it this way... yesterday as I was working on this meditation, stories kept filling up my newsfeed, stories about how life was coming back to communities in surprising ways during this time of fear and worry. In Wuhan, ground zero for this pandemic, reports are saying that the heavy smog which polluted the sky was clearing, that people were now able to hear the birds singing, a sound which they hadn't heard in years, a connection to God's creation which they had forgotten. In Italy, people are leaning out their windows, filling the streets with their voices raised in song, making connections with their neighbors, even as they are continued to be confined to their houses. And here in our little part of the world, we are hearing stories about how schools are caring for their students over the next two weeks, offering meals to them, sharing resources so that they continue to learn over the next two weeks, even challenging their students to practice their handwriting by writing notes to people in nursing homes who are separated from their family due to the quarantine.

For me as a person of faith, this is what the practice of redemption looks like...being an active part in the work of the Kingdom of God here on Earth, It is

is about knowing who we are, knowing whose we. It is about opening ourselves up to the many ways the Spirit of God is moving in and among us bringing us back to life, showing us time and time again, that the darkness will not overcome the light.

I don't have all the answers but one thing I know to be true is this...as people of faith, we hold to the promise given to us by a Savior who not only came out of the grave but a Savior who brought us new life.... who showed through his words and actions that the darkness will not have the last word, who showed us that love and light will always bring forth new life. As people of faith, we have been given a promise that nothing, not death nor life, nor angels or demons, nor our fears for today and our worries for tomorrow. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is revealed to us in Christ.

So as we continue our Lenten walk, making our way toward Jerusalem, know we have been given a gift, a gift of a radical newness found through Jesus Christ, a newness of life which reminds us who we are, which reminds us whose we are, a newness of life which always brings us back to life because through the grace and love of God, we have been redeemed. Amen.