

## Revelation

### Matthew 21: 1-11

As people of faith, what is being revealed to us in this particular moment? This was the question posed to us during our clergy peer group this week as we gathered together via Zoom. The answers to this unsettling question ranged from the brokenness of our healthcare system to the growing gap between the haves and the have nots to how the bonds of community really have broken down in recent years meaning that neighbors no longer know neighbors and that we as a society, as a culture have personified the motto: Everyone is on their own for survival.

As I have reflected on these answers over the last few days, I have come to realize that this current crisis didn't really reveal any of these things. They have been there all along. It is just that we as a society, as a culture, have chosen to ignore them. We have turned our attention from these things, going about our life as "normal", pretending that these concerns don't affect us. We have allowed the system to draw a curtain over these disturbing facts as we have adopted a mindset of out of sight, out of mind.

Actually what is being revealed in our current pandemic is that the curtain has been pulled back, showing us that the wizard is simply a man, distracting us with flashy lights and loud noises. What is being revealed in our current pandemic

is the system's shell game. It is no longer allowed to direct our attention away from these life draining realities. What our current crisis is revealing is that on all levels, socially, mentally, emotionally, physically, we have a long way to go before healing and wholeness comes to fruition for all of God's people.

All that we thought we knew, all that we assumed to be true, all that we have ignored and become complacent in is now twisted upside down, never to be the same again. Everything is in upheaval. Everything is being shaken to its core and in the process of being leveled to the ground. Everything is in turmoil and as people of faith, we are left with a choice...we can either draw the curtain back over these ugly truths once more, hiding them, pretending that these life draining realities about our society and culture do not affect us or...or we can get to work, yes even in quarantine. We can put our money where our mouths are. We can practice what we preach. As the Church, we have been forced out of our comfortable pews to start learning, to start engaging in the social justice issues which affect our communities. Because "like it or not, as people of faith, we can either add to the darkness of indifference, add to the darkness of out and out evil which surrounds us or we can light a candle to see by."

As ones who have experienced the Kingdom of God in our midst, experienced how God's grace and love really does transform us into people of hope and mercy, what is being revealed to us in this moment is that we are called

to a courageous faith. We are called to proclaim that the darkness does not have the last word. What is being revealed to us in this moment is the importance of the work of the kingdom of God, defined by authentic relationships which bring healing and wholeness for all. Just as it was revealed to the crowd on that Palm Sunday all those years ago as they celebrated Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.

I love how Matthew draws our attention to this moment at the beginning of our text. He uses familiar words from the Hebrew Bible, words which remind the people that their past, present and future are all tied up together. He uses familiar words to proclaim the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Matthew wants us to know that this moment is about more than parades and palm branches. It is about the coming of the Kingdom of God into our midst. It is about experiencing a presence so powerful, a message so compelling, it is about our imagination of what could be being so fully engaged that we chose to follow as we watch Jesus ride through the gates of Jerusalem.

We are told that in this moment when Jesus enters the gates of Jerusalem, it throws everything into turmoil. Suddenly we remember another time when Jerusalem was thrown into turmoil at the mere mention of the possibility of Messiah coming into its midst. It happened at the beginning of Matthew's Gospel when the Magi came to King Herod, looking for the place where the Messiah was

to be born. We were told that King Herod was frightened and all Jerusalem with him.

Now we see it happening again. Jerusalem, the very center of power and might, is thrown into turmoil because the Messiah has entered its gates. Jerusalem is shaken to its very core all because the Kingdom of God has come into its midst.

Just like all those years ago, what is being revealed to us now is not the broken structures of this time but rather as people who proclaim that Jesus is our Lord and Savior, what is being revealed to us is that we are called to act in ways which “claim our allegiance to God’s vision for this world”. What is being revealed to us in this moment is that as ones who know the grave is not the end of the story, “Jesus is holding us to a higher standard and a tougher hope.”

Because we are the ones who know...who know that Jesus ushers in a new way of being in relationship, a new way of being in community with one another, Jesus ushers in a new way of being engaged in this world. This new way is not one of power and might but rather of love and peace, humble powers which can topple systems and structures of oppression, freeing all to experience healing and wholeness as Beloved Children of God, humble powers which Jesus displayed during his ministry here on earth.

In this moment, as a society, as a culture, as communities around the world, we are being challenged by this pandemic in ways we never imagined or wanted. I don't know how long this time of uncertainty will last. I don't know how long our primary reaction will be a feeling of being out of control. But it is my hope and my prayer that we like so many who have come before us when they experienced uncertainty, will take this time as an opportunity to reflect on what really matters, to take this time to pull back the curtain and reveal the lasting Truth that there is no you or me. Rather there is only us as one community, as one Body of Christ, as one baptism, one faith, one Lord. It is my hope that during this time of uncertainty, we remember that in the midst of the chaos, in the midst of the all the turmoil, the Spirit of God is moving in and among us, bringing forth new life, that Jesus is ushering in a new way of being, redefining the powers which will bring healing and wholeness for all of God's people.

Again, I don't have all the answers but I will offer you this....As disciples of Christ, we were never promised easy answers nor were we offered an easy journey. What we were promised was this...that no matter what the journey may bring, no matter if it looks like the darkness will overcome us, we were promised that love and light will always have the last word.

So as we enter into the gates of Jerusalem this day, may we have the courage and the strength to hold onto a tougher hope. May we continue to walk the way of

Jesus, a way of peace and love, knowing that is only through these humble powers that systems and structures of oppression will topple so that all may experience healing and wholeness as Beloved Children of God. Amen.