

Readings:

Psalm 19

Mark 8:27-37

John 1:35-51

Come and See

Today I just want us to look briefly at why we are here. See each of our scriptures point to moments of noticing God in the midst. In the psalm and throughout the biblical text we are told that Creation sings praises to God, the trees of the fields clap their hands, the birds of the air sing a song, some of my favourite scriptures actually direct us to look to creation for wisdom. See how a flower is pleased with being a flower, how it does not panic, it simply lives its role.

Our passage in Mark followed a time when Jesus had preformed many miracles, and people were beginning to speak of his wisdom and gifts. But they were also beginning to fear him because he spoke a new kind of truth, a new way of life. In John Jesus walks by and people can't help but notice him, some begin to follow while others begin to question him. His response? Come and See.

I think Jesus says this because every single person we meet in the passage, just like every person here is in a different place in their life and faith journey. Every person will discover something different in Jesus. Every one of us will come to know something different of God and Christ even as we journey together. Jesus rarely gives a straight answer, he often responds with a question, or an action, or a request, like follow me. In fact it seems even when Peter comes out with a straight concrete answer it only opens Jesus up to challenge him more. To say if you have it all figured out then here is the next piece.

At the point in this passage in Mark Jesus knew that he had upset the authorities, he knew that he was about to die and so he wanted to prepare Peter who thought life had all fallen into place. Peter was under the illusion that from here on in he could wrap life up with a pretty bow and go on living the good life. It is easy to judge him but how many of us haven't or don't do the same thing every once in a while.

Peter didn't like Jesus telling him things would get hard, and life wasn't going to be perfect from here on in and so like I would most likely have done Peter corrected Jesus. That's when we hear Jesus say "Get behind me, Satan, for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things. And then we hear some of the hardest, most

misinterpreted texts of all time. If you follow me you need to deny yourself and take up your cross.

Now I wasn't going to give a sermon today but these verses just sparked something in me and I couldn't help it because they take us right back to our purpose. They ask us "Who do we say Jesus is?" "What does it mean to be a follower of Christ?" "What does it mean to be a Christian?" "What does it mean to deny ourselves and take up our cross?" "What does it mean to put our mind on divine things rather than human things?" My response – Come and See.

These are the questions we will ask ourselves over and over and over again in our life and faith journey – these are the questions we ask ourselves both as individuals and as a community of faith. Why Church? So that we can journey together as we attempt to participate in and discover truth. Why church? So that when those moments happen that don't fit into our perfect life plan, we are not alone we have an opportunity to remember we live in God's world, and God has created us to live in love and care of one another. Our mission statement says we are here so that we might "be an inclusive community serving God's world" That we might be a place of welcome for all.

Jesus quoted the Tora when he said "Love the Lord Your God with all your heart, and with all you soul, and with all your mind and with all your strength and love your neighbour as yourself." That is the life we are attempting to live. Jesus also said I have come that all might have life and have it abundantly. Our call as people of faith is to live out most fully who God has created us to be. And as we live into the questions of life and faith together we will see and discover who Jesus is, and what God is calling us to as individuals and community. So if you are looking for a place of faith where it's okay that you are not perfect...this is a good place. If you want a place where you are allowed to ask questions...you are welcome here...If you want a place to journey with others who are trying to discover who God is creating them to be... then settle in. Why are we here? It's certainly not because we are perfect, but perhaps it is because we all seek to know a little more of who God is calling us to be as we discover how loved we are. What does it mean to be an "inclusive community serving God's world?" Come and See.