

Seeking Jesus
Exodus 24:12-18; Matthew 17:1-9
John 3:1-17
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Our Lenten journey has been interrupted by weather. We had to wait to begin Lent together, but here we are now, most of us, marked with a cross of ashes on our foreheads. Lent is a beautiful time of seeking Jesus, of seeking God.

Like Moses on the mountain sometimes we have to wait even when seeking God. Moses waited 6 days. Can you imagine waiting for God on a mountain? It's cold. I know I've told you this before, but 2 of my friends and I spent the night on Mt Sinai. We had each brought a blanket, but the night got really frigid and windy. Clever locals had a stand with blankets to rent. We ended up spending a fortune on blankets, and we were still shivering.

Waiting on God on the mountain sounds really hard to me. Waiting is hard! Did Moses know he would be waiting for 6 days? Or was it like our lives when we wait often not knowing the date or time our hopes will be realized?

Waiting with no end date requires intense TRUST. It takes trust to wait patiently and faithfully.

We come seeking Jesus- we come seeking the very presence of God in the world. In Matthew 16 we find Jesus telling his disciples that he will go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering and death, and then will be raised.

This perplexed and bothered the friends of Jesus. Then Jesus went on to say that to be his followers, they too would have to “take up their cross.”

After saying all this to his disciples, 6 days went by. Remember the Gospel of Matthew was written for a Jewish audience who would have known about Moses waiting on the mountain for 6 days to receive instructions from God.

“6 days later, Jesus took with him Peter, James and John, and led them up a high mountain, and he was transfigured before them. His face shown like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white.” Then Moses and Elijah appeared talking with Jesus. Peter wanted to make 3 dwellings, but “while he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them and a voice said, “This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him.”

Just as Moses encountered the presence of God and received the tablets of the Law to instruct the people after waiting 6 days, Jesus-God with us- was the presence of God and the very instruction of God.

When the disciples heard the voice of God, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Get up and do not be afraid.”

The first instruction from Jesus to the disciples, after God said, “LISTEN TO HIM” was a gentle touch with the words, “Get up and do not be afraid.”

In our seeking Jesus the voice of God lingers in our ears, “This is My Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him.”
Get up Plymouth Presbyterian Church and do not be afraid.

Get up each of you, each of us and do not be afraid- for Jesus is with us.

We seek Jesus on the mountaintop in the spiritual experiences, and we seek Jesus, like Nicodemus does, by night. Sometimes we are afraid of what others might think; so we cloak our faith in the shadows. Sometimes we have doubts and yet have faith enough to come by night to the one whose Kingdom requires us to be born anew. To be born anew is to see things in a whole new way.

A movie comes to mind: The Matrix, a 1999 film starring Keanu Reeves.

(Wikipedia) “Humanity is unknowingly trapped inside the Matrix, a simulated reality that intelligent machines have created to distract humans while using their bodies as an energy source.” Some people have learned the truth; once you know the truth everything is different.

To be born anew is to see the Kingdom of God here and now.
To be born anew is to have your eyes opened to new spiritual realities.

This Lent we seek Jesus, we seek the presence of God on a mountain with patience and willingness to wait. We seek Jesus by night, as we are, hoping to be transformed in the process.
We seek the face of Jesus.

Let's close with a poem by a seminary classmate of mine, Rev. Brad Sheppard:

Lent is a way of seeing
To open my eyes
To wide my perspective

To broaden my outlook
To peer beyond the horizon
To squint for signs of hope

Lent is a way of seeing
God in the ordinary
God in the mundane
God in the extraordinary
God in the surprise
God in the small and the wide

Lent is a way of seeing
The possibilities of today
The possibilities of tomorrow
The possibilities for me
The possibilities for you
The possibilities for us
Lent is a way of seeing
Christ in the cosmos
Christ among the crowd
Christ in the least
Christ as the center
Christ as the whole

Lent is a way of seeing
Where I fall down and fall short
Where I cannot see or refuse to see
Where I am from and where I am going
Where the way is narrow and necessary
Where the One is leading and leads to the One

Lent is a way of seeing

Broken bread and poured out wine
Broken body for a broken world
Broken grip of the doom of death
Broken world born anew
Broken hearts surprised by good news