

Way-Making with Jesus

Pentecost 2 2024

St. Andrew's Kelowna

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In the name of the Holy Trinity, one God. Amen.

Today we begin Ordinary Time, that season of ordered time, ordered Sundays, after the celebration of Pentecost. Our colour shifts green as we begin making our way through the longest season of the church year.

And so it is rather fitting that our Gospel begins with the disciples making their way, literally making a way, through a field of ripe grain. I don't know about you but my brain sees that wonderful scene from Lord of the Rings when Frodo and Sam are setting out from the Shire on what will be the most life-altering adventure. As they are walking through the fields the grain stalks move showing their path even when we can't see them. The disciples were likely not that short and perhaps the grain field not that immense but you get the image and this idea of making a way.

And the disciples are making away on the sabbath, on the day of holy rest, the day that was integral to the identity of the people of Israel- it was one of the things that separated them from pagan neighbours because they belonged to the God God rested. The sabbath is that culmination of creation and as such God's people are to rest in the creative life of God, a day not bound by time or the tyranny of our own ability to do, produce and achieve; that immense goodness of God who created all things and say that they were good. And as the disciples make a way, Jesus and they pick grain to eat -they are labouring and travelling when they aren't supposed to do either- and the Pharisees jump on this with their objections. Jesus' response is fascinating likening their way-making to the journey David was on when he had been anointed by Samuel but was not yet King. This is the way-making of the Messiah, of the line of David, the King yet to be recognized as King, who feeds on the sabbath when there is hunger. Jesus concludes by saying the Sabbath was made for humanity not humanity for the sabbath or as other translations phrase it: The sabbath was made to serve us; we weren't made to serve the Sabbath (*The Message*) and the Messiah is Lord of the sabbath. Jesus is the Lord of the sabbath who way-makes and feeds as the creative rest of God incarnate among them.

And then it happens again on the sabbath. From the fields to the synagogue this way-making encounters another kind of hunger: the man with the withered hand, who biblical commentators note had likely lost his ability to work and therefore much of his livelihood. A less than holy work-stoppage; not the ceasing of labour the sabbath is about. And so Jesus heals him to which the Pharisees question. As Lord of the Sabbath Jesus widens the question, saying is it lawful to do good or evil on this day? What is the heart of the hunger I am meeting, the work I am doing, the way I am making, the life I am bringing? And the Pharisees plot to destroy him.

So much of our life of faith is making a way with the living Christ *with* others, looking for that life that he is bringing, looking for the new creation he is working in our collective midst: in the grain fields, in the synagogues, on our city streets, on our Farm-Gardens, in our hearts. Early Christians were called People of the Way and it serves us well not to forget that. Paul, in our second readings, tells us that this way-making life is about carrying the life of Christ within us—the life of the Creator who brought light out of darkness, that Creator who became flesh and dwelt among us, was crucified and was raised. And this life is held in clay jars, or earthen vessels, vessels so much more vulnerable than the divine life they hold. Earthen vessels that will crack and sometimes break, our lives in which there will be suffering be it self-made, inflicted upon us, or just the consequence of being finite humans. And it is just this, it is bearing both the death of Jesus in us and the risen life of Christ in us that enables us to bear witness to the new creation, to make a way together, as we bear in ourselves the truth of light in darkness, suffering and healing, of death and resurrection.

And so as we begin this new season in our church year, we are invited into this mindset, or better yet this heart-set of way-making with Jesus with others. In our Confirmation Class we are looking at our baptismal vows as the key ways to follow Jesus' way-making. They are like the hand-grips on a climbing wall that you grab on to as you make a way up wall and we are going to go rock climbing in the next few weeks! Oliver's favourite vow is: Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers? Austan's favourite vow is: Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being? We are learning that way-making with Jesus is about living how we love, a covenant of love, that enable us wot work with Christ to help others and ourselves become fully human, fully alive. And next week, June 9th, we we a whole parish are going to walk again the way that Christ has made for us over last 4 years, reflect on it together on all that the Spirit has done in us and in this place since Covid, look at some of our key learnings and name what is most important to communicate in our parish profile. So please come next week and stay for coffee as we relive the way Christ has made for us and the people his is calling us to become. And spend this week intentionally entering that mindset and heart-set of way-making with Jesus. Watch him feed and heal in our scriptures. Watch the ways of new creation in your own life, taking the time this week to reflect on what you have seen learned and learned about way-making with Christ.

The Lord of Sabbath has sought us out and known us, calling us into His very life: may we answer, may we follow, may we live.

Amen