

First Sunday After Epiphany

January 8, 2012

Seeing Re-Creation in the Ordinary Rhythms of Our Lives

People tend to notice God during a spiritual high – an experience from a retreat or some spectacular event that happened in their life;

OR, they cry out to God in times of desperate lows – sickness, struggles.

But the incarnation – God becoming a human being in Jesus – presents a very different place for God in our lives.

God is for the ordinary days

God is in the everyday

God is for the ordinary moments

Though Jesus came to reveal God, Jesus came to us – not in any spectacular way, but in a way that was so ordinary that no one really noticed that he was born (it was two years after that religious leaders discovered that there might be a Messiah around, when the magi showed up and asked about “where the king of the Jews was born?”)

That Jesus was for ordinary people in their ordinary days, is also revealed in the temptation of Satan – he was challenging Jesus not to be ordinary, but to make his mark on the scene in spectacular ways, to become a celebrity, to hang out with stars and the political elite.

This Epiphany we want to take notice of the ordinariness of God;

To take some time to explore how God is revealed in the ordinary rhythms of our lives.

I encourage you to be open to discover that God is most real to us when we make space for God in the ordinary times of our lives.

In our living, our working, our loving, our doing chores, in going shopping, in eating together and caring for one another . . . *These* are the times God can be most real to us, when we can most readily see the presence of God in our lives.

That is because Epiphany is not merely celebrating God being revealed,  
– it is about God acting to bring about *re-creation* in the midst of our daily lives.

Do we see *re-creation* happening all around us, as we open ourselves to the presence of God’s Spirit?

The miracle that we are privy to is that God always acts to recreate **in the midst of ordinariness, particularly in the ordinariness of our lives.**

That is what we see in our texts this morning as we put Mark’s text next to Genesis.

We are used to the spectacular nature of the language of Genesis 1 when God creates:

“In the beginning **God** created . . .”

“Let there be light” God says, “and there was light.”

Amazing, marvelous, awe inspiring!  
– and so we expect the language of re-creation to be just as grand.

But the *language of re-creation* in Mark 1 is so ordinary that we don't even notice it – I did not see it until recently.

We see the connections with creation in John's Gospel – “in the beginning the Word was with God and the Word was God . . .”

But it is also here in Mark's Gospel.

The Hebrew word which is translated “in the beginning” is *genesis*

What I never noticed before in Mark's gospel is that he uses the Greek form of *genesis* in a way that is easy to overlook.

Mark states: “John the Baptist *appeared* in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance.”

Did you notice the “creation” word?

The Greek word for “appeared” is *egeneto*, from the root *ginomai*.

It is the word for *Genesis* in the New Testament – it is a creative word which can mean *being born or begotten, to be created, to take place, for something new to happen to someone*

– and here it means “*to appear*”

John *appeared* as a creative presence coming onto the world stage in the wilderness to reveal something new that is redemptive, reconciliatory, re-creative – revealing light in a dark world!

John the Baptist came as a **reGenesis**, revealing the in breaking of a new light into the ordinary places of our lives.

**The light that God created in *Genesis* brought light into darkness that covered the earth;**

Now John is a voice of a new Genesis – of the light of God coming into the world  
– for all humanity, for all creation.

John revealed this light by “preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins”

And people thronged to him, confessing their sin, no longer wanting to live in darkness and they sought to be baptized  
– to live their life being set free from all that bound them

Yet, John the Baptizer was not the light.

John, by his own admission, is not the light – but he comes/appears to reveal the Light.

He declares: “the One coming after me will baptize with the Spirit of God;” who recreates us – ordinary people in the midst of the ordinary rhythms of our lives.

In Jesus, God comes into the midst of our lives to dwell with us, to walk with us in the ordinary, everyday moments of each of our lives.

***Epiphany* is meant to reveal this to us.**

**A time for us to reflect on the depth of this revealing.**

Epiphany is a *seeing* word, a *let there be light* word!

In our parlance it means having a “light bulb” moment where we suddenly grasp something, something becomes clear, an “aha!” that has a transforming impact upon our lives.

We see something so clearly that we are never the same again. We are changed!

The truth of Epiphany is that God is more revealed in ordinary times than in the extraordinary ones; whispers rather than shouts

– we are *re-created* for living radically different, not in the extraordinary experiences, **but in the ordinary moments of our days.**

Seeing this, discovering this

– changes our lives forever

– changes the ordinary moments of our days forever,

**Because God is in our lives during the ordinary rhythms, the ordinary happenings of our lives.**

So, how does this shape us?

How does this shape or reshape the rhythms of our lives?

– so that we not only see God,

But, it shapes the way we live in ways that others begin to see the light of God in their darkness, becoming open to God’s presence in the ordinary moments of their lives as well?

I have found that the most empowering word to share with someone else is how we see Jesus in them, to reveal to them where we see God in their lives.

It can be something as simple as saying “I see Jesus in you.”

[Story of Linda (Edmonton) . . . in a dark place, she just not being able to see God in her life – telling her at a moment when not knowing how to respond further to her an insight given by the Spirit of God – “I see Jesus in you!”]

The ordinary places that so many people live in are places of darkness, of wilderness

– wilderness – the abandoned place, solitary place, desolate, deserted; the habitat of darkness, of evil

– it is a place in which it is difficult to see the light

And so, as the people of God who are discovering the light of Jesus in our ordinary moments, we can encounter people in their ordinary moments pointing out where the light of God is shining in their lives, where God’s presence is coming near them, in what ways the Spirit of God is at work in them seeking to bring about re-creation.

We are called to be in the world as ones who point out the light of Jesus, point out the presence of God.

As we go about living our lives, working where we work, shopping where we shop, eating where we eat, driving where we drive, doing what we do, loving whom we love

– in all the ordinariness of our lives

– **we are the ones who participate with God in revealing a new Genesis, a *re*Genesis**

**Can we help our neighbors see in the ordinary rhythms of our lives, their lives? To see God.**

As we side with those who mourn and are powerless, are they comforted and experience the presence of God?

As we share the life and love of God to those who hunger and thirst for justice, are they filled with the peace of God?

As we show mercy, are others open to receiving God's mercy?

As we live with integrity, do others come to see God?

As we strive to be peacemakers, do others open their lives to become children of God?

As we live in the face of personal injustice, do we live not responding in the way we are treated, but in the way of Jesus, living out the will of God?

May we not only see God more clearly in our lives, but may we be open to the Spirit in the ordinary rhythms of our lives, so others might see the living presence of Jesus in the ordinary everyday moments of their days and be transformed as well.

**Let the light of God blaze forth from our lives!**