

Seventh Sunday After Epiphany  
February 19, 2012  
Ordinary Life Rhythms: Living  
2 Kings 2: 1-12, Mark 9: 2-9

This is the last Sunday on our series in which we have been exploring being open to God's presence in the ordinary rhythms of our lives – to be aware of God and to reveal God in the ordinary goings and doings of our days. Today we focus on living and hungering after God in the midst of the ordinariness of our days.

What we hunger after,  
what we desire,  
shapes our lives!

So what do we hunger after?

We are flooded by reports in the news of how our financial appetite in North America is never sated.

A small percentage, 1%, who comprise the wealthy in North America, in the world – create a disparity that affects the other 99%.

Our hunger, as Americans, for comfort, the latest conveniences – leads us to steal away more than our fair share of the world's resources.

Our hunger for oil – leads us into wars so that we might be the first in line to get our hands on that oil.

Our hunger for consumption seems to find no end  
– even if we “go green,” it seems to have little impact on curtailing our energy consumption  
– we may seem greener, but our growing demand for energy calls for us to become greater consumers of sources of power – no matter how green those sources might become  
– unless we learn to live more simply and on less.

**Our hunger knows no end – and we will consume ourselves to death.**

Jesus shares a different kind of hungering in the Sermon on the Mount: “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness/ justice, for they will be filled?”

It is more than hungering for righteousness and justice  
– it is actually a hungering for God  
– for God's righteousness,

For God's justice to shape, not only our reality, but the reality of a broken and insatiable world.

– our hungering and thirsting for righteousness also involves us praying – “your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

**There is a certain kind of boldness that is expressed through such an *alternative hungering*.**

The consumerist hungering of the world – is rooted in a **narrative of accumulation** – as Brueggemann expresses.

A narrative that describes a hungering that is always anxious because there never is enough  
– we have to get ours, and get it first  
– and as we get ours, we accumulate it, silo it, store it  
– we amass stockpiles more than we need  
– but then we need to protect our never having enough  
– and so we resort to violence to hold onto what we have  
– even take what others have.

A hungering for justice, a hungering for God’s reign, a hungering for God – is rooted in a **narrative of abundance**.

Such a narrative is a hungering that begins in trusting God who supplies all that we need  
– no matter how little or how much it is  
– for we trust God to supply all our needs according to the richness of his mercy  
– so we are able to be calm and anxiety free because we place our trust in God.

And so whatever we have is abundance enough  
– therefore, we pray for daily bread, not for our weekly bread, or our yearly bread.

In abundance, we are able to be generous, to share it with others creating community and as we break down divisions we bring about peace, rather than violence.

**Two different kinds of hungering.**

**Which kind of hungering do we want to characterize us as the people of God?**

**In responding to this question, let’s take a closer look at the prophet Elisha and the Apostle Peter this morning.**

In these accounts – of Elisha and of Peter, **there is represented these two different kinds of hungering.**

Peter,

- still reeling from the announcement in Mark 8, that Jesus must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again,”
- still stinging from the rebuke of “Get behind me Satan,” he received from Jesus, when Peter confronted Jesus saying it would not be so,
- now beholds the transfiguration of Jesus, and is fearful, frightened, overwhelmed, perhaps even confused and dumbfounded – all he can stutter out, though he dare not ask much – “shall we erect a monument to remember this moment?”

Perhaps it was a statement that had a tone of vindication, of “I knew I was right, the kingdom is coming now – so let’s memorialize it” – commodify glory, sell tickets to a spiritual spectacular  
– but, yet, somewhat frightened to say to Jesus, “I told you so!”  
– not eager to be on the receiving end of another stunning rebuke.

What he, James and John were encountering, was too strange, too weird, too incomprehensible.

And so, there is a reticence, a fear, of knowing what to do with the glory of God, which was being revealed.

Our text expresses that Peter did not know what to say because all three were so frightened.

But God invites a response – “This is my beloved Son, whom I love. Listen to him!”

What is God saying?

– “give yourself to him, hunger after him, partake of him – never let him go.”

It is not about Moses, not about Elijah, “it’s about giving all who you are to Jesus.”

It is not about setting up memorial stones, markers, tents (as ways of remembering what God has done, is doing, and will do) – making a museum of glory.

**It is not about accumulating spiritual experiences, spiritual memorials on which we can rest and reminisce.**

Rather, in God saying “Listen to my Son,” God is saying “Open your life to be in relationship with me,”

“Be open to what I want to do in you, in the life of every human being”

– It’s not about realities outside of ourselves, but **about realities that embrace us in living out the purposes of God.**

Too often I am like Peter

- unsure of going “all in” with God, with Jesus
- willing to set up some kind of marker, accumulating another memory.
- but holding access to myself back, playing it safe with God
- keeping control over my own life, just in case everything goes south in relationship with God.

“Let’s build a memorial to remember this moment – is far easier to say and do, **than**

– to confess, to hunger after being an image bearer of God’s glory, the presence of Jesus

– being a reflector and participator in all that God is doing in the world to heal the world and make the world anew.

**Yet, Elisha, represents a different kind of courage amidst the glory of God.**

Elisha just cannot be shaken off – he not only hangs onto Elijah – who clearly has the presence of God with him,

But Elisha is so bold as to ask,

“Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit.”

He dares to be bold in the presence of Elijah, the presence of God.

Such a boldness, such blatant hunger – is not arrogance,

**It is witnessing the glory of God and desiring to be filled to the brim with God,**

for God to be overflowing in our lives,

for our lives to be irrevocably transformed, “ruined” for the things of God in this world

- no longer living being in control of our lives
- no longer God’s place in us being “outside” of our lives
- but, **rather in all things we are passionate for God and live for the glory and purpose of God.**

This is Living, this is Life

- this is what we as human beings were meant for
- to live in partnership with God, to participate with God in re-creating the earth, reconciling relationships, being conspirators with God in re-creation.

Let us have the courage to embrace such hunger and desiring for God, for all that God has for us

- not for the exalting of ourselves
- but, rather to live as a new community, a new humanity, making visible the healing, death-overcoming, reality of Jesus, of God, in the world.

We live in days in which we are no longer to be shy, to be frightened and dumbfounded (like Peter)

- but, like Elisha, to ask God to pour out God’s Spirit upon us without measure
- a double portion
- receiving God’s promise, God’s inheritance in our lives
- so that we might live radically different as human beings.

What is interesting about receiving such a double portion or inheritance – is that the word for this is *kleros* – from where we derive the term *clergy*.

All of us who are inheritors of the promise of the Spirit – who hunger after the full measure of God’s glory in our lives = are the *kleros*, the clergy = we are all *clergy*

**This is how we are invited to the Table of the Lord, to participate in communion**

- not in reticence,
- not in fear,
- not in a hesitant way

- but Jesus invites us to come and share in his life at the Table
- to partake of him, to drink of him
- to be satisfied, for all our desires to be satisfied, in him!

May you and I not be afraid to ask God for the fullness of the Spirit in our lives

- not just marking the places where we see the Spirit at work in the world,

**But for the Spirit to take up residence in our lives so that we are the ones who live out the presence of God in the world.**

May our communion this morning be a celebration of this confession in our lives!