



Grain

“There’s gotta be a record of you someplace /.../ Your injured looks / The sacred and profane / The pleasure and the pain / ... / And it’s your face I’m looking for on every street. –Mark Knopfler of Dire Straights rock band, *On Every Street* Submitted by Rev. Peter Heide

Field

2 When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples³ and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?"⁴ Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see:⁵ the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them.⁶ And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."⁷ As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind?"⁸ What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces.⁹ What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. Matthew 11:2-9

Thoughts by Reverend Peter Heide, interim pastor, St. John’s Lutheran Church in Boscobel

How we think of God determines what we think about God and determines whether we can know God’s work and presence in our world today. This is John’s situation when he sends his disciples to ask Jesus, “Are you the one? Or, are we to wait for another?”

John’s expectations of God and how God will act do not quite match up with what Jesus is doing. John’s world thinks, “If God is going to come and be one of us, and God is all powerful, and God’s preference is for God’s chosen people, and God’s chosen people are being oppressed by the Romans, then God should have the power and authority to defeat the Romans and establish God’s chosen people as the rulers of the world.” Instead, Jesus tells John’s disciples that they are going to need to rethink how they think about God—not as conqueror or oppressor but as healer and worker of justice.

It is the vulnerable God that walks with us knowing our weaknesses, our disappointments, and hurts. It is the God who gives vision to the blind when they can’t physically see. It is the God who makes sure the lame travel with the rest of God’s people when they can’t walk. It is the God who speaks in the silence only the deaf can hear. It is the God who cleanses the unclean in his own blood. It is the God who forgives us when we were dead in sin and raises us up into new life. It is the God who says that poverty is not divine punishment but an opportunity for the wealthy to share.

In Advent, we come with John, in the prisons of our own limited thinking, asking, “Are you the one we wait for?” Jesus’ identity is a question for every generation. It challenges us to rethink and proclaim who God is. So, go tell what you hear and see. If you aren’t hearing anything, make some noise that proclaims Christ’s presence among us! If you aren’t seeing anything, point out God’s activity to those who are also looking! If you aren’t able to move, walk in God’s healing justice ways! Happy Monday!

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Many Blessings upon you,

Pastor Peter Heide