

6.26.22

Let the words of my mouth and the meditations
of our hearts be pleasing to you oh Lord.

Good morning, St. Benedict's! What a gift it is
to be here with you, and with those of you
joining us online. For those of you who haven't
met me. I'm Jen Crompton the community
trailblazer I use they/them pronouns and I want
to thank you all for welcoming me so
generously into this amazing community. I look

forward to learning from you as we explore together.

Today we find Jesus at a literal turning point on his journey to Jerusalem and within Luke's gospel. While Jesus was not received in the Samaritan village as James and John had expected them to be Jesus responded with calm and non-violence. Sending the disciples on to another village.

I'm not sure about you but I can relate to James and John here. Met with rejection, they

basically ask Jesus do you want us to just burn it down? I've definitely had more than one frustrating day in traffic, maybe a conversation with someone, or just a really bad day, and thought if I could only rain down holy fire life would be so much better. Maybe that's just me. Yet I appreciate Jesus' nonresponse, response here where he basically just says no and sends them away so he can get on with the work he knows he needs to do. I always read these moments between Jesus and his Disciples

with a big eye roll from Jesus. Because the disciples seem to keep missing the point.

As Jesus continues, he says. “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head”. As Jesus begins a series of what sound like caveats to discipleship, we hear the difficulty and depth of what it might mean to be a follower of Christ. We hear a list of what might be turning points or decision points in someone’s life. The death of a loved one or the need to work. To which

Jesus responds, “go and proclaim the kingdom of God”. In experiencing Jesus' turning point we can find inspiration for a world at its own crossroads where we often find ourselves with more questions than answers.

To turn towards Jerusalem and follow the path of Jesus looks different for each of us. I think this text speaks to us in a new way in our modern context. This text is calling us into a deeper understanding of discipleship and that the important work isn't taking a one size fits all

approach but making sure we are careful about the compass we use to guide us.

When I was discerning a call to ministry part of my process was to put together a ministry project. Mine was a three-part series on living our faith in the world. It started with how we experienced God in the world, then where we found ourselves encountering Jesus, and finally how do we talk about it with others. Through this work, I began to learn more about some of the spiritual and religious trauma we had all

encountered. We discussed texts like our Epistle for today and how for some they might represent freedom and a call towards joy and love while others experienced them as oppressive. That the scripture had been weaponized against them to keep them subservient in relationships or disassociated from their identities or bodies, or not allowed to truly be themselves in the way they had wanted or needed to feel whole or healthy. Maybe some of you can relate.

This discussion led us to a deeper understanding of what it meant to turn towards God in those moments, those turning points on our faith journeys. It looked different for each of us. While we each had a unique spiritual journey, we had a collective experience of community exploration and what it meant to find God at our turning points. For some that meant leaving the church, for others it meant learning more and for others, it was something completely unique. We weren't focused on an

outcome only on the journey and asking the questions. We became comfortable sitting in the question and waiting for God to meet us where we were. Sometimes that looked like moving on to a different question just as James and John moved on to a different village, even when we wanted to just throw some fire at it and walk away from the discussion. Yet, sometimes that looked like staying in the question and turning towards a new path as Jesus did on the road as he journeyed to

Jerusalem. Not clinging to an answer, response, or outcome just as Jesus responds he does not have a place to lay his head.

This text is calling us to do the hard work of diving deeper into our faith and looking through the lens of our teachings and values as we walk through the world. What does it mean to be in the world as a Christian and walk the path as a disciple of Christ? Today's lessons and gospel give us some insight into that. It's not just words but a turning, an action, a call to act and

move towards Jerusalem and the cross that would ultimately be the sacrifice of Jesus for us all. What are the acts and actions we are taking in our everyday lives to walk the path with Christ to move beyond words and move the needle towards justice?

My hope and prayer for us all is that we continue to listen for God at our turning points, moved to action as we walk with Christ in the week ahead. Amen