

## **Light in the Darkness**

Lent IV March 22, 2020

Ephesians 5: 8-14

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John 9: 1-41

This week I heard a story that was a little disturbing. A minister in a rural congregation, received an e-mail from the local ministerial which included evangelical conservative and fundamentalist churches. The e-mail was inviting all to gather for a prayer vigil to confess all our sins which has led to this pandemic so that we can be forgiven and the pandemic would be brought to an end!

This is the kind of view that the disciples had in their question to Jesus: “Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus’ answer was very clear neither of them sinned. There is not a cause and effect link between sin and what happens to us. Too often we can go there and it is not the message or understanding of Jesus. Jesus goes on to say that there is an opportunity for God’s works to be revealed in him. The Message Bible translates it as “look instead for what God can do”. As we move through this challenging time of the pandemic, look for what God can do through us and others. When I read this passage for the first time this week, I was struck cold by the words in verse 4: “we must work the works of God who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work.” It must feel like a dark time for many of us, both those who cannot work and those of us whose work has intensified.

It is important to note that darkness is not synonymous with evil. It is often the place of gestation and growth. People have feared the darkness as it can be dangerous, but so can the light, as it can be blinding, overpowering, or overwhelming. Darkness can be restful and beautiful. When it gets dark and we take time to let our eyes adjust, we can begin to see and know where to go. As we adjust to this time, what will we see as we live in this so-called darkness, where will it lead us in new ways and different opportunities? The way we are gathered today is a result of being forced to worship in a different way. Immediately after Jesus talks about the night and no one coming, he uses one of the I AM statements that describes the Divine. He says I am the light of the world. The passage in Ephesians names that now that we are in the Lord, we are children of light. The light of Christ carries on in us. As we live in the light of Christ, we can be light to those especially feeling the darkness. We can show

what God can do or how God can be revealed through us. We can also seek out that support. If you are not feeling that light let us know and we will find ways to offer you support and be light for you through this time. Jesus gave sight to the blind man, giving him light and a new perspective on life. The whole story plays out what God's glory, what God has revealed, looks like as the one healed testifies to his experience. He tries to convince the Pharisees of his experience as they continue to question him, gains confidence and even jokes with them or mocks them, when he asks them "do you want to become his disciples?". In the end of the story he finally declares his faithfulness to Jesus- Lord, I believe.

Others in the story did not see the light, refused to listen and see what was before them. As a result, they could not understand what had happened, convincing themselves that this was not the same blind man. How can we show God's glory, what work of God might be revealed through us, to see what God can do through us? There are many who are vulnerable to the disease and many who may be left on the margins because of their context, the poor, the homeless, the abused, Indigenous people on reserves, the refugees turned away at the borders, those living in war torn countries like Syria, and many others. Will those in need see your light? Where have you seen God's light or how have you been God's light this week? If you have thoughts to share, feel free to enter them into the chat box. I have seen God's light in the neighbourhood thanking the health care workers on the street, with social distancing, as they banged pots, made noise and shared it on social media.

I have seen God's light in members of our church calling people, delivering announcements, and delivering groceries for a friend.

I have seen God's light in Amanda offering to run errands for those in social isolation this week.

I have seen God's light in making someone's day through a simple phone call.

Add from chat...

The reading in Ephesians reminds us that Jesus calls us to live as children of light, rousing from our spiritual sleep to expose that darkness for what it is. Sometimes we need to gestate in the darkness and allow things to grow, and things need light to grow. It resonates with a poem that was shared on social media this week, written by Kate O'Meara in light of the pandemic:

And the people stayed home. And read books, and listened, and rested, and exercised, and made art, and played games, and learned new ways of being,

and were still. And listened more deeply. Some meditated, some prayed, some danced. Some met their shadows. And the people began to think differently.

And the people healed. And, in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways, the earth began to heal.

And when the danger passed, and the people joined together again, they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed.

May we seek the light as we find ourselves in darkness. May we be light for others through this darkness. May we do our best to keep community even as we keep social distance, using the tools before us, that people may see what God can do through us.