

“Jesus Knows You” (and He’s No Fool)

April 7, 2019

Matthew 26:31-35

(These are my thoughts for Sunday’s sermon concerning “being known by Jesus”)

Don’t be too hard on Peter, or the other disciples. We read the whole story of Jesus and his disciples, and when it comes to this point of the story, many of us are troubled, deeply disappointed in them and distressed by what happens to Jesus. Think about this....if you put yourselves in the disciples place, completely aware of the danger you’re in, would you behave differently? To be honest.....would I? I mean, I don’t doubt the sincerity of Jesus’s disciples, nor Peter’s passion when they were emphatic about their loyalty to Jesus. Yet, when the cloud of doom descended, they ran away.....leaving Jesus behind....set up by the leaders of his faith....humiliated, tortured, standing alone, mocked and sentenced to death....and....you know the end of the story.

The title for today is “Jesus Knows You.” I’m tempted to ask, “Do you really like the idea that Jesus really knows you?” I won’t. Instead, if you think about this moment and about the entire gospel story, you’ll find that there’s some reassurance here for us. Jesus does know you, and - he’s okay with you. Why do I think this way? (think about how we make many vows and then remember our baptismal vows which are reaffirmed when we are confirmed into membership)

On behalf of the whole Church, I ask you: Do you renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of this world, and repent of your sin?

I do.

Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves?

I do.

Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Savior, put your whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as your Lord, in union with the Church which Christ has opened to people of all ages, nations, and races?

I do.

According to the grace given to you, will you remain faithful members of Christ's holy Church and serve as Christ's representatives in the world?

I will.

Of all the vows we’ve taken in this life.... Clubs and fraternities, to government and public office, military, marriage....a lot of vows....our first is at our baptism...then repeated when we join church...vows of discipleship, vows to live our lives as faithful disciples of Jesus....and...**it ain’t always easy.** In fact, I doubt that many remember or think about those vows unless some old preach comes out and reminds us. How well do we keep our vows, especially our baptismal vows.... Which really are vows of discipleship....that we will follow Jesus.

Since I’ve retired, I have a lot of time to think about this things outside of preparing to preach...to think about these gospels...not In verses or chapters, but as those early Christian when they heard the stories of Jesus... and it was the stories that impacted them. So, I’ve been thinking about Jesus and his disciples. And, I’ve been wondering a lot about what did he in his first 30 years of life.

In the gospel of Mark, we quickly learned that his home was in Capernaum. It was at his home that a lot of people, including religious teachers. Remember about that story...when a paralytic was delivered by four friend and saw the crowd. There were so many that in order to get the paralytic to Jesus, they tore a hole in the Roof of Jesus’ house to get the paralytic down....Jesus was concerned about healing and we never thought about his roof..... I’ve been thinking....His home was by Galilee...a village of fishermen and contractors who made mill stones to press olives for oil. He had neighbors. He did his business there. He had friends...he knew people...and some of them, those he knew well, he invited to follow him – be his disciples. He knew Judas and invited him. He knew Peter, and the sons of Peter’s boss (perhaps) James and John. He knew their temperaments and their character...and their flaws and he still invited them. These were good people....flawed.....some weak and some terribly opinionated... There were a couple who felt a bit more important than others in that group while others were surprised to be called. He called them to follow him and...he taught them how to love in a way that it carried them beyond the laws that crippled relationships.

And...as we continue to read about them and their journey with Jesus, we see that they continued to be surprised by him... This morning's lesson happens just after they've eaten. It was a depressing meal for them because Jesus talked about his betrayal, talked about what was going to happen....then shared the bread and the wine...and sang a hymn together....and then took a walk to the Mount of Olives. They were together...Jesus knew them....hand-picked them anyway....andthey ran away anyway...afraid. So much for vows, eh? It's easy to be angry with them. Yet, the miracle of Easter was this....when he came back, what were his first words to them?... "Do not be afraid!" (afraid of what? Romans? Or a very angry Jesus?) Jesus knew them very well and he still loved them...and insisted that they continue to be his disciples and teach this world how to love like Jesus loves. Think about it, Jesus did not come back angry, instead insistent about the transforming power of love.

This is our call. To follow the one who knows us...and loves us anyway. This is our good news. This is how God loves us. Jesus knows you. Knows all about you so you don't have to pretend...don't have to be afraid, because he loves you anyway.... Maybe, thinking about this Lenten theme, the "Shadow Jesus" is about how we can become the shadows of Jesus....that folks can see Jesus in how we love....

All of you are invite to his table this morning. Come, accept his invitation and join the walk in the Son.