

Sermon

2.4.24

Year B 5th Sunday Epiphany

Good Morning, St. Dunstan Family!

Good Morning to our online family!

I am so glad that you are in this **place**, whether that is here in physical form or choosing to be here virtually, online! Welcome, Welcome!

Is there a special place in your life that whenever you think about it, whenever this particular spot just crosses your mind, your heart breaks into this huge smile?

That is called a 'Happy place.'

You may have heard this phrase before now. I get really curious about how words begin so I love the study of words. This has a specific name. It is called etymology, which is the study of the origin and history of words. Confession is good for the soul, I've heard. We'll be talking a lot more about that in the coming weeks, but I have a confession. Sometimes, I get my words mixed up. Here are two words that give me pause. Etymology and Entomology. Entomology is the study of insects. Two vastly different subjects. So, don't get them mixed up. Anyway, I digress.

Just so you know-

The 'Happy Place' etymology? It's earliest known use of the noun is found way back in the 1990s.

Oxford English Dictionary traces the earliest evidence for happy place from 1994, in the Ottawa Citizen, daily newspaper in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

Another definition of Happy Place is the:

mental visualization of a pleasant location, to avoid thinking or dealing with something unpleasant or painful.

We are ALWAYS someplace.

Today we are diving into 3 different places found in our Gospel reading of Mark 1: 29-39.

In these 10 verses, I counted up 6 or maybe 7 different places mentioned.

Interestingly enough, v. 29 mentions the synagogue and closes in v. 39 with the place of the synagogue.

*v.29 [When Jesus and the disciples] left the synagogue*

The architectural evidence reveals that synagogues of the early Roman period were places of community, made for listening and discussing. Recent archeology discoveries of synagogues in the area of the Galilee find they had colorful frescoed walls, beautiful painted columns, and intricate mosaic floors. Here in the synagogue, the Jews would gather together to study the Torah, God's word. They would sing psalms and pray together.

*V.39 And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues*

What does that tell us? Jesus and friends were always gathering together like we are now, listening to God's Word, hearing the Psalms, and praying.

Sounds like we are right on track for some terrific spiritual formation!

Scripture here mentions 3 specific places.

A private place, a public place, and an unknown place.

V, 29-31, after leaving the synagogue, Jesus visits the house of Simon and Andrew. In tow are the 'Brothers of Thunder' James and John. When my kids were younger, often they would bring friends over to the house. Young people were often coming and going. It was important for me to have some type of snacks for those young growing bodies.

Mark mentions in his writing that Simon's mother in law was ill, she had a fever.

How does one get a mother-in-law? Last time I checked, the only way to get a mother-in-law is to be married.

Then a question arises? How does Mark know Simon Peter is married? And for that matter, where does Mark get all this information?

The authorship of the Gospels is a matter of considerable debate amongst skeptics and critics of the New Testament canon. Mark's Gospel is an early record of Jesus' life, ministry, death, and resurrection, but Mark isn't mentioned as an eyewitness in any of the Gospel

accounts. How did Mark get his information about Jesus? There are several historical clues. I won't take time to mention all of them. So, here's one.

Justin Martyr, an early father of our faith, wrote "Dialogue with Trypho" in approximately 150AD.

Okay Mtr. Leesa so what is 'The Dialogue with Trypho?' It is a discussion in which Justin tries to prove the truth of Christianity to a learned Jew named Trypho.

And included in this interesting passage is a clue to our earlier question, *where does Mark get all this information.*

"It is said that he [Jesus] changed the name of one of the apostles to Peter; and it is written in his memoirs that he changed the names of others, two brothers, the sons of Zebedee, to "Boanerges", which means 'sons of thunder'...."

Interesting to note, Justin, therefore, identified a particular Gospel as the 'memoir' of Peter and said this memoir described the sons of Zebedee as the 'sons of thunder'. Only Mark's Gospel describes John and James in this way, so it is reasonable to assume that the Gospel of Mark is the memoir of Peter.

Whew!

There is so much I want to share with you!

The private place, Jesus ministered was in the bedroom at the home of Andrew & Simon-Peter. They told Jesus she was sick and in bed so what does Jesus do? He came and took her hand.

Often, Jesus physically touched people. Peter's mother-in-law literally felt the hand of God. Then what happens. V. 31, she began to serve them. Imagine if you have the gift of hospitality, there are a house full of people and you can't help your guests. Jesus knew her core desire. He met her in a private place and healed her heart.

V.32 That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. 33 And the whole city was gathered together at the door. 34 And he healed many who were sick with various diseases and cast out many demons. And he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

V. 33 tells us "the whole city was gathered together at the door."

Doors are for the public to come in and out.

Many Episcopal churches, as well as Lutheran, Methodist, Roman Catholic, and others, paint their doors **red** to symbolize that they are a haven for emotional and spiritual healing and a place for forgiveness and reconciliation. There has been much speculation on why doors are painted red. One such reason through the believing that churches are not 'social clubs for saints,' but are actually 'functioning hospitals for sinners'. So, just as hospitals display a **red** cross, churches use **red** doors to announce that we are a place of healing and restoration.

I did find this curious, v. 32 says,

At sundown they brought to him **all** who were sick or oppressed by demons

Then in v.34 the scripture says,

And he healed **many** who were sick with various diseases and cast out **many** demons.

Notice, it does not say **ALL were healed**.

**All** came but **many** were healed.

were and some were not. I don't know why **All** were not healed.

Finally in Mark 1:35,

he got up and went out to **a deserted place**, and there he prayed.

When I study, I like to read different translations, different versions. This word 'deserted' has been interpreted in a variety of ways:

**Desolate, lonely, secluded, quiet.**

The point is, Jesus went to an unknown **place** to be alone and have time with God. For some of you, the most secluded place you can find is the shower, for others of you it may be a park, the woods or out on the lake. I think the fact we need to know, if it was important enough for Jesus to find a quiet place to spend time in prayer then it must be extremely important for us to do the same.

The Gospel of Mark here in chapter 1 writes of Jesus being present in 3 different places:

The private place of a bedroom at the home of Simon Peter.

The public place of the front door opening out into the community.

And an unknown, isolated place- where Simon and friends actually searched out or rather 'hunted' for Jesus.

Knowing that we are ALWAYS someplace,  
my question for you is this:

**Where will Jesus find you?**

Or another way to phrase this:

**What place will you seek Jesus?**