

Pete Campola

From: Jodi Haier [jodester32@twcny.rr.com]
Sent: Friday, October 21, 2005 10:59 AM
To: jodester32@twcny.rr.com
Subject: A little something different

I will be away at licensing school and our devotions will return on Mon. I've included a portion of my bulletin and my sermon. I'll be doing this in front of my peers(pastors-to-be). Pray for me. Also pray for Bill Miller as he goes on his Walk to Emmaus. Pray for Val and the boys as Kevin is in Atlanta. Thanks.

Included is an outline to be used for personal notes on the sermon. It is referred to in the sermon. Use as you will. It takes me about 10 minutes to read the whole thing out loud. It is not as long as it looks. Blessings-Jodi

I A Place of Holy Mystery

A. History

1. Nain_____
2. Gate_____
3. Time of Life_____

B. Defining Holy Mystery

1. Different Texts_____
2. Communion & Baptism_____
3. Who is Jesus? _____

II Worship as Holy Mystery

A. God at work among us

1. Fulfillment of needs_____
2. teaching, correcting not mysticism_____
3. movement & growth_____

B. Quiet Reverence

1. Awe_____
2. Knowing the size of God_____
3. Understanding our relationship with God_____

C. Noisy Gratitude

1. Release_____
2. Freedom_____

A Place of Holy Mystery

October 21, 2005

Greeting

Gathering Words (Psalm 90) (Abingdon's Worship Annual)

L: God, we know you are with us.

P: From everlasting to everlasting you are God.

L: You have showered your love upon all generations, since the beginning of time.

P: From everlasting to everlasting you are God.

L: Guide us now through this time of worship, and into the week ahead.

P: From everlasting to everlasting you are God.

Song: How Great Thou Art (#17 UMH)

Scripture Reading: Luke 7: 11 - 16 (The Message p. 1866-7)

Not long after that, Jesus went to the village Nain. His disciples were with him, along with quite a large crowd. As they approached the village gate, they met a funeral procession - a woman's only son was being carried out for burial. And the mother was a widow. When Jesus saw her, his heart broke. He said to her, "Don't cry." Then he went over and touched the coffin. The pallbearers stopped. He said, "Young man, I tell you: Get up." The dead son sat up and began talking. Jesus presented him to his mother.

They all realized they were in a place of holy mystery, that God was at work among them. They were quietly worshipful - and then noisily grateful, calling out among themselves, "God is back, looking to the needs of his people!"



*Surgat hic, ut tuum vocet iudex unicus Surgat! Occidit
Cum nos a vitio ducere Christus iubet -
Ergo sumus plus est amissionem reddere vitam:
Plus nullius hinc ergo morte verere imbutum
O Christus tuum dicitur! De magis der Sündling leben
De Licht sollen wir: dicit auf: de rufft auch Gott.
Das Leben ist mit, können wir zu geben
Gott ist nicht dergest, als der Seelen anderer Welt.*

Message for Today

A Place of Holy Mystery

October 21, 2005 (LPLS)

Imagine, if you will, the scene depicted in the scripture and artistically rendered in your bulletin. Three crowds of people meet at the gate of the village, Nain. Nain means pleasant or delightful. Notice that this place isn't historic, exceptional or phenomenal. It is merely pleasant, average, unassuming. People lead "normal" lives here. The mourners are leaving "pleasant" Nain in their grief and Jesus and Company are coming to this town of delights with curiosity. Besides the two crowds:

Jesus, Disciples and Many people (right)

Widow, Pall Bearers, family members, friends, mourners (left)

We have a third crowd at this transition area. This is a mixing of all classes: guards, merchants and other travelers. Can you see the gate, hear the sounds of merchants and mourners, smell the sheer presence of people on the move? Can you taste the expectation?

The gate itself is a symbol of transition. The people leaving the city are leaving their everyday lives, the safety of their homes and businesses to face the bitter reality of death. The people entering the city are looking for rest and peace, comfort and food, and an end to their travels for the day. Those perched at the gate are in the middle of their lives, expectantly watching what will happen as these crowds collide.

Transition also marks the time of life for both Jesus and the widow. The woman has already lost her husband and now she has lost her only son. (Some translations even say only child) All of her hopes and dreams have died with this young man. His death really marks hers as well. She has no one to give her the value of a name. She will be on the fringe of society.

Jesus is early in his ministry. People are wondering what role Jesus will play. Disciples of John the Baptist are about to question his very identity. He has healed people already. What authority does this man really have?

So we have set the stage. This place of Holy Mystery is about transition. However I think it is about more than the uncertainty of change. Jesus performs a miracle by giving the woman her son back. I can hear the ripple of gasps, shouts and whispers as the news spreads. Then verse 16 starts with "The crowds suddenly realized they were in a place of holy mystery." Other texts do not include that phrase. Will anyone read verse 16 from their bible?

Notice that "holy mystery" is equated with fear and awe. I think of what frightens me: ignorance, desperation, violence, unexpected dramas, and loud noises. None of these things sound like holy mystery. I think that, in terms of "holy mystery," we are not talking about the first clap of thunder but the sheer magnitude of a living God. Here is a man that can reverse death. Imagine the shuffling of the crowd. What power! I can't understand the hows and whys of his action. I won't be able to control this man.

"Holy mystery" has also been attached to both the sacraments: baptism and communion. These sacred rites are

when Jesus fills the space between man and God. He acts as a bridge between what we are capable of by ourselves and what we are capable of with the Holy Spirit. Yes, this embodies that same feeling of “holy mystery.”

My favorite understanding of holy mystery lies in the question, “Who is Jesus?” The people want to know. The disciples want to know. When asked Jesus will respond with a list of his actions.

“Are you the Messiah?”

“Well, this is what I’ve done.” What do Jesus’ actions tell us? What about Jesus’ actions today?

Are they telling the same story?

How can we experience this holy mystery during our worship?

First, we will see God working among us. We will see people’s needs being met: healings, saving grace, forgiveness, freedom and joy will be evident. Take a moment to write down evidence of God working amongst us.

Next, Jesus taught the people about compassion and change. He corrected their understanding of death. He wasn’t about magic and mysticism. Jesus simply asked the woman not to weep over her loss and then asked the man to “Get up.” There wasn’t a ritual or payment, incantation or trick. Jesus taught through action and love. Make a note of the teaching that is happening in your life.

There was movement and growth. The entire setting is about transition. But Jesus brought order to the chaos; he unified the crowd towards one purpose. He added meaning where before there was confusion. After this miracle no one’s life would be the same. Jot down the purpose Jesus has brought into your life.

Verse 16 continues by saying the crowds gave glory to God through quiet worship. What about our worship gives you a sense of awe? Is it enough to still our restless minds? Do we take time to reflect, meditate and pray to establish a peaceful reunion with God? Write down an idea that will inspire your awe.

We tend to limit God to ideas we can understand and control. Jesus showed at Nain that God is beyond our frame of reference. I have preached on praying as big as God. What goal of yours is so large that only a Giant Loving God could fulfill it? Make a note about the size of God.

If God is speaking in a small, still voice, would the average person hear the miracle? Everyone in the crowd knew what Jesus said and did and he didn’t even have to shout. Do we understand this intimate relationship with a living God to the point where we will quiet ourselves and listen? On the line, make a note of the amount time in a day that you are quiet with God.

After the moment of quiet reverence the crowd erupted with the joy of thanksgiving. They were noisily grateful. Does our worship reflect noisy gratitude? Do we clap and sing, dance and connect? Jesus conquers death! What a release from fear and bitterness and loss! What has God released you from that makes you want to shout?

Jesus has freed us from the restraints of ordinary life and death. We have the freedom to be the children of God that we were created to be. Jesus is telling us that we are at the gates and we have the freedom to rise beyond the disappointments and little deaths in our lives. What are you free to do with the life in Christ you have been given? Make a note.

A place of holy mystery: we enter it anytime we encounter Jesus. As we gather in His name, let us pray...

O Lord, My God- When I in Awesome Wonder consider all the worlds thy hands have made, I tremble. Help us anticipate the workings of your will on our lives. Help us to be still when we need to listen and let us shout for joy at the blessings in our lives. Lead us through each transition with thought and promise. Thank you for the freedom and forgiveness we have found through your son. He has once again resurrected the dead spots in our lives. Thank you for the intimate relationship of prayer that was given to us through Jesus, the Risen One. Amen

Song Prayer of St. Francis (Emmaus Songbook #44)

Make me a channel of your peace,
Where there is hatred let me bring your love,
Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord,
And where there's doubt, true faith in you,
Make me a channel of your peace,
Where there's despair in life let me bring hope,
Where there is darkness, only light,
And where there's sadness, ever joy,
O Master grant that I may never seek,
So much to be consoled as to console,
To be understood as to understand,
To be loved, as to love with all my soul!
Make me a channel of your peace,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
In giving to all men that we receive,
And in dying that we're born to eternal, life,
And in dying that we're born to eternal, life

Dismissal: (Abingdon's Worship Annual)

L: Go celebrate the God who is our home forever.

P: God's love goes with us!

L: Go to follow Christ's example in loving God, self, and neighbor.

P: God's love goes with us!

L: Go with the Holy Spirit to change the world with love.

P: God's love goes with us!