

Epiphany 2, 2008
St. Luke's, Renton
Kevin Pearson, Preacher

Jesus turned to the disciples and asked, "What are you looking for?" "For what are you searching?"

They responded, "Where are you staying?" "Where do you abide?"

Jesus invites, "Come and see."

These could be mundane questions. We ask and answer such questions about our whereabouts, comings and goings all of the time. These could be friends or acquaintances hooking up for a night of fun. The Jesus of John's gospel, however, is ever drawing people to deeper layers and levels of awareness, and he surely means more than meets the eye. Like a good spiritual teacher, Jesus invites the disciples onto a path, onto a pilgrimage of deeper and deeper faith by awakening a question within them. What are you searching for?" "What do you seek?"

David Whyte says in a poem called "Sometimes"

Sometimes
if you move carefully
through the forest ...

you come
to a place
whose only task

is to trouble you
with tiny
but frightening requests

conceived out of nowhere
but in this place
beginning to lead everywhere.

Requests to stop what
you are doing right now,
and

to stop what you
are becoming
while you do it,

questions
that can make
or unmake
a life,

questions

that have patiently
waited for you,
questions
that have no right
to go away.

At a certain point along the pilgrimage of faith the question gets asked of us, “What are you searching for?” It is a question that has been patiently waiting for us. A question that has no right to go away.

The invitation of Jesus is to “Come and see.” Come along on the journey of faith, open your eyes, your mind, your heart. Open your life up to the questions for which you have no satisfying answer. “Come and see” is an invitation to wonder. That is what the children of this parish are learning in *Godly Play*. They are invited to wonder about the stories of our faith, “What might that have been like?” “What might that mean?” Rather than an indoctrination of quick answers, they and their leaders are learning to live with the questions, asking and wondering and trying out different possibilities. Wondering invites dialogue and conversation and openness and a willingness to differ.

How counter this is to our times among the body politic where we are taught to hunger for certitude. People want the quick answer and fear the time of waiting and wondering. The certitudes of “the bottom line”, “black and white”, “win or lose” rule the day, flatten life, and they bring violence to the human family. The quick decision, even if it is the wrong decision, is better than indecision, it seems. (repeat)

Not so in the spiritual quest—the journey to deeper layers of faith.

What do you seek? Where do *you* dwell? Come and see.

The spiritual questions invite our discipleship, our following of Jesus on the path of faith, and the questions lead us along the way. “Come and see” is no kind of answer to those seeking to know where Jesus’ lives, where his heart rests. It’s no kind of answer, but it is a profound invitation.

Looking back, my spiritual journey began when I was quite young. But I was in my early 20’s when the way of faith became more of a chosen path. I studied and I read, trying to be informed. I engaged a faith community where I was welcomed. But all the while I was riding the fence, not sure of stepping onto the path squarely. And then one day my priest simply said, “Oh, Kevin, why don’t you join us?”

That was both a question waiting patiently for me and it was an invitation—an invitation to come and see. For the next 25 years, I came and I saw, and though I’ve traveled great distances on that journey, there are new insights each day. The road just continues to get longer and I’ve long realized that the goal is not getting to the end, but savoring the way. A way WH Auden described in his poem “For the time being.”

He is the Way.
Follow Him through the Land of Unlikeness;
You will see rare beasts, and have unique adventures.

He is the Truth.



Seek Him in the Kingdom of Anxiety;
You will come to a great city that has expected your return for years.

He is the Life.
Love Him in the World of the Flesh;
And at your marriage all its occasions shall dance for joy.