

Intro Hook:

Someone told me this week that in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis they have all the time in the world, and no time at all.

Today is Palm Sunday the first day of Holy Week as we enter a time in which we retell the story of Jesus arriving at the capital as the long-awaited liberator and then before week's end being publicly executed at the behest of the formerly adoring crowds...who by Friday shout for his crucifixion. As we read the gospel of Mark we've seen that increasingly people suspect and identify who Jesus is... "you are the Son of David" – "you are the promised one" – "You are the Messiah" – Those who have truly seen him have followed him, joining him as disciples to walk his Way.

Mark 11:1-11

Here as he arrives at the capital we see that he is in control. He sends out to disciples to prepare things. He knows what's going to happen – in terms of the colt and the crowd – and sets it all up. He comes from the Mount of Olives – which in prophetic writings was where the Messiah would lead the hosts of heaven to destroy the enemy of God's people. He crafts his entrance to reflect prophetic words and symbolic actions from the Prophets and Psalm 118. The crowds shout Hosanna! "Save us now!" as they clamor for a leader to Make Israel Great Again by restoring the kingly line of David, taking the people back in time to a better time.

After the procession, Jesus enters the town and then the Temple – where he should let loose his revolution, proclaim his intentions and plans...and Mark tells us that Jesus looks around at everything, and then goes back to shelter with his friends because it was late.

What? That's not how it's supposed to be? Where's the take no prisoners butt-kicking of the bad guys? Where's the liberation of the poor? Where's the reformation of the Temple?

It's as if Jesus has all the time in the world to set things up and no time at all to get things done. *all the time in the world, and no time at all.*

Mark 14:3-9

Our second reading tells the tale of a dinner that happens just a few days later. Here too the disciples seem focused on what they expect, how Jesus will Make Israel Great Again – and perhaps what positions of power they'll have in the revolution as the insiders. Enter this woman who is an outsider. We know her from the enormity of the gift that she gives: anointing oil/nard that is worth a year's salary. It might have been precious family heirloom meant for a special moment, a unique time.... for how else could she have saved so much?

She alone recognizes that the Way of Jesus will lead to his death. And so she walks his way, using the time that she has to do what she must – to participate in the work of Jesus bringing about justice from a place of love.

The disciples don't get it...they're either blinded by their activist anger, frustrated that things aren't moving along faster, or withdrawing from the world, unable, or unwilling to deal with

it.....we could have given this money to the poor! Their indignation seems to be more of an excuse to not do anything, an avoiding of responsibility by looking elsewhere.

Jesus names her sacrifices, recognizes that she as the ultimate outsider – an uninvited woman, who came without her husband, who has no name – in the only one who gets it. *Jesus came to give his life as a ransom for many. The first shall be last and the last first.*

She is remembered because of what she did – she recognized that she had all the time in the world, and no time at all – and she acted. She Walked the Way of Jesus.

Closing Invitation

We are always challenged by walking the way of Jesus – loving others as God love us – even our enemies. Turning the other cheek to recognize that the injustice we are experiencing may be simply the paying forward of injustice already visited upon others. We have to look around and under what is in front of us to see what is. Throughout the gospel it's the last ones – the little ones – the unclean – the least of these – that see Jesus for who he is – the blind, this woman, the bleeding woman, children, foreigners...

Their eyes were opened – they saw – and they followed, walking with Jesus in his Way.

Today we're wrestling with a seemingly new world – marked by social distance and economic collapse, we're surrounded by people but feel alone, we have all that we need and yet hoard out of fear of poverty, we have all the time in the world, and no time at all.

It'd be easy for us to get lost choosing the way of blinding activist anger mired in frustration and burnout, (why is this happening? Who is to blame?)

Or the way of passive withdrawal from the world of the praying hermit, letting things happen waiting for what eventually shakes out.

But Jesus calls us – even in this season of COVID-19 – to pick up our cross and follow after him in the Way. To choose love over fear. To respond with grace rather than react with indignation. To love our neighbor as God has first loved us.

How will your discipleship shape the way you interact with others at work, in your home as you shelter-in-place, on the phone or on zoom? How you relate to friends, family and strangers? How you use this time in which a day feels like a week and yet we don't know what we did during that day?

The gospel of Mark starts with an invitation to walk the Way of Jesus which defies our expectations, demands our participation, and blows away our imagination with love deeper than we've ever known and grace more abundant than we could ever imagine.

“The time is now. The Kingdom is here. Change your life and believe in the good news.” (Mark 1:15)