

**A Sermon Preached at The Church of the Resurrection
March 22, 2020
The Fourth Sunday in Lent
John 9: 1-49**

I honestly am not sure what to say to you other than I love you and God loves you. I hope you will bear with me as we do our very best to make the life of the church work, just in a different way. God is here, God is good and God loves us.

Just to give you a little perspective on how much life has changed in just a few short weeks, four weeks ago was Transfiguration Sunday, we were on the mountaintop with Jesus and remember the words of Peter's to Jesus: "Lord, it is good for us to be here." Those words remind me that we are not alone, we are a community, even when things look and feel different.

Three weeks ago, we were in the wilderness with Jesus and we believed, even though it seemed hard, even at that time, that God is with us when we, too, are in the wilderness.

Two weeks ago we stood fast in sacred hope the truth that this world, this messy and imperfect and chaotic world, is the world that

Jesus came into, the world that God believed was worth saving. Last week, we were listening to Bishop Curry as he helped us understand Jesus' meeting at the well with the Samaritan woman. Specifically, we go on to hear the story of his grandmother and aunt singing, Jesus Loves Me, in the time of despair, sadness and even death. This week, Jesus encounters a man who is blind and can now see. Jesus gives hope to the hopeless, faith to the faithfulness and strength in Him.

Remember that it is good for us to be here. Even though "here" is not necessarily together, it is good for us to be here. It is good for us to be gathering in this virtual space, to be connecting in a way that we are able and to be worshiping God even though we are scared and anxious and not really sure what the future will hold.

Remember that God is with us in this wilderness that we have found ourselves in. That we have not been abandoned. That there are angels with us, no matter what they might look like, be it a friend who texts us an encouraging message when we are at the end of our rope or a neighbor who runs errands for someone who is

high-risk and should not be out and about or a fellow patron who lets you have the last roll of toilet paper at the store.

Remember that this is the world that Jesus came into. This world, this messy and imperfect and chaotic. This world that is currently facing a global pandemic world, is the world that Jesus came into, the world that God believes is worth saving, the world whose story is scary right now, but not over yet.

Our faith grounds us in a way that gives us strength, courage, wisdom, clarity and patience. Many of us wonder how we are supposed to handle what is happening in our world right now, but I truly believe that our faith will carry us through in so many different ways.

Now we have to wait. We have to wait in this moment of uncertainty, in this moment of fear, in this moment of anxiety. Yet, Jesus' promise that He tells the woman at the well is still true for us. This promise that we can drink of this living water and never be thirsty again. This promise that we have hope in salvation. This promise that we can worship God in spirit and truth even if we are

doing so virtually while practicing social distancing during a global pandemic. This promise that we, too, can proclaim the truth about Jesus, with others believing because of our testimony.

While it might look different than in the past, now is the time to do church. Now is the time to hold fast to our faith. Now is the time to believe in what we cannot see, to shine light into the darkness of the world and to believe that God will make order out of this chaos. Now is the time to, like the woman at the well, leave our empty buckets behind and go tell the world about this promise. And then show the world what it means.

Our lives have been turned upside down, and the scary and unsettling part right now is that we are not reacting to something that has happened and is in the past, we are living through something that is still happening and we are unsure how long it will last. But remember, we are still encountering Jesus-everyday, sometimes in new ways.

This hope has only gotten stronger over the past week as I witnessed people on social media or reaching out to me about ways

that we can all help one another through this pandemic. People offering to run errands for their neighbors who are the most at-risk, to donate food to the food pantry and to send cards to the elderly in assisted living with restricted visitation policies.

I want to remind you all to breathe. To take care of yourself, physically, but also emotionally and mentally. Go outside, get some fresh air. Reach out to someone if you are starting to feel isolated and anxious. And then let us do church. In a way that is safe and accessible, let us take care of the most vulnerable during this time. Even if it is just sending a card or picking up the phone and calling some of our older members who do not have internet access, that will make a difference.

And pray. Pray for health and safety. Pray for wisdom and guidance. Pray for patience and encouragement. Pray for strength and relief from the loneliness you might feel. Remember that you are loved by me and most importantly by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.