

May 28, 2017, 7th Sunday of Easter

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Following Christ. Serving Everyone.

Gospel Lesson: Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

Who wants to be a millionaire? Remember that game show from a few years back where each knowledge question takes the contestant to the next level. The more certain you are of all categories of information, the farther you progress toward the prize—one million dollars; that final treasure that says that you have made it. The crowd goes wild, cheering you on and your mind races to think of all the things you can buy with that cool million! You have achieved the mission impossible! You have proven yet again....as great game show winners before you...**knowledge is power.**

And we do quest for knowledge, don't we?

We surround ourselves with books; list our educational accomplishments on our resumes, and marvel at the amount of pure, raw information that the web provides at our fingertips. Anyone who has surfed the web looking for a specific piece of information has undoubtedly spent uncountable hours of their life clicking and scrolling through list after list of hits through blurred eyes; Many of my web-surfing adventures have left me frustrated, but more often, they have left me overwhelmed in pure, amazed bewilderment at the amount of knowledge there is out there in cyberspace. You know the old adage, "The more we learn, the more we learn how little we know."

Perhaps you, too, have encountered the feeling evoked by this old adage hitting home; the overwhelming sense of smallness when confronted with the truth that there is just too much knowledge to comprehend. ..the paralysis of frustration.

Today's gospel lesson pulls us out of a world where knowledge and certainty guarantee a treasure and reward and into the lurking shades of gray. It is as if the thought to be solid rock crumbles beneath our feet with each step. Just when we think we have it figured out, wham, someone with all the knowledge changes it; someone other than you, holds all the cards.

This morning, Jesus—through the pages of scripture—invites us to step through to the world where things are hidden from the wise only to be revealed to infants and children; those who are supposedly the least knowledgeable.

In the world of Jesus, the lame walk, the blind see, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the lepers are cleansed, the poor get something...good news and the undeserving get promises, people like you and me. Human logic just doesn't get it. Let's reach back into our childhoods; remember *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C. S. Lewis, where by walking through an ordinary coat closet, the children find themselves in a strange new world? Or maybe you remember *The Wizard of Oz* where through a tornado, Dorothy of Kansas is transported to a place over the rainbow called Oz where trees talk and monkeys fly. Though made in different years, these movies all play with a common

theme. Call it relativism, post-modernity or individualism...it means the same thing. What seems certain is up for grabs. You know, what we really long for, what we really thirst for, what we really seek, is truth.

The Pharisees in today's passage were looking for the same thing we do. They just sought it in the use of and strict adherence to the law. They wanted solid ground. They wanted certainty. They wanted to claim truth for themselves. They were trying, like we do, to make sense of the world. They made assumptions which Jesus condemns, "because John eats nothing. The Pharisees say, "He has a demon." And, because Jesus eats and drinks, they say he is a glutton and a drunkard." Bad assumptions. No room for faith.

Into the calm pool of empty legalistic law and easy answers, Jesus lets loose a drop of disruptive truth.

What is truth? Are you listening?

"No one knows the Son except the Father and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal himself."

Theologian Karl Barth puts it this way: "Knowledge of God takes place where divine revelation takes place, illumination of man by God." Revelation is the unveiling of something that was once hidden.. We may call them on an ordinary basis—aha moments—when things suddenly seem clear when just moments ago, we were struggling to see our hand through the fog. Think about your own aha moments for a second. Was it at Montreat during a youth conference? Standing over a loved one who was dying in the hospital? Maybe you were on a real mountain top soaking in the view of God's creation. Or maybe you were just sitting on a couch listening to a conversation go on around you. Wherever you were, it was not by your own doing, but rather from the Divine. Revelation is God's choice, God's gift, God's decision and God's divine initiative. God's revelation transcends what we can pin down, capture, or control.

Well, we know we humans do seek to know God. We have gathered here today to not only worship God, but because we also seek even a glimmer of God. We learn that God made sure humans could not find God through our own brilliance for it is God who finds us; IQ gives us no foot up on knowing God. 1 Corinthians 1:15-30 says that God chose deliberately to use ideas the world considered foolish, a plan despised by the world, to make those considered great by the world, to be nothing.

The truth is that if we want to know God, we look to Jesus Christ. It is in and through Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit that God lifts the veil of mystery to show us not only God's nature, but God's will and purpose. Jesus Christ is the final revelation of God; final, not meaning that God will never again act in the world for from scripture we learn that God continues to move and act. Rather final meaning, Jesus is the end all, beat all. Jesus is the decisive, fulfilling and unsurpassable witness of God. It is through the revelation of Jesus Christ that all other revelations of God are seen.

So in the conversation of what is truth over and against relativism and

individualism—Jesus is the world view. Jesus is the rose-colored glasses. Jesus is our radio station through which we get our news and Jesus is the solid ground upon which we step when the ground crumbles beneath us.

I invite you to trust in this promise. I've seen it, have you? Maybe you have missed it, as I have many times. It is like expecting someone to come in the front door and they really come in the back door and catch us by surprise. God, much to my dismay, seldom invests in billboards, especially the neon blinking ones. Jesus was the closest thing to such a billboard, and even those in his day didn't get it.

So...Who wants to be a millionaire? Who cares? We, as the church, have more to offer the world than a million dollars. We are witnesses to the Gospel of Jesus Christ which engages us in a new vision of life: a life where we can grow through the uncertainties. And last of all, there are more important things that God is waiting to reveal to us.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.