

There's Seeing and Then There's Seeing

I Samuel 16:1-13; Ephesians 5:8-14; John 9:1-41; Psalm 23 3-02-08

Very often when we ask someone if they “see” what we mean, we are asking them if they understand us. Sometimes they do, and sometimes they don't. Sometimes we see in an instant and other times it takes a long time to catch on to someone else's point.

Nations have the same problem. Israel had a very poor king in its first king. God had tried to warn the nation that it existed well just the way it was and that it needed no king. But the people, looking around themselves, only saw the kings of other nations and they thought that, to be worthy and recognized as a nation, they needed to be ruled by a monarch, too. So, Saul became the first king of Israel and a poor king he was.

God, we are told, chose a second king, named David. Samuel was sent to find and anoint him. Samuel, seeing people the way we all do, thought that God wanted one of David's brothers, the brother that had the bearing of a king. But, David, the youngest, was the chosen one. He went on to become one of the most renowned kings Israel had. In this selection process, God reminded Samuel that it was more important to judge people by considering what was in their hearts than by what they looked like externally.

Walking in the light of life is written of in the little Letter to the Ephesians. When we walk in the light of the way of Christ things are made visible and clear. When we lurk in the darkness we cannot find our way. If we choose to live with clarity of thought and purpose we will try to live within the guidelines Jesus set forth for us in his life and teachings.

In the long, long, reading from the Gospel of John we find Jesus giving sight to a man who had been blind from birth. This caused a great deal of disruption among the Pharisees and scribes. Not so much because the man was healed, but because, the deed was done on the Sabbath and by Jesus, a person quite feared by those who protected the established religion. Jesus had the knack of shining a bright light into the corners of people's souls and minds, touching their consciences and bringing them to enlightenment—a new way of understanding what God required of them. His life and teachings are meant to bring us, too, to that same enlightenment--that understanding that arises from deep within when we truly begin to see.

Marcus Borg wrote: “... enlightenment as a religious experience involves communion or union with what is, an immediate knowing of the ‘sacred’ that transforms one's way of seeing.”

In Jesus' interactions with others, whether the woman at the well, the blind man, his disciples, this is what he sought. A union of the spirit within people that would bring them to an understanding of what it truly means to know what it was he was all about and what it was they needed to be all about. When we discover what the essence of our religion is all about, we discover what it is we need to develop within ourselves and share with others. When we know this we find a sense of peace.

There is a little hymn I know I have shared with you before that sings of this deep down knowing, this time of seeing, this moment of enlightenment.

Here it is again:

*There's a quiet understanding
When we're gathered in the Spirit.
It's a promise that He gives us
When we gather in His name.*

*There's a love we feel in Jesus,
There's a manna that He feeds us
It's a promise that He gives us
When we gather in His name.*

*And we know when we're together,
Sharing love and understanding,
That our brothers and our sisters
Feel the oneness that He brings.*

*Thank You, thank You, thank You Jesus
For the way You love and feed us
For the many ways you lead us
Thank You, thank You, Lord.*

As we come to the moment of sharing communion together, we need to remember and reflect upon what it should mean to us. In accepting the elements of the sacrament, we are renewing our covenant with God through Jesus. We are accepting forgiveness for the many ways we have faltered when we have tried to follow and we are promising that we will try to see anew the way we are to go. All that is past is laid to rest and we are called to begin afresh as we walk along a pathway to better way of seeing, to greater enlightenment. God beckons us forward to accept the manna that God feeds us and to begin over once again.

-- Amen