

July 5, 2009
 Congregational Church in South Glastonbury, CT.
 Ezekiel 2:1-5
 Mark 6:1-13
 Fifth Sunday after Pentecost/Year B/Proper 9

Beyond Ordinary Sight

I ask you to be with me in a spirit of Christian unity. Pray with me, please.
 Holy One, with the words of scripture still fresh upon our ears we ask Your blessing upon these hearts made ready to receive Your voice from one among us. May the intention of this reflection measure fully with Your intention for Your church, and may the words spoken invite us to seek You in truth and in love.
 In the name of Jesus Christ, the Risen One, Amen.

Okay...so what is it with Jesus' home town? Here is this local kid who has gone out into the world. He's been traveling all over the place. In fact, he makes quite a name for himself as a miracle worker. He's out there casting out demons, curing illnesses, bringing people back to life. For God's sake...sounds like he's been working his tail off. So he finally shows up at home, and maybe he's figuring he can feel good about what he's been up to. Maybe he figures he'll get some rest, eat some of mom's home cooking, and maybe get his laundry done. But the first place he heads to is the temple. And that makes sense since it is the Sabbath and being the good Jewish boy that he is he wants to be sure he keeps the Sabbath. So, it sounds like he was just doing what he was supposed to be doing, keeping up with traditions, preaching a little, teaching the scripture...doing whatever was the custom.

Then the next thing we know there is arguing but that is also no surprise since that was what happened whenever scripture was being discussed, but then it sounds like things get out of hand with people making some pretty mean comments right to Jesus' face. It gets so that Jesus is offended. So, the good time is over and the party breaks up on a pretty sour note.

But can you blame these people? I mean really, how are they to know Jesus is really God? For them he is just the ordinary kid from down the street who used to throw stones at the alley cats.

Let's face it...when they knew him he was Mary's boy the carpenter. The last time they saw him he was probably sitting under a tree whittling a flute and whistling in the breeze. So, how could he possibly try to explain that he went from being this local carpenter to suddenly being God?!

Well...I'll tell you. Too bad they didn't have a kaleidoscope.

Because I think if they had a kaleidoscope maybe things would have made more sense. I have a whole collection of kaleidoscopes. You can find them everywhere in my house. I even keep one in my car.

I have no idea when I started collecting them or even why but I can tell you I like having them around.

I love the idea that you can take the most ordinary objects; paper clips, broken pieces of colored glass, beads, anything imaginable and use it in a kaleidoscope. And what happens? Each thing that is added, no matter how ordinary it is, adds to the beauty and color.

Kaleidoscopes have a way of reminding me that sometimes when I look at what life has to offer I need to see beyond the ordinary. If I'm only willing to look at the ordinary and see it in the same old way then all I am going to ever see is the same old thing. Nothing new will ever appear. But if I can look at something in a different way, with a different perspective then I might get a whole new array of ideas. Suddenly the ordinary takes on a very different look. Suddenly the ordinary goes from being nothing new to being something really special.

It's too bad the congregation in Jesus' home town did not have a set of Kaleidoscopes. They could have used them.

Maybe then they would have seen the beauty that comes when you chose to look beyond the ordinary.

Maybe then they would have seen everything that Jesus represented, and that God was actually there choosing to live among us.

Maybe, just maybe, they would have realized that God was not only there among them but that God was also there, dwelling within each of them.

They not only miss the full presence of God in Jesus, they totally miss how the presence of God is right there within themselves.

The message in this scripture is not only about what they could not see in Jesus. It is also about what they could not see in themselves.

Does it mean that Jesus is any less of who he is just because his home town could not see his full potential? The answer is no. He is no less than what he is meant to be. In other words he is everything he is meant to be regardless of their disbelief. And Jesus knows this. Despite the lack of faith in his home town, despite their disbelief he still carries on. He continues his work as though their lack of understanding has no merit. Without blinking an eye he turns to his twelve disciples and immediately sends them out. And the twelve disciples can go because they do believe! Their faith tells them they are fully empowered by God.

I believe that is what being church is about. It is about believing in the full empowerment of God and making that belief a reality in the lives of others. If we believe we are empowered by God, remaining faithful to all God's intentions for us, then it is our

responsibility to bring that empowerment to others. It is our responsibility to bring hope into each other's lives so that more hope can seed and grow.

It's our responsibility to let people believe not only in God but in them self.

We do this every time we share our hope with others. We share our hope every time we embark on a mission trip.

Every time we share our faith we are building up the faith of one another. We share our faith every time we gather as a community, every committee meeting, board meeting, every worship service.

Every time we share our love we make the presence of God a reality in someone's life.

We share our love every time we serve a meal at the shelters, every time we visit a shut in, every time we knit a prayer shawl or offer a handshake or a hug.

Every time I come to this church I see more and more sign up sheets. It tells me we are an empowered church.

Every time I read the newsletter I read how more and more the ministries of the church are growing. It tells me we are a church willing to meet God's challenge.

Every time I hear about our mission trips it tells me we are a church willing to be sent out, and willing to make the presence of God a reality.

Every time I hear about more and more possibilities for youth it tells me we are a church willing to look beyond the ordinary and see the possibilities of God's presence among us.

Every time I come to this church I thank God we are a church so willing to believe.

Every time I can I thank God for South Church.