

4 Lent A

(1 Samuel 16:1-13)

Psalm 23

Ephesians 5:8-14

John 9:1-41

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March 22, 2020

Livestream - Youtube

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Grace and peace to you.

There couldn't have been a more appropriate Bible story for today than this. And I know I often say "this is a favorite of mine," but this one really is a favorite! It's a story that reminds me of a Monty Python movie with these ridiculous, self-absorbed characters who bumble about, arguing over how this blind man came to see, worried over whose fault it all was and who had the authority to heal him – they completely miss the point. The point is, God is remarkable.

That might be our word today – "remarkable." I don't need to describe to you the remarkable times we are in. Most of us have never experienced anything like what we are going through. I don't even know how to describe to you what it feels like to preach and lead worship this morning without you here. It feels so empty.

Many people are struggling tremendously as we wait and watch for the virus to make its course. Every aspect of our lives, from relationships to finances to health has been affected. Who could have known we were so vulnerable? And that might be what sparks the most fear in us – to realize just how fragile are the castles and lifestyles we've built.

The first step to seeing clearly is learning that you're blind. Today we are realizing that we are not so self-sufficient as we imagined. We need help. That confession is the first step. As soon as we understand our limitations, our humanness, then we become open to God's unmitigatedness.

While we grieve the stock market dropping God has been sparking creativity. While some scoff at the call for social

distancing, God is calling forth medical leaders to teach and guide us. While we are frustrated we can't go out to the mall or the pub or our friend's place, God has been knitting together a network of attention, love and care with our families and neighbourhoods.

As we continue to adapt to the challenges before us, this remarkable God is right beside us with encouragement and hope. Watch for God on the move where you are. Do we not say over and over again that God is out in the world? God is in the neighbourhood? God is at your work, in your home and heart? Do we not teach that God isn't confined by the walls of the church or one holy day a week? God is responding to what is going on, but sometimes we've got so much mud in our eyes, so many excuses that we are blind to the miracles at work all around us. What a remarkable time!

Look for God out there! What are you seeing? What new ways are you discovering God? What I am seeing is that the internet is exploding with ideas for home based activities. Teachers are revamping classrooms and lessons. Parents are adapting. Families are finding new ways to engage with one another. Neighbourhoods are reaching out to make sure everyone is ok. Phones are ringing to visit with others and to keep information flowing. God is connecting us in new ways – just when we thought all was lost.

And this is truly one of the remarkable things about God. When all seems lost, when all seems hopeless, when you or I are most afraid, whether it is Good Friday and the cross is looming, or it's just another day that you cannot leave the house – God is still there to redeem and resurrect us out of such darkness.

We're not quite there yet, but this is the promise and hope of Easter. When the bright hope of Christ was snuffed out by the world's inability to embrace the covenant of love, all went dark, the Apostles ran away, the people scattered, the good

times had come crashing to a halt. God however, didn't quit. God took that terrible day and turned it around.

To be clear, God doesn't create the bad stuff. God redeems it. God hasn't caused COVID-19 to get our attention, bad things don't happen to teach us a lesson. That's manipulation. But God will be the one to help us out of it. Which is already happening. The power of Love is mightily at work drawing out the best of who we are. The power of love is infusing our creativity and determination. The power of love is in you doing remarkable things.

So take your "virtual" pot of mud and go and heal the world. There are a lot of troubles out there, a lot of blindness, much grief, many who are felling afraid. But you are the light of the world, you are God's people who have for so long been fed and nourished in here. Now, be the church out there – you are the living body of Christ for this time, this moment for a world in need.

I know that you will do remarkable things. How do I know? Because God is with you. Always had been, always will be. Amen.