

Wicker Park Lutheran Church

Rev. Jason S. Glombicki

January 24, 2021

One of the things I love most about Mark's gospel is how it's written. It's short and to the point. It's very matter of fact. It's like a quick tweet or burst of information. And we see that in today's reading because we get two nuggets of information paired together in a short reading.

It starts with the phrase "now after John was arrested." And just before John the Baptist was arrested, Mark's gospel tells us that Jesus was tempted by Satan, or in other words, everything that was not of God's vision for the world tried its hardest to pull Jesus away from God's truth. These two things—Jesus's temptation and John's arrest—are describing the reality of the world. The reality that a world unchecked will tend to pull us away from God's vision.

And, it's not that hard for me to imagine this. After all, what I know to be true is that this world can pull in opposition to God's vision. That is why we see partisan and religious divisions yank us further from one another. That is why we witness how computer algorithms drag us into echo chambers of our own frustration. That is why we are so easily taken down the path from anger to hate to violence.

And, the forces that oppose God's vision, those forces, they seek to stroke our ego with the supposed gifts of power and privilege so as to hide the structures of inequality and oppression. So, instead we are tricked to believe

that sexual harassment is boys being boys, and that ableism is only driven by the financial cost of inclusion. So too, we are fooled into believing that heterosexism and transphobia are attributed to what is supposedly natural, and that xenophobia and nationalism are a logical response to the fear of scarcity. And the list goes on with these ungodly deceptions.

Into this reality Jesus says, “the time is fulfilled” or, another way to put it, the time has expired, the time is complete, or the time is full. It’s the moment when Jesus had witnessed and experienced how misaligned the world is with God’s vision, the moment when Jesus reached a breaking point, and the time when Jesus said, “enough.”

In the 21st century, these moments of enough sound like: well, “Time’s Up!”¹ and “Black Lives Matter,” and “love is love,” and “we are all immigrants.” These moments are similar to when Jesus said, “the time is over.” It’s over because in that moment God’s vision is coming in hot. Those moments occur when we repent, when we turn away from the deformed vision for the world, and when we turn towards God’s love, justice, and peace.

But Jesus didn’t stop there. Today, we got another little burst of information. In the second part of today’s reading, we heard that it wasn’t only that Jesus had enough, but so too, James and John, *they* had enough. For them, the time was now. They, too, were ready to turn towards God’s vision. They were ready to be midwives for God’s vision.

¹ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Time%27s_Up_\(movement\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Time%27s_Up_(movement))

And, for me, I've had that moment of being called. That moment when over time my eyes were opened to the reality of the world and then, I joined with Jesus's "enough." For much of my life, I thought being colorblind to race was a good thing. I believed that ignoring the race of another would prove that racism was only for the history books. Of course, most of the time this belief occurred in places that were absent of BIPOC. I remember how defensive I was when I was first confronted with the idea that colorblindness was a racist ideology. At first, I resisted the notion, even as it came out of a black friend's mouth. But over time, I began to see the importance of acknowledging race, and the history of racism as told by the ones that lived it and continue to live it daily. I saw how important it is to celebrate differences rather than pretend they do not exist. And, once I saw the injustice of being colorblind and when I was able to acknowledge the truth coming from BIPOC, then I too felt called to work to fish for people.

Friends, that is the difficult work that we are called to in baptism. Our calling as God's people is to do this work together. And, that is why in today's reading when Jesus said "repent," that word is plural. Jesus did not say that this difficult work of responding to injustice or of being a person of faith is done individually. No. A person's faith is enacted in community. Repentance is a communal activity. Our calling as Christians is to be with one another and to collectively work for justice and peace.

And, that my friends, is the gift of today's gospel. The gift that reminds us that Jesus had his moment of enough. The time where he rolled up his sleeves, joined with others in the work, and became the conduit for God's vision of justice, love, and peace. It is a vision that is freely offered by our

God for you, for me, and for all of creation. And as we experience that gift and also recognize the forces that to pull us away from God's gift, we gather together as God's people here, even virtually. We gather to join in God's work. We gather at Christ's holy table to be fed with these gifts, to be nourished in God's grace, and then we go forth joining in God's holy work. Today, we look for the places in the world that are misaligned and we, like Jesus, say enough as together we lean into God's vision. What a gift to be together in this work. Thanks be to God. Amen.