OPEN YOUR EYES

Mark 7:24-37

September 8, 2024

Be opened! … Open up! … Open your eyes!

In this imperative, we are challenged to examine what we see, where to look, and how we understand what we see. The observance of a season of creation gives us the opportunity to celebrate God’s creation and our place in it. The Good News this day is that there is beauty all around us—there is abundance all around us—there is community all around us—there is justice all around us. Open your eyes and you might be surprised at what there is to see.

We are called to a new way of life—a new way to look at life—a call to open our eyes, our ears, our body—to seeing God’s will for all that He created in a new way.

We all have, over the years, looked at life differently than we do today. I remember a time when my mindset was: get what you can, use what you want, and dispose of the rest. That sounds terribly gross. But think about it. In every room of our house, we had one trash can. When we had our fill of whatever we were doing, we put what was left over in that trash can. I wouldn’t think of doing that today.

Let me give you a couple of personal example. I beg forgiveness often for this. I was a summer camp director back in the sixties, a boys’ camp with about 75 campers. We were constantly after the campers to keep things neat, to clean up after themselves. I remember one day in particular that the trash shed outside the dining hall was a mess—mostly food scraps. I couldn’t blame anyone in particular, so as camp director I felt it was my job to clean it up. I vividly remember one day with my hands covered with garbage saying to myself: “And I went to college, seminary, and grad school for this.” What a humongous missed opportunity this was to teach young boys the importance and value of a “reduce, re-use, recycle” lifestyle.

And now another example of seeing things differently. I was married right out of college—most guys were. With my wife and two small girls, we set about living the good life as I knew it. I worked hard and, when I came home, I rested and waited to be called to the table for dinner. That’s what father’s did. Role clarification was pretty simple. Respecting “the dignity and value” of another person was quite easy then.

All of this is to say that the way we see does change. I presume that social norms had something to do with it, but I would like to think that my reading scripture and sharing community with fellow Chrustianshad a lot to do with it, as well.

Isaiah describes seeing things differently. He contrasts the old with the new—the is with the what will be: “Then

 the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and

 the ears of the deaf unstopped; then

 the lame shall leap like a deer, and

 the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For

 waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and

 streams in the desert;

 the burning sand shall become a pool, and

 the thirsty ground springs of water.” (vs. 5-7)

How beautiful is that poetry!

And we read in our Gospel just now how Mark describes Jesus’ mission:

 ears were opened and he could hear clearly,

 tongue was released and he spoke plainly.

The life of Jesus is one story after another story of what he came to earth to do: to help us all to see things differently.

So during this season of creation let us …

 CELEBRATE the marvel and majesty of God’s creation, the joy of living in such a world, and the opportunity to experience it with all of our senses: see, taste, touch, speak, and smell “the beauty of the Lord.”

 CONFESS the ways in which we have been: blind, mute, and withdrawn; and demonstrate a willingness to mend our ways and to participate in bringing about change for the good of the cosmos.

 COMMIT to love mercy, to do justice, and to walk humbly with our God.

I invite you to reflect on and share a response with me:

1. I am recommitted to seeing the creation in which we live, move, and have I=our being as a magnificent gift of God’s handiwork—human, non-human, animate, and inanimate.
2. I open my eyes to see what we humans, in particular, have done in this “garden if Eden,” where we see what greed, selfishness, and the need to control has done.
3. I open my eyes to see a fulflillment of God’s promise of resurrection and life, of rewnewal and new life—no more than new eyes, new ears, and new possibilities, a described and promised in the miracles Jesus performs in our world today.

I began today with am imperative: BE OPENED !

Let’s end this day with a declaration: I AM OPENED !