

Year A – Proper 9 *“Following the Wisdom of God”*

“Wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.” (Mt. 11:19)

When did you first become aware of your beloved? How is that you came to be together? Joined (or not) in a formal ritual, there is still a story and journey of how two people discover each other and the great potential for life and love.

Or, if you have no one who fits in the category – what is the story of your search? For, at the heart of life is the search for love and meaning. And many of us are gifted with the opportunity to live that out with another human being, but some are gifted in other ways, with love of creatures or creation or Divine presence. Some are still searching.

St. Augustine said it well: *“Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee.”*

It is the restless heart that searches for love.

This morning we listened to another story from book of Genesis – that great first book of the Bible that gives the story of our beginnings as a people of faith. Two Sundays ago it was the creation story. Last week we heard about Abraham’s willingness to give up his own self by sacrificing his son Izaak. And today, we hear the story of how it is that Isaac, after the death of his mother, finds his Rebekah who will eventually give birth to Jacob and Esau.

The story seems strange to us. You only heard parts of it. Abraham has grown very old. Sarah has recently died. Isaac has no wife and no heirs. Possessions mean nothing without the relationships of love and family. Abraham sends his servant out to find a Hebrew wife for Isaac. The servant takes ten of his master’s camels (some for barter) and goes to the city of Nahor and stops at the well to water his camels at the time when women would be coming to draw from the well. He prays to the Lord to reveal the woman to him. Rebekah comes to the well and gives him and the camels water and then takes him home to rest for the night. The passage we read is the servant telling his tale to her father. All perceive the hand of the Lord is at work and the father releases his daughter to the servant to be taken back to Isaac who takes her as his wife.

This is a great story of searching for and listening to the guidance and flow of the wisdom of God in their lives. If you read the full 34th chapter of Genesis you will see that the people (including Rebekah) are following what they perceive to be the leading of God among them. If we attend to our lives, reflect, pray and listen, we can see how God works to bring us, too, into the fullness of love for which we are made.

Jesus has that same concern. In today’s Gospel he is ranting about folks who think they have all the answers already and sit on the sidelines complaining. They think they are wise and yet the purposes of God are hidden from them because they are more invested in their own interests and influence than they are in the actual life of God (also called Wisdom) that flows through all of humanity. They think they have all of the answers already.

Once upon a time there were two groups of battleships on maneuvers. The weather was terrible, pea soup fog, high winds and seas. The second night out was worse. The captain stood the bridge all night, wary of just second-hand reports. He didn’t want to chance the battleships of the other group colliding with them in the open seas. All night he checked on the night sky and what could be seen. Toward dawn the officer yelled, “Light on the starboard side, sir!” The captain yelled back, “Is she steady or moving?” A pause and the reply, “Sir, she’s steady!” “Send a message ASAP,” he roared. “Change course 20 degrees immediately.” The message was relayed and sent. Then back came a reply on the radio that was passed on to the captain, “Sir, they suggest you change the course.” The captain was furious. He turned and yelled, “You tell them I am a captain and I’m ordering them to change course, 20 degrees hard now. Don’t these fools know we are on a

collision course?” The message was sent. Then the reply came. “I’m an ensign second class, and I suggest you change course now.” The captain was near spitting, and the light was fast approaching. “Dam it, you tell them I’m the captain of a battleship and they’d better obey my orders immediately.” The message was sent. Back came the reply, “I’m a lighthouse.”. And the battleship turned.¹

It is so easy for us to think that we know what’s going on – to be sure and positive. We understand how to do life. We follow the rules. We’re successful. We become blind.

Wisdom, says Jesus, is vindicated (proven to be the true life) by the deeds that flow from engagement with this Divine Life. The servant puts trust in God, listens, watches and finds a good wife for his master.

Jesus says this wisdom, this knowledge of the work of God is available to those who approach life with the mind of an infant. The young mind is eager and open, not defensive and cluttered. It is always learning from experience, continuing to seek and test out life. There is great flexibility and curiosity in the young mind. Having such a mind means we are, like Abraham’s servant, open to the deeper dimensions of the life that we are engaged in and ready to say “yes” to life that abounds.

Jesus knows that we are weary of dealing with the demands of the world, of trying to be something or someone we are not. And he invites us to yoke our self to him so that he can take some of the weight of the world on himself. So that we can find true rest and refreshment that comes from following his lead, being his friend, his lover, his disciple. He invites us to trust the Wisdom of God which will guide us if we are looking for Her action among and around us.

Isn’t rest what we all came here for? Have you found it yet? Certainly, our bodies can get rested enough so that we begin to think we are rested.

But the true rest, the real deep rest of the human heart and soul is something else. It arises out of our deep connections with each other and God – our willingness to allow ourselves to be guided, carried and led to a life which is like a deep well that continually feeds our thirst, just as it did for the servant and Rebekah.

Let us pray:

“Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee.” Let us be like Abraham’s servant and listen, watch and follow the path that leads the everlasting life of love.

Amen.

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¹ As told in *Parables, the Arrows of God*, by Megan McKenna, p. 12.