



Come and See!

Week of February 9, 2025

The Word ...

“Then I said, “Woe is me, I am doomed! For I am a man of unclean lips,
living among a people of unclean lips; ...
Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send?
Who will go for us?” “Here I am,” I said; “send me!”
(Is 6:1-8).

“For I am the least of the apostles, not fit to be called an apostle, because
I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God, I am what I am”
(1 Cor 15:1-11).

“Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man.” ...
Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid”
(Lk 5:1-11).

Pondering the Word ...

Today’s readings are obviously about being called by God. Isaiah, Paul, Simon Peter...all keenly aware of their limitations and sinfulness. You can imagine a cartoon, all three of them with quizzical looks on their faces, a three-pronged word balloon over their heads: “You talkin’ to *me*?!” “Yep,” God says, “I’m talkin’ to you!”

Our theme this year is “Courage in Community.” Communities around the US are paralyzed by fear right now, and it’s not just immigrants. There are people afraid of losing their jobs after dedicating years to civil service; retirees seeing their pensions and healthcare threatened. Budding scientists, like my own daughter, worried about research grants; people just now realizing how tariffs work and that their daily expenses and livelihoods will be negatively impacted. People hesitant to go about normal routines due to the disarray in government safety entities. And people far beyond our borders losing the goodwill on which they have come to rely.

I feel overwhelmed, impotent, and scared. And angry...at times, very angry. I know I am not alone.

I am “blessed” (or perhaps it is “cursed”) with abundance. If I wanted to, I could run away and hide, even leave the country. But I remember my call, spoken to me by a dear friend, Sister Josephine, from India who works with the poorest of the poor: “Elaine, God calls you where you are.”

Do I have...do you have... the courage to say, “Here I am. Send me.”?

Living the Word ...

It is critical at this juncture for people of goodwill to come together in community—not just tribes based on religion or race or political labels. People who can look at the big picture, who are committed to the dignity of all God’s children; people who do not allow their “blessings” to blind them or cause them to hide.

We attribute the saying, “*The only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing*” to Edmund Burke, but researchers think it is more likely what he wrote in “Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents” (1770): “*When bad men combine, the good must associate; else they will fall, one by one, an unpitied sacrifice in a contemptible struggle.*” Much more powerful, I’d say! God is calling us to come together. What is our answer?

Personal Reflections and Ideas ... _____

Mon, Feb 10: *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth*” (Gn 1:1-9). I love *New Yorker* comics, and I have the daily calendar. On the day I started writing for the week, this one showed up: God and Jesus are standing on a cloud looking down on the earth. The caption reads: *“One day, all of this was going to be yours, son. But now I wonder—would you rather take Mars or Jupiter?”* **Provision: Be a co-creator.** It’s a nice little joke, but of course, the joke’s on us. Among the many confusing, irrational things happening today, the short-sightedness concerning the health of the earth boggles the mind. Let’s consider how we can be co-creators with God, protecting the earth and its creatures. If nothing else, let’s figure out how we can stop destroying and at least be more neutral. There are hundreds of websites that list entities and corporations that are major polluters and “greenwashers.” See if you can avoid using their products and, BTW, tell them why. It may seem like a drop in the bucket, but if more of us do this, we might help to bring about change.

Tue, Feb 11: *The Pharisees and scribes questioned him, “Why do your disciples not follow the tradition of the elders but instead eat a meal with unclean hands?” He responded, “Well did Isaiah prophesy about you hypocrites: ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me... teaching as doctrines human precepts’”* (Mk 7:1-13). Ah, the age-old tactic of leaders using obfuscation to avoid bigger issues! Nit-picking, “straining out the gnat and swallowing the camel,” trying to distract people by pointing out a fallen tree branch while ignoring the forest fire. We all know this passage has nothing to do with washing your hands (which is a good thing—so kids, go wash your hands before dinner!). **Provision: What “human precepts” do we follow at the expense of love?** There are wonderful and meaningful traditions and rituals, and there are those that are exclusionary and hurtful: Who is welcome at the table and who is not? Consider this question today.

Wed, Feb 12: *“You are free to eat from any of the trees of the garden except the tree of knowledge of good and evil. From that tree you shall not eat; the moment you eat from it you are surely doomed to die”* (Gn 2:4-9, 15-17). Have you ever considered why having the knowledge of good and evil would doom our first parents? The textbook answer is they pay the price for disobeying God, but I have trouble accepting a petty, power-hungry God. Maybe God’s warning is not so much a threat of punishment as it is a way of protecting us. **Provision: Look for what is good!** We are made in God’s image, “a little less than the angels.” Unless we are graced as mystics, we cannot and do not see beyond our brief sojourn on the dust of this earth. “This, too, shall pass” and “All shall be well” can be hollow words in the midst of evil. I think God wants us to know and to see what is beautiful and good, a Divine Parent who wants happiness and peace for all children. We cannot unsee evil. But we can try to transform it, to use it as compost and fodder for growth of something good.

Thu, Feb 13: *The LORD God said: “It is not good for the human to be alone”* (Gn 2:18-25). Scripture messages, like today’s, have timeless significance. Everywhere we turn, we hear about the epidemic of loneliness. I wrote about this verse six years ago and addressed the same subject—and that was BC: before COVID! Things are even worse now. Just like the warnings about our earth and the climate, we just don’t learn. **Provision: Give of yourself.** Without getting distracted by the allegory and the male/female thing, let’s consider how God creates a partner for Adam: after bringing Adam to a place of rest and vulnerability, God reaches into Adam’s being to bring forth the other. God uses a rib, part of the structure that helps protect the heart. Hmmh. Maybe we avoid getting close to others. We don’t like being vulnerable, unwilling to bring forth our true selves for fear of rejection. And yet we know, both literally and figuratively, new life springs from our willingness to give of ourselves. Will you take a risk to break through the wall of loneliness to give life to yourself and another?

Fri, Feb 14: *“God knows the moment you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like gods who know what is good and what is evil”* (Gen 3:1-8). *“I confess my faults to the LORD,” and you took away the guilt of my sin; for this shall every faithful person pray to you in time of stress*” (Ps 32). *“Ephphatha!”* (Mk 7:31-37). The woman is in a “Catch-22.” Her eyes can’t be open to see what is evil unless she eats the fruit of the tree, but if her eyes had been open, she would have seen the evil of the serpent and done the right thing...maybe. One thing we don’t hear about in the Genesis story is the first humans telling God they are sorry. (Now, we can get onto the slippery slope of atonement theology and the reason for Christ coming to earth, etc.... but we are not going there!) What strikes me in the intersection of these three readings is the concept of openness: our willingness to see reality for what it is, to be open enough to know when to seek forgiveness, and to be healed by Jesus’ touch. **Provision: Be open to compassion and healing.** Go off by yourself with Jesus today and let him open your heart.

Sat, Feb 15: *“Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain wisdom of heart”* (Ps 90). A favorite quote, one worth repeating: *“How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives”* (Annie Dillard, from *The Writing Life*). **Provision: How do you plan to spend this day, this gift from God?**