

**June 30, 2019****13<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time****Year C****“Very Moment Counts”**

When I started thinking about the text for this week, my first response was, Sorry, Jesus. You are wrong. Sometimes we must bury our dead and you are just going to have to wait. Sometimes we have to say goodbye to those we are leaving or to those we have lost, and we will catch up to you eventually. Sometimes we have a few things that need tending before we jump on the discipleship bandwagon. Like what, you might say, Jesus?

Well, like grief, for example, for those close and personal, but also for whom our world continues to insist cannot be a part of your kingdom. My son Stavros lost his wife 8 years ago to metastizing breast cancer. Beth was diagnosed a year after they were married. Because of the type of cancer her life expectative was 5 years. She had him attending church with her weekly, when Beth died Stavros was very angry with God. He took her way too soon. Trying to help him grieve to release the anger wasn't easy.

Sometimes we just need some time. Time to adjust to the heartbreak and the loneliness losing a loved one brings. Thanks, Jesus.

But then, I started imagining this text from Jesus' point of view. Not from an historical perspective that gives attention to Jesus' own situation -- although that might be worth considering. But from the perspective of the urgency of God's favor. That every minute matters for those to whom it really matters.

That every moment counts.

I began to wonder -- what if Jesus sees the importance of time, of a minute, of even a second, not just for the sake of the urgency of his ministry, the urgency of the kingdom he wishes to bring into its fullness, the urgency of making sure that all know God's favor before those who reject God's favor will silence him for good, but because being human means such urgency -- every moment really does count.

In the truth of our lives, so fragile, so frail, every moment counts. During transitions and transformations, every moment counts. In the reality of ministry and meaning that take on all the contexts and circumstances of our lives, every moment counts.

In everything we do, work and at home or out in our community we live moment to moment. What we can do to help a neighbor or even a stranger can show that person that they matter to God.

Every moment must count since God made the decision to become one of us. Jesus' call is not an insensitive plea to abandon that which is important to us, who matter to us, who make a difference for us. Jesus' call to let go is a promise -- that God becoming human means that moments matter. Time makes a difference. And that even second's matter to God. Why? Not for the sake of your service alone, but for the sake of your being in the kingdom God imagines. Every moment matters because every one of us counts.

Every Thursday morning, I join a group of Pastors in Area 4. so last week the leader for the day, for today's scripture lesson, brought us with everything from practical advice and biblical study, we were invited to relocate their contexts in this context for the sake of a moment in time. We brought our cares and concerns, our people and places, our troubles and truths to a moment in time that promised, in part,

transformation. I hope for many that transformation indeed happened. It did for me.

Why? Because moments count. The convergence of time, people, purpose, and place create transformative experiences. And in those moments, we are reminded that moments matter.

What does all of this have to do with discipleship? With Jesus' rather impatient call to witness? Perhaps Jesus recognizes our tendency to put off the moments in time that might actually make a difference in what we say about him.

Perhaps Jesus sees that we come with ready excuses to defer our proclamation because we think we need to be in a better place, a better time, a time when the stars align so as to make our experience of the Gospel the perfect it was never meant to be.

Perhaps Jesus simply says stop making excuses and start imagining experiences that invite "let's see what happens" instead of "I need all my stuff figured out."

We tend to wait for God's action rather than getting our feet wet. Are you at the Red Sea, waiting for God to do something? Or are you at

the Jordan River, willing to get your feet wet so as to enter into the promised land?

Are you waiting for someone else to speak justice? To call for righteousness? Or will you embrace the moment and proclaim the promise of God's favor?

Are you waiting for others to stand up for those our world rejects and abuses? Or will you seize the moment and say God's love is for all?

Are you waiting for even those you trusted to advocate for who you are, for who God has called you to be? Or do you now find yourself needing to tell your truth and risk so much, if not all? How do we measure our witness to the love of God? How do we measure the magnitude of August 18, 1920, when the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified?

How do we measure the moment in time on December 1, 1955, in Montgomery, Alabama, that Rosa Parks refused to obey bus driver James F. Blake's order? How do we measure five hundred twenty five thousand six hundred minutes in the year of a life? How do we measure the times when you can truly be who you are?

In what increments will you measure your life? Because every moment counts, says Jesus. You count. You matter. And God counts on you.

It is just that simple, it is just that hard. Amen.