

First Mennonite Church Edmonton

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April 18, 2021 - Baptism Sunday

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Tianna, when you first shared your faith story, and mentioned this scripture, immediately I wrote myself a note to remember this passage for your baptism service. I think this is a fantastic little passage to reflect on as we celebrate your baptism. On one hand it reflects your faith journey, which you've shared and on the other hand it's a great reminder for the congregation as a whole for our own faith journeys.

This passage from Matthew is a part of the Sermon on the Mount, and is a part of a collection of teachings. What I love about this particular teaching is it speaks to our relationship with God, and God's relationship with us. Now, to put this out front early, this passage is not about seeing God as a vending machine God. That is, to see God as the source of all our desires. A God to whom we can call on for anything, and after sufficient prayer we can expect God to deliver that which we ask for. No, this passage is telling us something else about God, and our relationship to God. I want to spend a little time today reflecting on these three verbs, Asking, Seeking, and Knocking.

Asking and you shall receive

I've heard it said, the only way we know for sure the answer to a request is to not ask it. That is to say, if we want something, but we don't ask for it because we're afraid of being rejected, or some other reason the only way to know then answer for sure is to not ask, then we know the answer is 'no'. Asking, for help, or for something, especially of God, is an act of faith. It's an act of trust. It's taking a step out of our own self-centred lives and opening ourselves to others, and to God. It's the vulnerable admission that there is something that we cannot do ourselves, and that we need help. And what I think Jesus is getting at here is that God is open to our requests, God want's us to ask, and by doing so we are demonstrating faith and trust in God's goodness. Not just God's goodness to fulfil our request, but God's goodness in God's care for us.

Because God wants to be involved in the lives of God's created. God want's to be involved in our lives. Not in some passive way, not in a vending machine kind of way, but rather in a way that's engaged with us in a personal way. God want's to know our needs, our desires, our longings. And God wants to know this because God cares, because God loves.

Asking for help is opening the door for relationship God and in turn is grants us opportunity to be formed as one of God's people and to grow closer to God, which ultimately is what God desires.

Seeking and you will find.

Another saying that I've heard in the last while is "what you look for is what you find." And this reminds me of a song by Bryan Moyer Suderman. I do love the image that Bryan Moyer Suderman offers in inviting us to become 'detectives of divinity.' I think that being a detective of divinity is a part of our calling as God's people; to seek and to notice where God is at work in the world around us. This maybe has become difficult in the midst of the global pandemic. I've heard clergy reflect that it's become a challenge to notice the movement of the Spirit in amongst all the isolation. The Mennonite Church Alberta communique has one feature which takes this seeking seriously. They include a snippet each week about 'One Good Thing' A few weeks ago I was invited to offer 'One Good Thing.' In the midst of feeling overwhelmed it challenged me to consider one good thing, curiously enough, once I started I couldn't find just one, I found a number of good things all together. Jesus calls us to seek, to look for God in the macro and in the micro; in the one good little thing, a house plant spouting, or maybe in the micro, an answer to a prayer that's the plea of the heart. Ultimately to seek is to wonder where might God be in any given situation or place.

And in this I hear the invitation to question, to wonder to be curious. I hear God inviting our wonderings and questions, our queries and our curiosities. And I believe that sometimes these wonderings and questions are more important than the answers. And this is because the discovery is filled with growth. How we find our answers to our questions is sometimes more important because of how it shapes and forms us.

Seeking isn't just looking. Seeking or searching I hear is connected to curiosity. And in this I hear Jesus inviting our curiosity. I hear Jesus saying that God want's us to ask questions, God wants us to be seekers, God wants us to explore and to wonder. Because, I believe it's in that wondering that we're drawn closer to God, as we seek and wonder, we begin to see, and notice more of God around us.

Knocking and the door will be opened

For me this passage is an invitation, and the thing to notice here, is that it's not passive. We have to be active in it. A question if not spoke is not asked. You can't search if you don't start looking. and a door does not knock on its own.

As we were in our Lent series, we were brought to the edge of growth, the edge of 'deepness', and we were left with the invitation to cross the threshold. We can be brought to the door of God's house, but it's up to us to raise our hands and knock, to ring the doorbell, announcing to God that we're here, we're ready, we'd like in. And Jesus promises, the door will be opened. God is present and ready to welcome us in, but we must knock on the door. And this is the act of trust and faith in God that you did today Tianna, you knocked and asked God if you could come in, and God, lovingly, graciously, without reservation or pause says absolutely!

Asking with Trust and Faith, Seeking with Curiosity, Knocking to Enter God's Presence. Three movements of the Christian walk. Tianna, these are three things that you've witnessed to and committed yourself to today through your Baptism. And for the rest of us, we are reminded today that these three things are a part of our walk of faith, our faith journey. These are three ways that we connect with God through Jesus Christ. And these are three movements that we will repeat throughout our whole lives.

Asking, Seeking, Knocking...Asking with Trust and Faith, Seeking with Curiosity, Knocking to Enter God's Presence. Three movements of the Christian walk. May we all keep on Asking, Seeking, Knocking.

Amen.