



Come and See!

June 2, 2019, Ascension

The Word... *

Jesus enjoined them not to depart from Jerusalem,
but to wait for "the promise of the Father about which you have heard me speak...

It is not for you to know the times or seasons
that the Father has established by his own authority."

(from Acts 15:1-2. 22-29)

"May the eyes of your hearts be enlightened,
that you may know what is the hope that belongs to his call..."

(from Eph 1:17-23)

"Let us hold unwaveringly to our confession that gives us hope,
for he who made the promise is trustworthy."

(from Heb 10:19-23)

Pondering the Word...

Patience and hope. The theme for the Easter season; the theme we are to live as Christians; the theme we must embrace in times of trial and difficulty, like the ones many of us are living through now. While we may echo the psalmist: "*Come back, O Lord! How long?—and have pity on your servants.*" (90:13), a large part of our call as Christians is to demonstrate hope and patience in a world darkened by greed, hatred, and sin.

The virtues of patience and hope go hand-in-hand. Without patience, hope can seem like a pipedream and can run dry; without hope, patience can quickly turn to bitterness. It is not for us to know God's timing, but we pray for the eyes of our hearts to be opened, and to trust the one we confess and in whom we have our hope.

Living the Word...

How do you nurture patience and hope? Impatience is a major source of anxiety and anger, and can be particularly challenging for young parents who have come of age in this era of immediate gratification. To grow up well and healthy, children need to develop slowly, to be allowed to fail, to be given the extra time they need to learn on their own. If you try to rush it by being impatient or doing for them, you *will* pay the price later down the line.

First, look at your expectations and hopes. Are your hopes based on results-- e.g., where is my child on the bell curve chart for this or that ability—or on some random checklist of those things needed for success? Hope is not a specific thing or accomplishment. It is an attitude of living, a way of being in the world.

Next, practice patience. Notice triggers that set you off and make a conscious effort to quell your anxiety. Take a deep breath and ask the Spirit for help. Patience *can* be learned. Start by practicing it in lower stress situations. Make note of the blessing that is at the root of your impatience—the line at the grocery store, the wait at the doctor's office--and say a prayer for those who don't get to wait for the things we take for granted. But above all, "*trust in the slow work of God,*" (from the prayer *Patient Trust*, that Theilhard de Chardin wrote to his young niece. <https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/8078/prayer-of-theilhard-de-chardin>)

Personal Reflections and Ideas: _____

*Note: the lectionary readings I've chosen are for the Ascension of the Lord. Your church may or may not use them today.

© 2019, Elaine H. Ireland. To receive "Come and See!" free via email, send request to ehireland@gmail.com. Images: Sharefaith.com

Jun 3: *“Do you believe now? Behold, the hour is coming and has arrived when each of you will be scattered to his own home and you will leave me alone... I have told you this so you might have peace in me.”* (Jn 16: 29-33)

The disciples will scatter in fear when Jesus is arrested. He tells them this ahead of time and that God will be with him, so they are to be at peace. We too face situations when we don't live up to what we say we believe. We grow disappointed in ourselves and lose confidence. Jesus knows it's hard for us to always do the right thing. We are not alone. He is with us, giving us peace and courage to move ahead and do better.

Jun 4: *“Now this is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ.”* (Jn 17: 1-11)

The Greek word for “know” in this passage, “ginosko,” connotes an intimate knowledge, a deep, personal understanding that is ongoing. It is not awareness nor a static knowledge, but one that is alive and growing. Too many of us “know of” God. For others, our understanding of God is locked in the past. Jesus says eternal life is an intimate relationship with God, one that is continually growing and giving us life abundantly, life that we can experience right here, right now, in God's time, “kairos.” Does intimacy describe your relationship with Jesus and the Father? If not, seek out trusted sources to help you know them better.

Jun 5: *“Keep watch over yourselves and over the whole flock of which the Holy Spirit has appointed you overseers...”* (Acts 20:28-38)

“Keep watch over yourselves.” Boy, is this ever an important message, one we know has not been taken to heart by many who work tending the flock! Whether it is the well-meaning caregiver or social justice worker who does not take time for respite, prayer, and self-care; or, more insidiously, ministers who steal from or abuse members of their flock because they are evil or think themselves above God's law — this is an important message for everyone. It is a slippery slope we encounter if we imagine we are immune to the presence of evil. Look at your spiritual health today. Are you taking care of yourself and your relationship with God?

Jun 6: *“You will show me the path to life, fullness of joys in your presence...”* (Ps 16)

We are born and begin living. We learn how by watching our elders, and if we're lucky, we have good examples to follow. But so many of us are just living, as in the words of the late poet laureate, Mary Oliver: *“Listen, are you breathing just a little, and calling it a life?”* We seek the path to life, the fullness of joy found only in an awareness of God's presence. Today, take time to breathe deeply. Let your chest and stomach expand on the inhale and contract on the exhale. Imagine the Spirit reaching down deep into your being. Allow joy to fill you. Give thanks. Follow the path that leads to the fullness of life.

Jun 7: *“And when he had said this, he said to him, “Follow me.”* (Jn 21: 15-19)

Peter is having a déjà vu experience here. It seems like yesterday he was fishing on this same lake when he hears Jesus say the same words: *“Follow me.”* Three years ago, Jesus was big news. He was causing quite a sensation and there was a sense of excitement, despite the risks, in following him. Now Peter sees the past few years flash before his eyes: Jesus stirring up conflict, having to hide with him like a fugitive; Jesus' trial, his own denials; the passion and crucifixion; the threats of the Jewish and Roman leaders; these encounters with the risen Jesus. *“If I didn't understand what following Jesus meant back then,”* Peter says to himself, *“What in heaven's name can it mean for me now?”* Following Jesus is a commitment we renew every day. Each morning, imagine Jesus saying, *“Follow me.”* Make a conscious decision to go where Jesus leads you.

Jun 8: *Peter turned and saw the disciple following whom Jesus loved...he said, “Lord, what about him?”* (Jn 21: 20-25)

Jesus has just charged Peter with feeding his sheep. It is a dramatic and moving encounter. As we discussed yesterday, one can only imagine the questions Peter must have! So what's the first thing he asks: *‘What's John gonna do?’* Of all things, Peter's first thought is about the other guy and the role he will play! If you've been given a big task, it's natural to want to know who you can rely on for help. Jesus reminds us though not to worry about what others are called to do. Just follow him. Rely on Jesus. He'll be there for you.