

Lent 4, Year A
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1 Samuel 16:1-13
Psalm 23
Ephesians 5:8-14
John 9:1-41

Can you remember a time when someone recognized and understood you in a way that felt completely authentic to you? Someone who saw you, not in a new light, but saw the light that lived within you? Someone who knew what you were born for and called to be? Someone who saw deep into your being and knew and told the truth about who you really believed you were.

Let me give you an example: In the movie *Hook*, Robin Williams plays a middle aged, stressed out, over worked, corporate attorney who returns to the home in London where he was raised as an orphan, to visit the woman who cared for him, Wendy Darling. What we learn is that Peter is really the legendary Peter Pan, who has grown up and forgotten who he really is. In a series of events that take Peter back to Neverland as an adult, a number of people, beginning with the famous fairy Tinker Bell, try to help Peter recognize himself. It is not easy. Even the lost boys don't believe it is he, because his outward appearance is so different from what they believe their leader should look like. They don't believe Tinker Bell, they just don't see him. Finally, in one scene the youngest and smallest of the lost boys, looks deeply into Peter's countenance; he begins manipulating the skin of Peter's face, with his precious, small hands. As he scrunches up the extra skin on Peter's cheeks and pulls his eye brows upward; the young boy stops, and smiles the most knowing smile, and through his wisest eyes says, "Oh there you are Peter."

In that moment Peter is transformed. He is seen. Acknowledged, validated and recognized. And in that recognition he is forever changed; he sees himself, and in turn others begin to see him and he can begin the business of seeing others as well.

It seems that this is much of what happened to both David and the blind man in our readings from today. For these men, it was perhaps the first time in their lives they were truly recognized and seen. They were seen and confirmed by God in a way no one else could or ever had before.

In David's story the usually wise and all seeing prophetic Samuel doesn't see David for who he is. He assumes the one God has chosen to lead Israel is David's eldest brother Eliab, whom Samuel believes has the "look" and

markings of a king. Instead, God gives Samuel a reminder, a prophetic nudge, and says,

“Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.

I wonder about David? I wonder if David knew who he was before old Samuel came along and anointed him that day? I wonder if he didn't have an inkling in his heart, as he tended his father's sheep in the Bethlehem fields. An inkling that possibly there was more to him than met the eye. Sometimes perhaps as he lay on the ground at night and prayed, he sensed that he had been created for something specific; that he held gifts that no one could see, except for him and God. Certainly, his brothers and his father hadn't seen them, yet David was sure they were there. He hadn't quite honed what these gifts were, but it felt like there was something special about him; so he would wait and see what God had in store for him. God would reveal it to him; he need not worry, only to believe what lived within him. And of course this was true; God sent Samuel to anoint the truth of what David held in his heart. And that truth of David's God given vision, changed a people and a nation.

The same wondering may have gone on for the blind man in the Gospel. He had been blind his entire life; sitting along the side of that road, in crowded Jerusalem. No one had noticed him, or if they had, he had only been identified as that poor blind fellow who begs on the street corner. And still I bet, he, like David, really like all of us I think; was certain that there was more to him than met the eye. There was something inside of him; something that God perhaps had written on his heart, that he knew was true. It kept him paying attention for that moment when he would be seen with different eyes.

And then it happened. Along came Jesus, who saw him. The blind man didn't see Jesus; he couldn't, at least in the way we often think we should see. Instead he was waiting. I like to think praying inside his darkness to somehow find and release the light that he knew lived inside of him. And there it was, the light of world stopping on his street corner, reaching down and taking a handful of the earth and mixing it with his own human saliva, making a godly paste and anointing the man; enabling him to shine that light that had lived inside him over every person around him.

The man knew it immediately, Jesus was what he had been waiting for, he had been seen; he had been transformed. And because he believed by the truth in his heart, he became an evangelizer right there on the street corner. He had no trouble rebuffing the questions by the Pharisee's and others who could not yet see. They kept asking him, "*Then how is it that your eyes were opened?*" "*What did he do to you?*"

The brave new evangelizer tells them he doesn't really know except, "*the one thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.*"

He knew Jesus lived in him, he knew it all along.

It is because God sees us that we can see; that we can feel that inkling of who we really are. God sees what is in our hearts, and we know it I think, if we wait and listen.

For the past few weeks of Lent our readings', sermon's and congregation's meditations on Wednesday nights, have been examining the healing and transformations that can and have taken place as we walk through the desert of Lent. Perhaps, it is the desert places of our hearts that we have really been talking about. Perhaps, we are talking about what it is like to be waiting on the side of road in Jerusalem or Port Townsend, or in the fields of Bethlehem or the fields of our lives. Waiting and preparing ourselves to be seen, to be noticed, to be anointed by God. To examine and trust the inkling that is in our hearts so we can be transformed and shine our own God written light. It is gloriously different for each one of us. *We are the children of the light*, who have been waiting; going about our daily ways, waiting to hear what God has for us as we move out of the desert. Who are we as we wait and walk this Lenten season? Who do we know lives inside of us? When it is called in us and we are anointed; will we be able to walk in the light and be seen and begin seeing the light in everyone around us? Will we hear God say. "Oh there you are." I knew you were there because "*the Lord looks on the heart.*"