

Sermon: May 8, 2011 (Mother's Day)

**"Anonymous"**

Sometimes it's just plain good to be ANONYMOUS. Maybe on vacation ... just some place where nobody knows you. You aren't a minister ... you are not defined by the "big mistake" you made 3 years ago ... not a housewife, or plumber, or Lutheran, or ex-Catholic, or the guy from the AA meeting.

I'm just "me" ... whoever I am in that moment of time.

I had an "off-campus" wedding yesterday. I got there a bit early ... and recognized one of the guys from the wedding party. He was having a fairly animated discussion with another guy. I went up to say "hi" ... introduced myself to his friend. Well, his friend obviously had a bad day ... 'cause he was ranting and raving about someone who did him wrong.

Cubs fans --- all 3 of you --- remember former manager Lee Elia??

His infamous "rant" after a loss ... where he went on-and-on ... using bad language that hadn't even been invented yet. I mean ---- it was so "bad" ... it was "funny."

This guy is having the same kind of moment. Now ... my language isn't always the best. But this guy said in 5 minutes what I can't fit into 5 years. He is dropping more "verbal bombs" than I ever thought possible.

Anyway ---- I say to the guy I know: "Hey, I better get going ... wedding is about to start."

As I'm walking away ... I could hear "the ranting-and-raving" guy say: "WHO IS THAT GUY?"

"Oh ..." he responds ... "He is the minister doing the service!!"

What fun!! ----- the look on this guy's face is priceless .... discovering his "earthy rant" takes place in front of the "family priest." Every time I got near the guy after the service ... whoa!@!! ----- he would turn in another direction. The "joy" of being anonymous ... of people not knowing who you are.

Speaking of anonymity ...

The disciples are walking to a town call Emmaus ... it's after Jesus has been raised from the tomb. They encounter a "stranger" ... who joins them. When they reach their destination ... the stranger keeps on going. But the disciples invite him to stay for supper.

At the table ... "this stranger" breaks bread ... and something burns inside of them.

Before they can say anything ... "the stranger" disappears.

Now they know: THIS STRANGER IS JESUS.

You see? ... it's in life's anonymous moments that we discover Jesus.

*The gentle stranger.*

*The overly tired mom.*

*An act of kindness we don't deserve.*

*Reaching-out to someone else ... and they don't know it's you.*

If and when Jesus comes back ... we won't know he is here. It's not going to be like the tv-evangelists would want us to think: loud voices, raptures, with the righteous few being whisked away.

Jesus is anonymous. We discover him in the breaking of bread, in a gentle touch, a wrong turn made right, a word of forgiveness. A flannel shirt ... a package to Afghanistan ... Muslims and Christians and Jews ---

working together to keep the flood waters at bay.

A plant sale. A kid's work of art. A beautiful sunrise on Mother's Day.

It's been quite a week, hasn't it??

Bin Laden ... coming up on 10 years since 9-11 ... the destruction in southern Illinois, Missouri, Alabama,

Tennessee. Peoples' fears ... the sense of loss.

There are some "fun miracles" along the way, too. The White Sox won last night!!  
Derek Rose of the Bulls ----- with all his money and fame ... paying tribute to the one person who  
keeps him grounded: HIS MOM.

We all need people in our lives ... who keep us "grounded."

*When we're too self-absorbed.*

*When our life is one pity-party after another.*

*When we forget what and who is important.*

*We are too impressed with ourselves.*

*Our religion is one based on self-righteousness ... and we are a bit too free about our opinions ...*

We need someone: our mom? ... dad? ... grandma? ... the goof down-the-block???

*"Hey, Borling ----- you are only one person. Your journey is no more important than anyone  
else's. And yet to a few ----- your journey means the world.*

*In the meantime: be humble. Be good. Reach-out. With love."*

I think of these words someone left on my desk this week:

***Earth does not belong to man. Man belongs to the earth.***

***Man does not weave the web of life ... he is only a strand in it.***

***Whatever happens to the earth ... it happens to all of us.***

***Whatever man does to the web of life on earth ... he does to himself."***

I think often of life's "connectedness."

And somehow I am reminded ... even tho' she has been gone for 25 years ...

*my mom's love for me was "RIDICULOUS."*

In the midst of self-righteous temper-tantrums ... little league games ... un-done homework ...  
friends over, messin' up the house everyday ... bad piano lessons ...

**ALL SHE DID WAS LOVE ME.**

*Undeserved.*

*Unconditional.*

*Not thanked enough.*

*Behind the scenes.*

*Always "anonymous."*

In a few moments, we'll break bread.

Common ... ordinary ... store-bought bread ----- eaten and shared by ordinary people.

Jesus reminds us:

***"It's in the ordinary moments ... when magic can happen."***

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