

June 26, 2022
Third Sunday after Pentecost

Meditation: “FOMO”

In the OT lesson, Elijah is about to be taken up into the heavens, and not once, not twice, but three times he tells Elisha to stay behind, and not once, not twice, but three times Elisha refuses to leave his side. It becomes obvious in the reading that Elisha knows what is about to happen. In fact, he tells the company of prophets in both Bethel and Jericho as much. I wonder, is Elisha suffering from FOMO – fear of missing out? And what is it that he doesn't want to miss out on? Finally, on the other side of the Jordan river, Elijah asks Elisha what it is that he wants.

It seems that our society, especially in the last couple of years, has become extremely divided, suspicious, intolerant, and filled with hatred and vitriol and rage. We have conservatives vs. liberals, (republicans vs. democrats,) pro-mask vs. anti-mask, pro-vax vs. anti-vax, people who want rules to protect us all vs. freedom fighters who reject any and all forms of restriction, pro-gun vs. gun control, racialized hatred directed against Indigenous people, people of colour, and people of non-white, Christian cultural and religious backgrounds, like the Afzaal family, hatred directed at the LGBTQ2S+ community with flags stolen, and the mass shooting in Norway, and now, it's pro-life vs. pro-choice. The question I have is why? Why all the suspicion? Why all the intolerance? Why the hatred, vitriol, rage, and acts of violence? Why? It just makes no sense to me.

Could it be fear? Could it be fear of change? Or could it be FOMO? Fear of missing out on what some feel entitled to. Fear of missing out on positions of privilege. Fear of missing out on social power. Fear of missing out on social control. I wonder.

The Psalmist was distressed, perhaps even fearful of whatever was happening in his life or in his community. However, instead of heading down to the local gun shop to buy an AK-47 and several cases of ammunition so he could kill whomever he blamed for his distress, he sat with God and remembered all of the blessings in his life, and in the life of his people. He remembered all of the good things God had done in the past – and remember, Dr. Phil says the best indicator of future behaviour is past behaviour. God can be trusted to keep God's promises, because God has been shown to be faithful in the past.

There is more need for Christians to speak up about the state of our society now than ever before. As Christians we need to speak up about the lack of respect people have for one another. We need to speak up about intolerance, whether it is intolerance directed against Indigenous peoples, people of colour, the LGBTQ2S+ community, immigrants,

refugees, pro-vax, pro-choice, NDP, or any other identifiable group of people. Why? Because Jesus calls us to be inclusive. Why? Because God is pro-life. God created all of us, not just the ones with blue eyes or brown hair or you get the idea. "But," you may say, "it is uncomfortable to confront someone who is shouting obscenities at another person because of.... well for any reason. It could be dangerous if that person turns their attack on us. It could be life threatening if they have a weapon."

So? Jesus calls us to take up our cross, and to spread the good news of the kingdom of God in word and in deed. Jesus calls us to be bold in our discipleship and to be daring in situations of injustice. Jesus calls us to have FOMO – fear of missing out on a world where all people, where all of creation is respected, and where everyone has what they need not only to survive, but to thrive. That is justice and righteousness. Go, and make it so.