

“Shining Glory” Isaiah 672:1-5, John 2:1- 111/17/2010 Kenmore UMC

Redeemed and vindicated by God, God’s people are to “*shine like the dawn,*” and reveal God’s glory.

“*On the third day,*” John alerts us in the first words of this passage something big is going to happen. We should have the eyes of our hearts open for what God is going to do. It starts off as a pretty ordinary day. Jesus and his disciples are at a wedding. It gets a little surprising when Jesus’ mother sees a problem and tells Jesus about it.

It gets more surprising when Jesus essentially says, “*so what,*” where I come from you don’t say that to your mother, so Jesus adds, “*it is not my time yet.*” Like any mother who sees so much in her son, this mother knows what an amazing son she has and ignores Jesus’ rudeness and tells the servants to do what Jesus tells them to do.

He told them, *fill the jugs used for purification with water, they did.* He said *draw some out and give it to the wine steward, they did* and the amazement begins.

This ordinary day in the life of a village in Israel is transformed by an outbreak of God’s transforming presence.

Jesus’ disciples saw this and believed. Maybe they even congratulated themselves on their decision to accept Jesus’ invitation to “*come and follow,*” because they realized they were following the right One, the One who was “*the Word made flesh,*” who was the “*Light that shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it.*” John 1:5

Haven’t you been there? Do you remember or have you forgotten? Rev. Robert Brearley, Pastor of St Simon’s Island Presbyterian Church asked that question in his statement that, “*Sometimes the church has forgotten that our Lord once attended a wedding feast and said yes to gladness and joy. Prompted by his earthly mother, Jesus turned water into wine to point us to his heavenly Father, a God who loves to hear the laughter of people celebrating people. Sometimes the church has forgotten to live the joy of such revelation.*”

Have you, Have We, forgotten when God has transformed the ordinary into the extraordinary in our lives and in our world? Or do we remember the joy and the wonder of Jesus entering our lives, our world and transformed it by his love and joy. What a difference it makes when we remember, when we claim, when we orient our lives by that shining light in our midst.

Suddenly love and joy have a new dimension, no wonder this passage has been read at so many weddings, “*Jesus adorned and beautified the wedding at Cana of Galilee,*” the welcome says, which is to say, “Jesus will adorn and beautify this wedding today with his presence and this marriage that begins today, this life and light that begins today in the lighting of the couples Wedding Candle.

Who knows what the next day/s will bring in the couples lives and the lives of the guests at the wedding, but the joy of the love the couple shares shines out on all who have gathered, and it will shine in whatever dark days may lie ahead in the unknown future. As Pastor Debbie Blue says, “*Two beings are committing their lives to something the exact nature of which is yet to be determined, till death do them part.*”

How could we as the Church, as followers of Jesus forget the light of such joy in our lives? How could we not shine with such joy and glory?

Today, just two weeks past Epiphany, four weeks past Christmas, have we forgotten? How much we need to remember just five days after the devastating earthquake in Haiti. How much we need to remember the day before the celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s birthday and some

46 years since he stated his dream on the Washington monument mall on the hundredth anniversary of the emancipation proclamation.

“Again and again we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.

He goes on to state his dream that is born in his faith, *“With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope.*

With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom when all of God’s children will be able to sing , (together).

In the face of all the issues that divide people from one another and the rancorous voices that call us to division, and even blame disasters on the victims of the disaster, we need to remember. We need to remember at a wedding feast about to turn sour, Jesus brought forth the sweetness of joy through some new wine.

And he shone with the glory of God.

We need to remember the voice of the prophet Isaiah, who cried out to God that

“For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent, and

For Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest

until her vindication shines out like the dawn and

her salvation like a burning torch.

The people had returned to the devastation of a destroyed country, a destroyed Temple and they wondered if God forgot, Isaiah wonders if God forgot Israel.

And Isaiah proclaims his remembrance: *The nations shall see your vindication and all the kings your glory: you shall be called by a new name,*

...You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord,

...You shall be called ‘My Delight is in her,’

and your land married.

...so shall your God rejoice over you.

The people of Haiti have heard this word of the Lord from the prophet Isaiah, they sang out the hymns of faith in the midst of the destruction and death all around them. The pain and devastation that is doubly cruel for the poverty of those who are its victim is a darkness that hangs over the world, but the light of God’s love has not gone out, but shines in the deep darkness. Morning paper picture of the last 3 presidents together calling for our response.

The impossible is being made possible, no roads to carry the food and medical supplies for the broken, no water for the thirsty, it will be brought in by planes and boats and trucks, same with the food, same with the heavy equipment.

Despair from the tragedy touches our lives, one of our families (the Volle’s) knows the woman who went to bring home their adopted child from Haiti, the mission team from our community caught in the disaster even as they had gone to bring relief from the poverty, students and families not knowing how their love ones are faring, the leader of the United Methodist Committee on Relief, Rev. Sam Dixon is killed in the earthquake under the rubble of the Montana Hotel.

And yet UMCOR is there, along with so many other relief workers, from governments and charities, volunteers who have cried out through their actions they will not rest until a new day dawns in Haiti. By the third day, UMCOR alone, we United Methodists, had already raised over a million dollars and we have even taken the offering yet.

People have remembered, in the darkness – light, in devastation – hope, in despair – joy, in brokenness – peace.

The light of love kindled in many a wedding ceremony, is burning bright, it is shining with Glory.

May we, God’s people remember, claim and Shine with that glory in our lives, in our world. Amen.