

JUNE 25, 2017

PR LABC

The first wedding I ever officiated was only four months after I was ordained and came here to serve you, the people of First Lutheran.

Five years ago, I was honored to officiate the marriage of Claire Landry and Marly Zell.

Every couple's relationship is unique but yet incredibly similar as well. Because we all long to be known, and loved, and valued, just as we are.

Just as God has made us.

Just as we have developed in response to our life's experiences.

Because we all long for truth in our relationships, whether it be in a romantic relationship or a friendship, whether it be with our professional or community relationships.

We all long to be truly seen, even if it may be uncomfortable or fearful at times to take off our protective masks that keep us supposedly safe and secure.

When we willingly follow Jesus in our various life's seasons, when we are mysteriously drawn to inquire about Jesus, or when we even have doubts about journeying with Jesus, however we are when we are with Jesus, we are led to deeper truths in our knowing and seeing.

To more deeply know and see ourselves,
to more deeply know and see one another,
and to more deeply know and see God.

Because knowing and seeing the truth of how God works within us, within others, and within this life, is of great importance to God.

Especially the gifts of knowing and seeing when we are walking in the newness of life that comes when we are united with Christ Jesus, and we are gifted with the grace to die to our brokenness, and to be raised to live a life transformed by the gracious love of God.

And in that journey of truthful discovery with Jesus, of being led to greater knowledge and sight, we are told to not be afraid.

To not be afraid if we are in doubt of the wisdom of God's ways,
if we are in doubt that God does not see us,
and we are not deeply seen and known by God
especially when life's experiences seem to have more death than life,
more rejection than acceptance, more pain than joy, more fear than faith.

To not be afraid of how we are regarded by others,
even when we fear that we are not truly valued, or even fear for our very lives.
To not be afraid if we are not liked for sharing the gospel message
that we die to brokenness and then rise again to live freed by grace.

Instead, we are told to be brave, and to proclaim on the rooftops
what we hear whispered in the secret of our hearts.
We are told to be brave, and share with others in the open light
what we have heard when we journeyed through our dark spaces,
to share what kept us alive and kept us going when we were in despair.

We are told to be brave because God's grace reigns, and helps us to be brave.
And nothing in this life that we may try to cover up and keep secret
is unseen by the One who's eyes are always upon us,
by the One who values us beyond compare.
Because what happens when we are hiding is just as important to God
as what happens to us when we want to be seen.
And we can be brave because we are known and seen and valued as we are,
because God's grace reigns especially when life seems too hard to be brave.

Whether we have the strength or the courage to believe it or not.
Whether or not the fear that comes from what we hear said about us
keeps us hiding or not. Whether we feel brave or not.
Because above all, God's gracious love for us and care for our souls reigns.
Of this, we can be certain.

Today, I have asked Marly and Claire if they would be brave,
and share their faith story with you, their community of faith.
To bravely share how God has been at work in their lives.
To share with us in this bright light what they have journeyed through.
To proclaim on the rooftops what they have heard whispered to their hearts.
All the while, trusting that God has all the hairs of their heads counted,
and they are of great value to their God.