

St. David's Episcopal Church
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The other morning my alarm went off three times before it really woke me up. The first time it went off, I was able to roll over and turn it off, or at least hit the snooze button. The second time it went off I vaguely remember Rob walking around to my side of the bed and turning it off, or once again, hitting snooze and the third time it wasn't the alarm, but Rob's voice demanding that I do something about the alarm that made me to get up and actually turn off my morning alarm.

I heard it before this third time, but it took something much louder, more demanding to make me rise from my sleepy haze and do something about it.

Sometimes life is that way, you know that something is going to happen, but it takes a sign out of the ordinary to get you to move out of the complacent inertia that one's days can become to do anything about it. If you are like me, in the between, you spend time talking about what is going to happen, planning for it, processing with anyone who will listen the impending, but still you put it off until something louder, something out of the ordinary, some sign lets you know that its time – NOW.

This is where Jesus finds himself when in response to learning that some Greeks want to see him, he says, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified." Jesus could no longer put off the inevitable, the alarm had gone off one too many times. Time for preparation and processing was over, the hour had come.

When Jesus' metaphorical alarm went off, he had spent the last – days, weeks, months – talking with his disciples about his impending death and resurrection. In the Gospels According to Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Jesus talks about his inevitable persecution, death, and resurrection at least three times, while John writes about three other occasions when Jesus predicts his own death.

Each of these Gospels includes at least three accounts of Jesus talking with disciples about what is to come – there is the time when Peter, upon hearing of Jesus' inevitable suffering and death, exclaims, "This must never happen!" and Jesus responds, "Get behind me, Satan." Each includes the story of Peter, James and John witnessing the transfiguration, after which Jesus orders them not to tell anyone what they had seen until after "the Son of Man had risen from the dead." And each of the synoptic Gospels includes depictions of Jesus foretelling his suffering, death, and resurrection as they traveled to Jerusalem.

As Jesus prepared the disciples for his impending pain, suffering, death and resurrection, Jesus was also preparing himself. Jesus was fully human and even he needed to process and come to accept what God was calling to.

Today's reading begins just after Jesus and the disciples arrived in Jerusalem. The faithful who had come to worship at the Temple during the Passover Festival filled the streets. Also in the crowd were followers and friends of Jesus, as well as the curious who had heard stories about the miracles Jesus had performed and about Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead.

And there were some Greeks.

While our reading uses the word Greeks, these people were Gentiles. They were “those people,” the ones Jesus had forbidden the disciples from approaching when they were out preaching and teaching. And then, “some of the Greeks came over to Philip and said to him, “Sir, we would like to see Jesus.”

This was huge –the Gentiles where THOSE PEOPLE.

I can just imagine the scene. The group of Greeks pushes one young man forward urging him to talk to Philip. It must have been like a scene from West Side Story when a member of the Jet gang crossed the street to talk to one of the Sharks.

Philip, realizing the importance of this moment, and not knowing what to do, goes to Andrew and together they go to Jesus. What did they think Jesus would say or do?” I am sure they were not expecting the metaphorical alarm clock to go off for the third time and for Jesus to suddenly declare, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be gloried.”

But Jesus can no longer ignore the “alarm.” His mission had grown bigger than ever imagined. Jesus realized that he was NOT just here for the people of Israel, but he was here for all people, even Gentiles – anyone who was willing to give up their present way of life and live into the new commandment and God’s new covenant.

The metaphorical alarm had gone off for the third time and Jesus knows it is time, and yet, as if to remind us that he is fully human, Jesus pauses and

processes what is to come one more time saying, “Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say --- ‘Father, save me from this hour? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour.”

“Sir, some Greeks wish to see you.”

Jesus does not respond because there is nothing more to say. The time for preparation and processing has passed and he chooses to take the final steps of his journey, to experience the pain of persecution, endure the shame of crucifixion, and suffer death for three days. As Jesus makes the choice to give up his life so that others might have life eternal, he invites his followers to join him in the Kingdom of God. The doors are open, he says, to those prepared to follow his example, loving God with one’s whole heart, and giving one’s life on earth to God so that one might have life eternal with God.

Each Lent we are reminded that Christ made the ultimate sacrifice for us so that we might pray to God to give us grace to love what he commands and desire what he promises and even through life’s wilderness moments pray that our hearts remain focused on the true joy that can only be found living through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

As the dawn of Easter approaches, has your alarm gone off? Will you continue to hit the snooze button or are you ready to rise each day, living into the new covenant God promised to the prophet Jeremiah? A covenant based on love, forgiveness, mercy, and grace. Are you ready to receive forgiveness for your sins and experience the joy of his saving help? We who have been broken - and we have all been broken at one time or another – are we ready to be born again with Christ and in Christ to rejoice – to once again know the joy that is

ours at our birth. Not a giddy joy, but the feeling that babies who are loved and cared for have when they have been fed and are asleep in someone's arms, drunk on milk. This is the joy that is ours, that contented feeling of resting in God and God resting in you.

The opportunity to choose this joy is given to us by Jesus, a man fully divine, yet wholly human. A man who lived among us, loved us, and even processed the sacrifice that God called him to make with us. Throughout his life, we heard thunder, while Jesus heard the voice of God, loving, encouraging, calling. In the end, the choice was his and he chose love. He chose us.

I hope this Lent we will listen more carefully to the thunder and in the end choose Christ and the true joy found in him.