

4th Sunday in Ordinary Time • C
January 30-31, 2010 • Christ the King

Last week we hear the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. In Luke's Gospel he begins in his hometown. Remember the excitement and wonder as Jesus read from prophet Isaiah that Spirit was upon him and that he had been anointed to bring Good News to the poor; a year acceptable to God. Remember how every eye was upon him when he said, "today, this is fulfilled in your hearing.'

Last week we had to wait for the crowd's reaction. And so today, we get 'The rest of the story.' It is amazing how quickly the story turns... from being filled with wonder and amazement to literally wanting to kill him. It all begins with the question: 'Isn't this Joseph's son?'

You can imagine his hometown friends and relatives saying. We know you; we watched you grow up, we sit in chairs you made.... Just who do you think you are? Amazement turns to anger.

This isn't simply a story of ages gone by; it is our story. Where are you in this story? The townspeople thought that knew Jesus. They wanted to keep him safely contained in a box of their creation; we know who you are—you are Joseph's son. They weren't open to seeing God's potential.

So where are we in this story? Are we the townspeople? We know the stories of Jesus. We have grown up hearing about him. But do we really know Jesus? Do we allow Him to truly be the Beloved of God, who calls us into a radical relationship with God and each other? Or is it easier to keep Jesus, the Christ, as a tiny little infant wrapped with swaddling clothes, laying in a manger? Have we created God in our own image?

Or are we simply a passive audience, watching the drama of Jesus being played out before us without any impact on our lives? Is it just like the movies we watch? Does this story have any impact on our lives?

These are challenging questions for each one of us; questions with which we should wrestle from time to time. Faith isn't something passive and static. It is dynamic and is living. Faith is lived. Faith is love.

God so wants to be to a part of our lives, that he sent his Son to show us how much we are loved, beloved. This true love is radical. It calls us into relationship with God and each other. This is a love that is ever inclusive, always embracing and always challenging. This is a love that is alive and active. This is a love of justice and compassion. This is a love that invites to see as God sees, love as God loves and to act as God acts.

Let's listen again to Paul's description of love:

Love is patient, love is kind.
It is not jealous, it is not pompous,
It is not inflated, it is not rude,
it does not seek its own interests,
it is not quick-tempered,
it does not brood over injury,
it does not rejoice over wrongdoing
but rejoices with the truth.
It bears all things, believes all things,
hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never fails.