

## **Homily – Lose Your Life**

**Rob Keim**

**June 21, 2020 – St. Barnabas' Episcopal Church**

This past week has not been one of my favorites. There are a lot of good things happening and only a few bad things, but the final straw was when the gophers got to some Dymondia plants that I had been tending for the last three months. Somehow everything just piled on, and this past week I started going to that place of despair. For the last three months Jeff and I have been rolling with the punches, but this past week, I got tired of just plugging along. There was a set back with something – the details don't matter. And, for the first time I just trashed a sermon because I wasn't in a mood to be able to preach it.

We all have experienced weeks like this. You know what they are like. Sometimes the tears are there for no particular reason. And, I know with the stresses that we have all been experiencing during this time of the Coronavirus, I know that it can be hard to be resilient.

We can take a glass is half full attitude and practice being positive.

We can be mindful of all the good things that are happening around us.

We can be thankful to God for the things that we already have.

But sometimes things just pile on, and our usual ways of relieving stress just don't work the way they usually do.

And, I know that some of you have some pretty somber things going on in your lives. Loved ones with serious illnesses or even the Coronavirus itself. Financial uncertainty. The deep longing to be with others. Relationships with those in your shelter that seem to be coming unbent. Even in normal times these things can be hard to weather.

And, it can be hard to watch the news. Sometimes we just have to turn off the 24-hour new cycle, but we also need to stay informed. Black lives matter. Police lives matter. Immigrant lives matter. Those with mental illness, their lives matter too. Even when we are overwhelmed, we still need to be the hands and feet and voice of Jesus in the world. And sometimes, we even need to be the eyes of Jesus. We need to stay informed.

In today's Gospel reading Jesus tells us many things that could lead to despair. *“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace,*

*but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and one's foes will be members of one's own household."*

Though we might think this reading is a prediction of our shelter at home, it is not. Instead, today's reading is part of the lessons Jesus is teaching his disciples as he prepares them to do ministry in the world. Of note, Jesus is not telling his disciples that they must be armed with the sword in order to breed conflict. That is not what he is saying. Instead, Jesus is saying that the life of the disciple is not going to be only peaches and cream. Being a disciple does not mean that only good things happen in one's life. Disciples will have some hardship. But, being a disciple is still worth it. The hardship is temporary and is not the last word.

At the conclusion of today's Gospel reading we hear Jesus tell us, *"Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it."*

In other words those who choose to be follower of Jesus will have their old shallow life torn away, so that a new more beautiful life will take its place.

This may be a good time to remind ourselves that we are a resurrection people. Jesus modeled this in his own life, death, and resurrection, and we have this assurance for ourselves as well. And this resurrection assurance is not only what happens to us after the death of our physical bodies. We have this assurance in this lifetime as well. We live with the hope that things will burst forth from the setbacks of our lives.

Again, Black lives matter. Police lives matter. Immigrant lives matter. Those with mental illness, their lives matter too. I wonder what freshness will come as we move forward through these turbulent times into a new normal.

And, I know, just as you know, that a blah week will end and new energy will come. A week with tears will give way to a new time of joy. This too will come.

Before I finish today, I want to show a video from PBS NewsHour. You may need your box of tissues for this video, especially if you are already having a down week. Each Friday evening the PBS NewsHour ends its broadcast with an "In Memoriam" segment for some who have died from Covid-19 during the past week. Here is the video from this past Friday.

All of these people are beautiful in their own way, and all of them are now with God in ways that we can scarcely imagine. We should not ignore these deaths, but instead move on through the sadness. May you lose your life so that you will find it.