

We celebrate today as Epiphany Sunday, the closest Sunday to the 12th day of Christmas. The day that the wise men came and visited the baby Jesus. They went on their own faith journey. They saw something different. They saw something that they felt needed to be searched out. They felt that there was something greater than themselves in the world. They wanted to find it. And they did. They found the baby Jesus.

When they got there, they didn't know what to expect. Didn't know what was going to happen. What they knew was that there is a lot of questions surrounding this event. There's a lot of unknown going on. But they found a baby.

Imagine that. Imagine something so big and wondrous that there's this massive light shining down, saying, hey, look at me. And then you get there and it's an annoying little baby. And it's an annoying little baby because I'm sure he was cold and hungry and crying a lot, because that's what babies do, especially by the 12th day.

Wednesday's 12th day. I was a wreck. I don't think I'd slept for a week by that point. So I can only imagine what it's like in the middle of nowhere, cold, hungry and wanting. But there was still enough that they saw it and thought we're now going to change our lives. We're not going to go back to the king and tell him that we found the baby. We're not going to go back and tell them exactly where it is. Instead, we're going to run for the rest of our lives and worship this child. Because if we go home and we don't tell the king where he is, we're dead. And anyone that we come across along the way, they'll be dead because they'll be trying to backtrack and find where this baby is.

This baby was so wonderful that it was more important to the king that people were dead than it was that the baby was alive. It was so important that he ordered all male children born for two years to be killed. This one little baby had that influence on the world. And then he grew up, and he still had that influence.

In today's reading, we hear about John the Baptist talking to two of his disciples, talking to Andrew. And says there he is. There is the Lamb of God. And instantly Andrew went to be with him. Just that little bit. Simply seeing him walk by, hearing that he is God was enough to convince two people. And then those two people convinced more people.

We continue in the reading and we hear about Nathaniel, and Nathaniel's talking to Jesus. And Jesus says to him, I saw you under the fig tree. What does that mean? I see people every day. I see people in cars. I see people at the bank. I see people at the gas station. Some of us see more people at Git and Go than others, but we see them everywhere. So why is it so significant that Jesus said I saw you under the fig tree?

It's significant because he's telling Nathanael I see you for who you are. When he was under that fig tree, it was the lowest point in Nathanael's life. He was ready to end it all. He thought there was no one out there for him. He thought there was no one there to support him. He thought there was nothing worth living for. And God heard him. God heard the hurt, the anguish, the suffering in this one, poor man, and sent Jesus to find him. And he said, I saw you.

How wonderful is that: to be seen, to be heard, to be shared? That's what we all hope for, right? We all hurt every day. We're all tired every day. We all felt unseen at times, and here is a stranger saying, I see you. And it was enough in Nathaniel believed him. Believe that he wasn't alone anymore and jumped up and followed him. In the reading it says they met at the 10th hour. This is important because that is when Shabbat starts for them.

So that is the time that they start to celebrate and worship God together. And they instantly wanted to be a part of Jesus's teaching. They instantly want to be a part of his faith. Their faith journey had taken them to where they could not go alone any more. Their faith journey had got them to recognize that Jesus was the Savior, but it wasn't enough. They needed something else to help them move on. And they found it. They found it in each other. They found it in Jesus, and they started celebrating and worshiping together that day.

This week I talked about my own faith journey. It's interesting seeing faith journeys as they progress throughout people and throughout faiths. They're different in every faith. In our faith, many times, our faith journey is our own. So often, we don't want to impose our beliefs and our thoughts on others that we don't see that people are asking for help with their faith Journey, that they're asking for help to get them to church, that they're asking for help in finding answers. The questions they don't understand themselves. We miss out on that.

I left the church for a very long time because my faith journey led me away. I wasn't finding answers in the church. I wasn't finding answers from the people I was talking to him. I don't hide that. But I finally found somebody that brought me back to my faith journey. It brought me back and led me back here, and I'm grateful for that because I had somebody tell me that they saw me and that they believed in me enough to get my ass up every Sunday morning and get me here. Because it's hard.

It's hard for me to come in every Sunday. I can only imagine. But I found somebody to help me do that. I found somebody that helped me carry on that journey. Somebody that supports me, and then that one somebody became all of you. Because every week I want to come up here now, and I want to be a part of your faith journey. I don't want to step on your faith journey because your journey is not the same as mine. Your life is different than mine, but we all come to a point that we can't do it alone, and you shouldn't be expected to do it alone. Jesus didn't do it alone.

Besides the obvious that Jesus was God and the Holy Spirit altogether, Jesus had John the Baptist. Right at the beginning, this one Infant believed that this other infant was God, was the Messiah, was the Savior. Had written his name on all of our hearts. Is there with us in the silence, in the beating in between. And the disciples recognized that he was a part of their lives, and they went and continued on his traditions, went and continued on his teachings, went and found others because there are others.

We know there are others, especially this time of year. So many people come to us and say, I'm going to go to church. That's my resolution this year. And we know how I feel about resolutions. They fall, and it's okay to slip. God expects us to slip. God doesn't expect us to be perfect. They know more than anything else that we are not perfect, so it's okay to fail. It's okay to be who you are because God sees you as who you are. God sees the love within you, the joy within you, the peace, and the hope and knows that each one of us is here to spread all of those things. To be that someone for someone else as we can't do this alone in our journey is just as significant as somebody else's And helping them find that love is a wonderful, wonderful thing.

And I hope that we do that. I hope that we continue to deliver that love. That is my resolution this year, to help spread God's love in more ways each and every day. And I know I will slip. I know that there are days that I'm going to be like that person is not worth it. That person is not worth my time. That person is not worth God's love, and I know that's not true. I

know they are worth God's love. I know they are worth my time, but sometimes it's harder to get to people than others. And we can all do it. We can all find those people that need our help, that need to see God's love and vision through us, because if they don't see it through us, they might not find it alone.

Let us pray.