

Throughout these summer Sundays and in the midst of all that continues to happen in the cities of our nation and world, Jesus has spoken to us in ways that seem to move us in a different direction than the perceived “wisdom” of the day.

This has been, and continues to be, an unusual summertime, but in the midst of it all the stories of the Gospel, as told by Jesus himself, give us a new insight, a different perspective, as we have met those persons Jesus has brought to us. Sometimes the stories are comforting, but at other times they have challenged our attitudes and reminded us that God’s words to us, and Christ’s presence among us, has everything to do with the realities we face in these times.

Today, we meet God himself, seemingly filled with anger over all the inhumanity, the great outcry and the “grave sin.” “I must go down and see,” God says, “I mean to find out!”

Now, again, we meet Abraham, who just last Sunday, with Sarah, touched us with their amazing hospitality, and generosity; who ran to the three “strangers” and welcomed them without fear, and conversed with them. The “infinite sadness” that Abraham and Sarah might have felt about the world in which they lived, was overcome by and “infinite love,” an open spirit and a refusal to be consumed by fear.

Abraham was able to see into the human heart. Because of his vision, his open spirit, his sense of hospitality and his trust in the ultimate goodness of humanity, he was able to speak to God, with whom he walked through the city, about God’s own mercy and compassion, about God’s own love for those created in the very image and likeness of God.

But Abraham was not naïve. He saw the reality, the sin, the brokenness all around him. He named it for what it was, but he did not let it define either him or the whole human family. For Abraham, in the midst of all the darkness, was able to see light. In the violence and hatred, in the sin and selfishness, he could see justice, service, selfless giving and a true innocent spirit.

For Abraham, humanity, cultures, others could not be defined by the anger, the violence, the hate. He persistently believed in the goodness of the humanity and in the whole human family in all its diversity! He consistently refused to be infused with fear, hatred, doubt and isolation. He spoke to God, to himself, and to all who could hear him, that if only a few were filled with goodness, with a willingness to persist in belief and hope, if only a few would be just, then all could be. And God heard and believed Abraham and so did the people.

And now, again, we meet Jesus himself, the new Abraham, who lives among the whole human family. “Teach us to pray,” we hear. When you pray this is how you are to live, this is how you are to believe. You are all sisters and brothers, every neighbor, every one; you share one Father, so you dare to say, “Our Father;” you are to pray and live to seek and build the Dwelling place of God, in this “city” where all are to be welcomed, where all are loved. Seek what you need, but not what you want, ask only for daily bread, and share with the many without. Seek forgiveness, accept forgiveness and forgive, forgive, forgive. And as you walk through the struggles and violence of your cities and world, like Abraham walked with God in the city, pray that your faith, and your living of it, is not put to the test, but that you will see in all the diversity of the human family the light of goodness, justice and hope. Ask for faith, seek goodness, hear those knocking at the door: Open, receive, and find.

Be persistent in your faith, in your service, in your love. Seek first the dwelling place of God amongst the whole human family, in all its diversity.

Like Abraham, walk with God through the city. Ask about the human struggle; seek the light of hope and the goodness dwelling there; knock on every door and cross the threshold of every house. Give good gifts to all the children. Let your prayer be daring and true: "Our Father..."

BE AMONG THE TEN WHO LOVE THE NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF!

