

There was moment when my father's words came true.

I grew up hearing, "you'll never know how I feel about you," from my father especially. Of course not! "How can I know dad, I only know how I feel about you." But then Jordan was born. Oh my goodness. Jordan was delivered by emergency caesarian section at 4:44 in the morning, Saturday, May 24, 1986. At 2.5 weeks overdue, Sheila had been in induced labor for 24 hours and had been pushing for an hour and a half. The nurse said, "the way she's pushing that baby should be firing across the room like a football." Mothers will know something about which I speak. Thank goodness there had been an epidural block so Sheila wasn't feeling most of it. But with Jordan at 10 pounds three ounces, and Sheila a dress size three before she got pregnant, this was not a good combination.

As soon as Jordan was out, they scurried me out of the operating room to follow the incubator that held the little tike (well okay he came out wearing football pads). He was to be bathed and readied. The nurse who bathed him asked me "what's his name?" We hadn't shared this with anyone yet, because we weren't exactly sure. I told her "Jordan...I think." "He will always be Jordan to me."

And there it was – the thing my dad said I didn't know. I knew. In that instant I knew how I felt about Jordan. And then I knew how my dad felt about me. Who knew? You can only know when you know. Right? And the only person who could teach me was a 15 minute old infant whose name was maybe, Jordan.

According to the Episcopalian priest, William Countryman, this is the borderland of the holy. This place where that which was once previously hidden becomes known is the place where Jesus lived his entire existence. Whether he was healing, or preaching, or teaching, or praying, or partying with his friends, Jesus escorted people into an encounter with ultimate reality, in the holy moment of NOW, to connect with God. That is how Countryman defines priest. A priest, of the order of Melchizedek, one who is fully immersed in the sacrament of revelation, is one who reveals hidden things. Arcana. Mysteries. Hidden things. A priest is the one helps someone to see that which they could not see before. Jesus was the ultimate example. In his life, death and resurrection, Christ is the ultimate high priest who calls us to our own priesthood. And the texts we read today help us to remember – that we are all members of the priesthood...the priesthood of all believers. We are all priests.

The author of 1st Peter is writing to the whole church, not a particular community and to newbies joining the church about what it means to follow in the countercultural steps of Jesus. Marginalized, sidelined, a tiny minority sect, the second century church was about a completely different set of cultural values. Taking one's place in that church was to become as Christ; to be God's people with a lineage, a royal priesthood.

The gospel of John reiterates this idea. Not only reiterates, but assures that while Jesus is plugged into the energy of God through the Spirit, his followers will be and do the same. Greater things in fact shall they do. This text speaks to us directly...as we take up our roles in the mystery of revealing hidden things to one another.

The key for everyone is to remain curious.

We cannot be right if we expect to encounter the holy. We cannot be rigid and experienced if we expect to see something we had previously not seen. I love the poem in our words for meditation this morning.

From the place where we are right, no flowers will grow in the spring.
The place where we are right is hard and trampled like a yard.
But doubts and loves, dig up the world, like a mole, a plow,
And a whisper will be heard in the place where the ruined house once stood.

From the place where we are right, we can never hope to encounter the mystery that someone might show us. From the place where we are right, we cannot possibly see that which was seen before.

Each of us is called and commissioned, ordained to the work of bringing people into an encounter with the holy, in the borderlands between things unknown and known. And that can only happen if I let them show me; if I say yes to their wisdom; if I ordain them. You see just as we must stand as priests, as accompaniment for others into the borderland of the holy, it only works if we let people accompany us. We must let go of being right...and ordain the one who would teach us.

My sons – oh the things I would never have seen had I not been gifted with these two beautiful young men particularly.

Matt – I've never heard the voice of the piano sung with such style and passion from one so young

Jill – a ministry with the differently-abled, I'd never seen before.

Len – the beauty of this place through the lens...the photos of us

The Sunrisers - the capacity for remaining curious and open and gracious, unflappable and gracious in all the changes

Judith – the capacity to celebrate unparalleled joy in the depth of profound grief...who knew?

Alice – your capacity for hospitality

Barbara – a child of the world, unstoppable regardless of ability

Doubting Thomas asks the question in the incredulity of what Jesus says to them. How can we possibly know the way you are going? Friends, apply this to the borderland of the holy...how can we get there? Jesus says follow me. I am the way, the truth and the life. You get to the father, the ultimate reality, the NOW of God through me, by me, by my example. I will never forget one young fellow in the Spirituality of Wine program as we explored this text: "Blair, I'm the one who has to own these words. I am the way the truth and the life. No one gets to the father but through me, too." And Jesus echoes, "greater things than these shall you do in my name."

This is our inheritance my friends. Receive it, be in it, and be at peace. Amen.