

Hide and Seek (Message presented by Greg and Mary Kay Birdwhistell at Broomfield UCC 4-28-2019)

God: Peace be with you. (Start out whispering. Repeat gradually getting louder)

M K: Oh My God! You scared the bejeez... I mean, Oh! My God! I wasn't expecting you.

God: Why weren't you expecting me? I'm always here.

M K: Well, yeah, you're always "here" but I'm not always looking for you. You do seem to show up at just the right time, though.

God: I'm never far away. Do you remember those times during your Song of Joy years when the message and the music came together even though no one had talked to anyone else about a theme? That was me. Remember those days?

M K: I remember them fondly. It seems you and I spent a lot more time together back then and then it ended and to tell you the truth, I've been feeling a bit lost.

God: Would this be one of those times I seem to appear just when I'm needed? You seem to be struggling with something.

M K: I am. I'm trying to write something really special to share at church. But I'm feeling confused and a little ...unsure.

God: You've been reading the Bible again.

M K: Is it that obvious? I've been immersed in John's story about Thomas. I'm trying to understand why Thomas was so full of doubt. I know you wrote this story but I need to process so bear with me. Looking back, I can see that Mary of Magdala...

God: The one at the tomb.

M K: She believed as soon as Jesus spoke her name and then she ran off and excitedly told the disciples "I have seen the Lord!" And when he first made an appearance to his disciples as they stayed hidden...

God: In a locked room.

M K: They were overjoyed. Thomas wasn't there and refused to believe what the others had told him. In fact, He wanted indubitable proof that Jesus was alive. So this makes me wonder, why didn't he believe a roomful of his closest friends?

God: That's a good question. Has there ever been a time when you had cause to be skeptical?

M K: Yes, I can think of a few instances.

God: And no matter how strongly others believed and tried to sway you, what held you back?

M K: Now that I think about it, I was the one left out of the loop, the proverbial last to know, even though I was close to the person involved in the circumstance. So I was completely caught off guard. The information I was receiving was not congruent with what I believed to be true. I needed to defend the truth as I knew it.

God: And so Thomas was...

M K: Defending the truth as he knew it.

God: Can you see the air?

M K: Can I see what?

God: The air that you breathe, Can you see it?

M K: No, you made it invisible.

God: Can you see the wind?

M K: It's made from the air. It's invisible, too. But I can see the grass and the trees bending before it.

God: Can you hear me?

M K: Well, I don't really hear you but I know when you're speaking; like now.

God: So, right now you have no doubts?

M K: I don't have any doubts ever; in my heart I know you're near but this is about Thomas. He had just spent 3 years with Jesus. They were friends. When Thomas heard that Jesus was alive what kept him from seeking out Jesus? Jesus had been making appearances in the vicinity of the disciples. Maybe if Thomas had just made the effort to find Jesus...

God: Jesus was seen only when & where He chose to be seen.

M K: You're right! Well, I mean, of course you're right. Jesus would just appear and be standing among his disciples; at least that's what the Bible says: "Jesus came and stood among his disciples and said "Peace be with you." Just like you always do. Why didn't he stay with them?

God: I think you need to answer that for yourself.

M K: Why? You're here. You know the answer. Just tell me.

God: Where do you look for Jesus?

M K: What? Are we going to play hide and seek?

God: In your world today where do you look for Jesus?

M K: (puzzled) I look in the Bible. It tells us everything we know about Jesus.

God: Is that the only place you look.

M K: No.

God: Well where do you look besides the Book? And you can't use that time you were cloud gazing and saw a cloud that looked just like the face of Jesus.

M K: I observe the world around me. I find him in kind works being done. I find him in the smile of a stranger. I find him in the sharing of a meal and sometimes in sadness and suffering. I find him in the comfort of a hug. I find him as I look into the eyes of others.

God: That's good. Does that validate our existence for you?

M K: Most of the time.

God: What do you mean "most of the time"?

M K: I mean sometimes Your spark is there in their eyes and sometimes it isn't. It's the difference between looking into a pristine pond and a stagnant puddle. There is life in one and desolation in the other.

God: Interesting analogy. Is there life in the stagnant puddle?

M K: It certainly doesn't look lively.

God: But do things live there?

M K: I guess so.

God: But you can't see them?

M K: Not without a microscope.

God: Would a microscope have helped Thomas?

M K: For a moment I forgot this was a discussion about Thomas. No, a microscope wouldn't have helped he needed proof that the person who appeared to the disciples was Jesus. He needed to touch the scars from the nails and put his hand into Jesus wound. He needed to see a bigger picture.

God: He required a lot of hard evidence, didn't he?

M K: It would seem so. But Jesus was okay with it. He told him "Because you have seen me you believe, blessed are those who have not seen and believe."

God: Yes, He has a much smoother way with language than me. I said “ I am the Lord, your God, you shall have no other God’s before me.” Pretty demanding wasn’t I.

M K: Well, you did have that reputation for a long time but let’s get back to Thomas and his skepticism.

God: And, yours?

M K: Do you know how much easier this would all be if you and Jesus didn’t have to be so mystical? We spend our time looking for you and trying to define you so that others can know what we know but can’t see, hear or touch.

God: I wanted it to be that way. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end and all things in between. If you could see me in one form all the time it would be hard to grasp omnipotence.

M K: You chose to be a part of everything and to keep yourself hidden in plain sight so that we would always wonder if we were seeing You or not. That means we always have to be “ it ” in this eternal game of hide and seek.

God: I can’t be it.

M K: I thought you could do everything. Why can’t you be “it”?

God: Really?

M K: Yes, really. Why can’t we take turns?

God: Because, I always know where you are but you lose sight of me, even when I’m always above you, beneath you, all around you and within you.

M K: Was that what happened to Thomas? He lost sight of Jesus and had to be reminded?

God: That’s a good explanation. I’ve been watching you write while we were talking. Why don’t you let me hear what you’ve been writing?

M K: You mean you haven't been looking over my shoulder this whole time?

God: No. I know you hate that. Besides, sometimes I like to be surprised.

Go ahead, I'm listening.

M K: Okay God, here we go.

Hide and Seek

Is it You that I hear in the stillness of dawn,
Or is it in the bird songs that you are calling me?
Are You the wind rustling gently through the leaves
Or could it be that You are the tree?

Are You the light that shines from each bright star
Or are You the infinite darkness in between?
Are You each leaf, each blade of grass?
Are You the color green?

Are You the sun bringing warmth and light?
Or are you a cold and stormy day?
Do I hear your laughter in a bubbling brook
And when children are at play?

Do I see You smiling when I look up and
Someone is smiling at me?
And if I look deeply into their eyes,
Is it You that I really see?

Are You the abundance in some walks of life
And the scarcity in other places?

Are You the joy in our singing and dancing?

Are You the sorrow that creases our faces?

Are You the One Who gives me life

And makes my spirit soar?

Are You the One Who will take me away,

When for me there is no more?

Are You each breath that I take

Every moment that I live?

Are You the Love that fills me

With all that I have to give?

Hide and Seek it seems to me

Is a game we like to play

And just when I think I've found You,

You quietly slip away.

If only I could keep You

In the center of my soul,

Always present, my Source of being

The One Who makes me whole.

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