

Lent 5, Year B, RCL
The Rev. Catherine L. Tatem
The Church of the Redeemer, Greenville, SC
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Jeremiah 31:31-34 Psalm 51:1-13 Hebrews 5:5-10 John 12:20-33

One day the Israelites reached the promised land. Their desert time came to an end when they reached the place that God promised to them. Our desert time is coming to a close, as well. Next Sunday is Palm Sunday, and we will make our way to the cross alongside of Jesus. Our year-long desert time appears to be ending, as well, as vaccines are distributed and given, and we begin to abandon some of the strict practices of pandemic time. We have not yet arrived at the Promised Land, however. People are still dying of Covid, of senseless shootings, of hatred, hunger, and a hard world. We are still in the desert.

From the midst of every sort of chaos, the words of Jeremiah land like a cool drink on parched lips: The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with Israel.... I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Over and over again the people turned away from God and broke the covenant under which they were living. God's response is faithfulness, accompanying us wherever we wander. God's ultimate response is a new covenant we call Jesus. It is the way of Jesus that we are called to carry with us and write on our hearts. When we carry Jesus within ourselves, we live fully into God's love for the world. In our humanity, however, we still fail, still grumble about the spiritual food that God gives us, and wonder how to get to any promised land. We know the way there; we find our best life in following Jesus, in writing Love upon our hearts.

So it is with the Greeks who approached Philip with the simple statement "We want to see Jesus." Their words convey a desire to *know* him. The Greeks are asking for an encounter with, an experience of, Jesus (David Lose). We do not know if they got to see Jesus in that moment. Perhaps the important message is that the Greeks and the world thereafter will know Jesus through the seeds that have been planted in others; in that case, we are the ones to spread the word of Jesus. "This is all for you," Jesus is saying. That's how much God loves you. Now die to yourself, your ego, and tell the world.

As we move from deep Lent to Holy Week, let's tell the world – show the world – about life with Jesus. Prepare to take this walk to the cross with Jesus so that we might find the deep and abiding wholeness of life with him forever. Pray. Get quiet and listen. Notice where you find God. Keep walking, out of whatever desert you might be in. We are not supposed to be in barren and dry places for ever, just for a period of time, that we can get humble ... and discover that God has never left us, from ancient wanderings to today and beyond.

For the violence of the world, for the sins still within us, we join together and pray, "Come, Lord Jesus!"