

This morning for our Gospel reading we're going to read and reflect on it in a style called *Lectio Divina*, a Latin phrase meaning "divine reading." It's an ancient tradition of reading scripture as devotion and meditation, dating back to St. Benedict in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. This style of reading does not involve seeking historical background or the researching of a text, but *listening* to how God speaks to us through the words.

The first step begins with the reading of the scripture in an unhurried manner. Listen for a word or phrase that jumps out at you, which somehow speaks to your life or our church. The next step will involve prayer as we seek God's wisdom in our understanding of the text, and finally those who are willing can offer their reflections on what words or phrases spoke to them.

I will begin by reading Luke 4:14-21, and as I do, listen for a word or phrase that speaks to you, and ponder how it connects to your life. You may wish to follow the words on the screen, or you can

close your eyes and focus on the sound of the words....

Let us pray...God, whose still small voice spoke to your followers generations ago, may the words they wrote continue to speak to us today. Help us to hear you today through your Word, which remains alive yet today. Amen...

What words or phrases jumped out at you in this scripture from Luke? What did you hear? ...

Luke's Gospel tells us that when Jesus stood up in the temple to read from the scroll, he was following the ancient practice of reading scripture during worship. Imagine if we had come today and had no scriptures to read—what if they had been lost generations ago and we had forgotten what they said.

That's what happened about five centuries before Jesus. The people had been carried away into Exile by the Babylonians. Some had lost touch with their traditions and history as they adapted and

learned to live among the Babylonians for 50 years. When the Persian King Cyrus conquered the area, he let the Israelites return back home and their ways of worship. They repaired the temple and rebuilt the surrounding walls, and now men and women gathered in the town square to hear the ancient writings. The scribe Ezra stood on a wooden platform to read the scroll, and the people stood all day long eager to listen to these sacred words. As Ezra unrolled the scroll of holy words, it's almost as though he had opened a time capsule—words that had been placed in the scroll to be kept safe until the people returned and discovered them again.

Have you ever created a time capsule for a future explorer to discover? You take some newspaper articles, a few objects that represent your life, and maybe a hand-written note to future readers; and then you place them in a container and bury them someplace where a future archaeologist will dig it up. If you had buried a time capsule 50 years ago and opened it today, just imagine how you might marvel at how much life has changed!

- If you had buried a popular record 50 years ago and played it today, you might hear this. (Blue Velvet)
- If you had buried a grocery store receipt from 50 years ago, you would see that a loaf of bread cost you 21 cents, eggs 96 cents a dozen, and milk \$1.04 a gallon.
- If you had buried the mortgage to your house, you may discover you had only paid \$19,300.
- If you buried a list of your favorite TV shows, it might have included *The Beverly Hillbillies*, *Leave it to Beaver*, *Bonanza*, or *The Andy Griffith Show*.
- Newspaper stories about the President would have been about John F. Kennedy.

Time capsules: a glimpse into the past. When Ezra unrolled the time capsule scroll of scriptures, the people heard words about traditions they had forgotten. Possibly they rediscovered these words from the sixth chapter of Deuteronomy:

Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God,  
the LORD alone. You shall love the LORD your  
God with all your heart, and with all your soul,

and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise.

As they listened, their eyes were filled with tears, possibly crying for joy at hearing the words of scripture again, or shedding tears of sadness that they had forgotten their traditions.

Wouldn't it be sad if we forgot our traditions and lost touch with our scriptures? What if our children or grandchildren 50 years from now rediscovered the Bible after not having heard it for five decades?

In a sense, each of us here is a time capsule, preserving and passing on the memories, traditions, and stories of our faith. Together our individual time scroll lives form the church, an even larger time scroll. I wonder...what might our time scroll church look like in 50 years? That's a bit hard to

envision, isn't it? Let's make the question a bit easier: what might our church be like in 5 years?

That's a question a group of people here at Crossroads have been asking on Saturday mornings as they envision our future. A few weeks ago they decided to ask for your help to imagine what our church might be like in 5 years, so I invite you to help create a time capsule of our dreams for our church. Use the insert in your bulletin to list your dreams—what might our church look like in 5 years? You may place your ideas in the offering plate this week or bring back another week. The vision committee will read your ideas and discern how we might bring them to life. And then we can create a time capsule by placing all your ideas in a safe place for 5 years. Won't it be fun to open that time capsule in five years and see what we've done? How might you keep alive the time capsule vision, keeping alive the good news of Jesus Christ?