

July 27, 2020

"The Way of Jesus is the Way of Life and the Way of Life can change the world." Bishop Curry

The podcast this morning involves "learning" and one portion of the podcast involves incorporating pop culture into teachings. I'll talk a little more about that tomorrow.

Today, I wanted to reflect on our reading from John's Gospel. In so many of Jesus' teachings, I wonder how many words and phrases were used by Jesus that were easily understood by the people listening but that we no longer understand.

Just in this last generation, there are phrases that we understand that our children may not understand. I still tell my children to "roll up the windows" of the car even though our windows are electronic and don't have manual cranks. I may ask them to hang-up their phone when they have no way to "hang-up" a cell phone. They can end their conversation but "hanging-up" makes no sense to them.

In our Gospel passage, Jesus says "I am the door of the sheep." What Jesus actually means has confused people over time but if you were alive at the time, you knew exactly what he was saying. G. Campbell Morgan (*The Gospel According to John* [Revell], p. 177) tells of a conversation he had with Sir George Adam Smith, a scholar who had spent much time in the Near East. Smith told of meeting a shepherd there who showed him the fold where the sheep were led at night. It consisted of four walls with a way in. Smith asked, "That is where you go at night?" "Yes," the shepherd said, "and when the sheep are in there they are perfectly safe." "But there is no door," said Smith. "I am the door," the shepherd replied. He was not a Christian man, but rather an Arab shepherd. But he was using the same language that Jesus used. He explained further, "When the light has gone, and all the sheep are inside, I lie in that open space, and no sheep ever goes out but across my body, and no wolf comes in unless he crosses my body; I am the door." When Jesus said "I am the door" the people knew exactly what Jesus meant.

When we are ordained to the priesthood, the Bishop asks each person to be ordained a priest: "Will you be loyal to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of Christ as this Church has

received them? And will you, in accordance with the canons of this Church, obey your bishop and other ministers who may have authority over you and your work?"

The person being ordained answers: "I am willing and ready to do so; and I solemnly declare that I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and to contain all things necessary to salvation; and I do solemnly engage to conform to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of The Episcopal Church."

The miracle of the Bible is that after more than 2000 years, it remains the Word of God with God still speaks to us in a transformative way even though words and traditions may have changed significantly over time.

Today, Jesus is telling us just as he has told every generation before us, that we will find protection in Him, live life abundantly, and find new life in Christ the Good Shepherd.