

Jesus loves a good mountain scene. I truly do wonder sometimes if Jesus at this point in our biblical journey with him is an expert hiker. Just a few verses prior we were on a mountain feeding the 5,000. There's something about the elevation for clarity and pause that Jesus appreciates and yet he never stays there too long.

But, boy what a scene we have – ghosts! God's voice! And Peter's tent building business!

It's important that we set the scene here a bit before we take the climb together this morning.

Jesus has been busy offering miracles and sharing the truth of his death. The disciples have retreated into the wilderness valley out of fear or persecution from the feeding of the 5,000. And Jesus has dropped a bomb of truth that he is going to leave them but not forever.

Can you imagine being the disciples traveling through city after city watching these miracles take place and this subversion of roman empire rule and in the wilderness of hiding hear, "I'm going to leave you soon, but don't worry."

I would do what I think Peter did, worry.

Jesus takes Peter, John and James on a hike up this mountain to pray. And there something truly miraculously wild happens. Moses and Elijah appear and start having a conversation with Jesus about what he just shared with the disciples in the valley.

Moses and Elijah are no strangers to mountain climbs either. They are valley people who need elevation to see well, too.

Moses received the commandments on the mount and at the end of his life viewed the promise land from a cliff's edge. Elijah ran from the valley to the mountain for safety and was set on permanently staying. Except God says to Elijah, *go back to the wilderness...I'm going to take care of you.*

Now I'm a bible nerd when it comes to this story. I spent an hour and a half on this next verse in our text today.

Because what gets said next is so human and honest it's worth spending time with...

Peter and his companions were ***weighed down*** with sleep. The root of greek word translated to weighed down is bareo which means heaviness. Peter and his companions were heavy with grief; they were exhausted. And in the midst of this heaviness Peter sees something truly awe striking and decides right then and there – he never wants to leave.

Peter wants to stay on this mountain top for the long haul. The valley has been tiring and Jesus if we all just stay here together, we never have to the leaving part; the hard truths, the messiness of life!

Peter wants to build tents but not just any tents! Peter wants to build tabernacles (movable tents for God). But Peter wants to make movable tent unmovable and prementant in residency. Everlasting residency right here; right now – no questions asked. Jesus, It is good to be here!

Or in other words, it is good to not feel this grief...

I can just picture Peter running around almost manic on this mountain top picking up objects to build these dwellings. And in the midst of Peter's gathering ... God sends a cloud to slow Peter down. And God's voice breaks through to share hard truths:

"this is my son, chosen, listen to him!" ... a silence falls over with Jesus in view.

Peter wanted to stay. Peter was exhausted with the valley. Peter was scared and weighed down with the grief of the impending hard truths Jesus was sharing and God says, listen.

Listening to our grief – our collective moments together – can provoke heaviness and yet it can also be the entry point to healing together.

Peter's hard truth that he has to swallow is that the valley must be lived too. But the valley friends isn't lonely or without God's love, Christ's guidance, or the spirit's nudges.

Before I came here today, I was told that this is a healing church; a healing place. And in many ways this made me reflect on the call to be sojourners together... disciples who care for one another.

What if we built our movable dwellings together in this healing church and offered hard truths to one another? Hard truths of how difficult this pandemic has been on us? Hard truths of how difficult things may be at home right now or in our work-places? Or how hard it is to receive bad news?

What if our movable dwellings were in the valley with each other and we leaned in instead of being weighed down or shared the weight?

At the beginning of our scripture today we heard, "Now, eight days after these sayings..." which sounds like a set up for our text but it is actually a really important clue for us in this journey of hard truths.

Just a few verses before today's text Jesus shared his impending death and an instruction for us to take up our cross together.

The very last verse before verse 28 Jesus shares, *"some with me will not taste death before seeing the kingdom of God."*

here's what I believe "these sayings" mean for us in our text for today...

God asks Peter, James and John to listen to Jesus because what Jesus has been sharing in the valley is...I have hope for you to take up your cross to take up your life I have given you and live it to its fullest in love, hope, peace, justice, mercy and toward the promise I'm assuring you that death will not have the last word.

Death does not come without grief. Without the heaviness of the world. And, yet what Jesus models for us throughout his ministry and on this very mount is we

can share that weight with one another. After all, Jesus was talking to Moses and Elijah about the heaviness of his own task.

Friends, if your valley holds grief this morning look to the dwellings you all have built in this healing church – this healing place. Lean into them, share your weight with one another and trust in the good news that God is with us in the wilderness, on the mountain top and in the valleys. Our everlasting dwelling awaits us and while we are here on this earth may we live deeply into our humanity and our Christian faith by sharing our emotions, our griefs and naming what weighs us so that we might live now in all seasons honestly with God and each other.

May it be so.