



May 3 – Big Fish

I was recently reminded of one of my favorite movies, *Big Fish*. It is a movie that came out in 2003 and has now been turned into a musical. The story tends to the strained relationship between an adult son and his dying father. The tension comes from the father telling “Big Fish” stories about his adventures in life. All the stories sound like impossible tales from a land of make believe. The son kept asking for the “TRUTH.” The father responds that he has always told the truth.

In the last scene of the movie, the son stands in awe as characters from these stories arrive at his father’s funeral. He realizes that his father was telling the truth, or at least there was truth in every story that his father told him. Now, as he sees the people in front of him, he comes to believe what his father had been saying all along.

In the Gospel reading, Philip seems to be asking him the same thing, “Show us the truth. Show us the Father.” He has heard the stories, but it all seems to go beyond what he can imagine. This must be fiction. Jesus responds with the simple truth, if we have seen Jesus, we have seen the Father. Philip is still skeptical.

The move Jesus makes is one that resembles that closing scene in *Big Fish*. Jesus tells him to look beyond the words. “What have you seen?” This becomes the reminder for all those who seek Christ. “What have you seen?” We are invited to look at the works, what Jesus did, and compare that with what we know of God.

When you look at the whole of Jesus ministry, it is the embodiment of the love of God which is proclaimed through the whole of scripture. It is the image of a God who is “merciful, gracious, and abounding in steadfast love.” It is the image of a God who always chooses to walk alongside humanity, from the exit of the Garden of Eden to Abraham, to the Exodus, exile, return, and incarnation. God has always chosen love over anger, a choice that has harmed God along the way, numerous times. Yet, God continues to walk with us and asks us to do the same.

We will know that Jesus is the Christ, and we will know the Father, when we see the works of grace and mercy, patience, and steadfast love. Those become the very marks of God. They become a sign to any who are seeking the presence of God. Do you see these works, these acts of love and grace?

I sometimes wonder why, or more accurately grieve, that the modern Christian Church has been centered on fear tactics as a marketing strategy. There is this desire to maintain an ordered clubhouse more than to tend to the work of love and grace. AS we do that, dive into fear, what we show the world is organized religion with all of its flaws. We show the world division. We show the world an array of denominations. We say we love and welcome, we show fear and scarcity.

Jesus does not tell us to only look to his works to witness the Father. Jesus invites us into the same works, saying that we will, “in fact, do greater works than these.” Jesus, the messiah, the very Son of God, and second person of the Trinity, tells us that we will do even greater things. It is easy to write that off as something like fiction. That must be a *Big Fish* story. It is not. Jesus means it.

We have the ability, the agency, even the command to live this love and grace into the world around us. Our faith, centered in love and grace, has the power and presence to build bridges and bring healing. When you approach with curiosity, and look to love and grace, suddenly the path to reconciliation is seen, and a better future can be built together.

Jesus didn’t just hope that people would be able to do greater works. Jesus reminds us that when we work together, empowered by the Spirit, all things are possible. Even the things like Peace and Justice which seem unattainable become possible. Jesus is not giving us a *Big Fish* story. Jesus is giving us an invitation to step out in faith. Jesus is inviting us to show the world love and grace. Not just say the words, but to show the world that reconciliation, the peace, that justice can happen. Amen.