

Legend tells us that while trying to solve the problem of how large a boat could be and still float, Archimedes drew up a bath. Upon entering the bath, he noticed the water level rise; upon leaving, it receded. And suddenly it all clicked. He had the answer and before even putting his clothes on, he raced out into the streets naked and shouting, "Eureka! I've found it!"

You almost get the sense that the earliest disciples are feeling that same sense of excitement. Eureka! We've found the messiah! Except for one small detail that should not be so quickly ignored: Archimedes didn't find anything and the disciples didn't find the messiah. Rather, they had a moment of revelation to something that was already there.

Which is why I would guess that we call this season in the church Epiphany and not Eureka. It's not about whether we've found Jesus, as if Jesus was missing or hiding somewhere. It's not as though God in Jesus has suddenly changed and we're discovering the new nature of God. It's a season marked by a paradigm shift in our own hearts and minds, one where we realize that God has always been here with us. Sometimes we just lack the awareness to see how God has been at work around us.

It's no wonder that Nathaniel was skeptical. Many in this time claimed to be the messiah or to have found the messiah, and all had resulted in disappointment. What's more, to hear that the messiah came from Nazareth was not only laughable, but it was largely unexpected. Wasn't the messiah supposed to come from Bethlehem? Wasn't the messiah supposed to be of a kingly lineage? We'll have to forgive Nathaniel for questioning the origins of Jesus of Nazareth because he, like many shared an idea and opinion on who the messiah was to be.

Which really isn't all that different from us. We have our ideas of who God is and we like to hold onto those notions, in search of things that already confirm what we believe. In fact, it's not that uncommon to come across the idea that many people prefer the New Testament God in Jesus as opposed to the Old Testament God. Now, let's just take a second and give that all the consideration it deserves, and realize that Jesus isn't signaling a change in God, but is a fuller revelation of who God has always been. Old Testament, New Testament, it's all the same God. It has always been the same God. It will always be the same God. But

thanks be that God doesn't actually care to be molded and shaped into our preconceived ideas. God is who God is. And the incarnation of Jesus in the flesh doesn't change anything about that.

Elie Wiesel was a Holocaust survivor who shared his experiences in his book, *Night*. And in this book, there's an underlying question that never gets fully asked until towards the end, which is, "Where is God?" He describes a horrific scene of the execution by hanging of three Jewish prisoners, including a young boy. Ignoring the pleas of the crowd, the execution moves forward, leaving all who witnessed it in a state of shock. The silence is broken by a man who cries out, "For God's sake, where is God?" And Elie Wiesel says that he heard a still, small voice in his head say, "Where is God? This is where – hanging from the gallows." Like Christ on the cross, he realized the presence of God, with him and all those prisoners in even the darkest moments of their lives.

It's not that we found Jesus. It's that Jesus found us and helps us to see and recognize the eternal presence of God in our lives. Even when it seems impossible, even when we don't know if we can believe it, even if we aren't looking, God is with us. God has always been with us. God will always be with us. Because Jesus does not show us a new God. Jesus comes to us as God, for who God truly is and was and always will be. A God of love and compassion, a God who enters into the suffering and sin and brokenness and death of this world, in order that it may be made whole again.

And my brothers and sisters, that is why we are called to come and see. To come and see for ourselves how God is indeed making this world new. For I know of no other way to invite others into this newness of life than to come and see. Come and see. Come and experience an epiphany, a revelation and realize just who this God truly is. Come and see and be changed by an encounter God revealed in the love and grace of Jesus Christ. Come and see from the witnesses of saints before us and with us now that we will know even greater things than this. We are promised that God will show up. We are promised that God's already there. We are promised that God never tires of searching, seeking, and finding us, until all may know the depths of love that God has for us and this world. God is with you. You are found. Come and see the new life that is promised. Amen.