

**Dabble & Dismiss**  
**Lent II    Gospeled Lives Series    February 28, 2010**  
**Luke 23:6-12**

A fresh encounter with Jesus. That's what we hope you will find this Lenten season as we read the book *Gospeled Lives* together and study the stories and preach on the Word. This is really a wonderful little book- if you still haven't picked one up, just go on Amazon and order it. It is light, short reading that is filled with open-ended meditations. And so far we've learned that when some people encounter Jesus they feel called to follow. And sometimes when we have an encounter with Jesus some belief or practice that we hold dear can be deeply challenged. This week, we'll learn how many people, even after a direct encounter with the Lord of all life choose to reject him. We'll read of a young man who came to Jesus and treated him with great respect as a learned rabbi, asking him what the greatest commandment is. But the only thing he could see of Jesus was that he was a great rabbi, nothing more, and when Jesus told him to sell all his goods and give the money to the poor, well, he just wasn't ready to go that far. We'll read of the crowd in Jesus' home synagogue, who rejected Jesus' message that the words of the prophets were being fulfilled, finally, today, in and through him, in that moment. All they could keep saying was, "Isn't this Joseph and Mary's son? How can he talk like this?" We'll read of Pilate and Herod and the games they played with Jesus before they rejected him. The Lord of all life, the one who danced at the beginning of creation, stood before them and they mocked him and they had him beaten and they treated him like any other threat to their thrones, like any other messiah du jour. He was just another side show to them.

And as I looked over these stories I noticed that all of these encounters had one thing in common. Everybody involved was a dabbler. A dabbler. Do you know what that word means? Look at the front cover of our worship folder. There you will find a dabbler. When I googled "dabble" this week for cover art for our bulletin I kept getting pictures of ducks with their tail feathers saluting us and their feet dangling. I took the picture to our local duck expert, Bill Johnston (yes, he really is a duck expert of sorts, an artist who has painted many a wooden duck decoy) and he told me in the wild world of waterfowl there are 2 kinds of birds- divers and dabblers. Divers put their bodies all the way in the water when they want to eat fish. Have you ever seen a pelican feed? They fly over a school of fish, their wings tip over, they dive right down and splash, into the water they go. When they come back up they have a bill full of fish. That's a diver. A dabbler goes into the water half-way. They tip their bodies and half of them goes below the surface to feed and help of them stays out.

Dabbling is going into something only part way, less than whole heartedly. If you go into an encounter with Jesus Christ with less than your whole heart, you will end up dismissing him. You will end up missing the point of what he has to say, missing the purpose that he came into our world for and into your life for (if only for a brief moment), and missing the opportunity to have those missing parts of your life found, filled in, fulfilled.

Dabbling. What a waste of time. What a waste of opportunities. And we have to admit, we are a people who dabble, living among a generation of dabblers.

Most of us are buffet people, who like to take a little taste of this and a little taste of that, rather than having a whole deep, rich experience of just one food.

We dabble in our hobbies, becoming a little good at painting or kind of good at our instrument or somewhat skilled at a handful of sports rather than focusing in and becoming an expert at one. We dabble in our knowledge and understanding of the world, relying on Wikipedia to give us a paragraph on a topic and thinking we know all we need to know to make judgments about that field. We dabble in our travels, thinking we have really learned something about another culture by jumping on and off a cruise ship or a bus when all we've learned is how to buy souvenirs in English with different accents. In every area of our lives we Americans tend to be dabblers, loving a little taste of something rather than a big, life altering bite, going in half way and then backing out quickly.

In today's scripture lesson, Herod dabbled with Jesus.

A quick, dabbling background on Herod- see, I can't even help but dabble in this sermon!

There are at least 4 Herod's named in the Bible and they are very easy to confuse.

Herod the Great was the one mentioned in Matthew 2 and Luke 1. He was called the great simply because he did a lot of building and there was a degree of peace, stability, and prosperity during his long reign. He also was a power crazed killer who eliminated anyone who he thought was plotting against him, including a couple of his own sons. The joke that went around Jerusalem in his day was that it was better to be Herod's pig than his son. This is the Herod who talked with the Magi and eventually killed all the male children 2 years old and younger in Israel.

One of his sons in the Herod that we look at today, Herod Antipas, the ruler of the Galilee region, put in palace and supported by Rome. Character wise, he doesn't fall too far from the family tree. A third Herod is Herod Agrippa; IN the first part of the book of Acts he initiated persecution against the Christians. And Herod Agrippa the second is found at the end of the book of Acts. Paul had an audience with him.

Our Herod is the one who married his half-brother's wife, Herodias. Our Herod is the one who killed John the Baptist. And perhaps he felt a little guilty about that, perhaps he dabbled in guilt for a moment, because when he first heard of Jesus and the miracles he performed, it is recorded in Matthew 14 that he said, "This is John the Baptist. He is risen from the dead!" He thought John was coming to get him.

In today's gospel, Herod simply wants to see the miracles. That's all. No search for truth. No questions for the rabbi. Perform for me Jesus. Show me how powerful you are. I understand power. I come from a long line of people who know about power. Show me your power.

But dabbling with Jesus got him nowhere.

Herod mocked him. Dressed him in an elegant robe. And sent him back to Pilate.

Herod encountered the Lord of all life and all he experienced was a silent, sad, clown.

Herod walked away hungry. Jesus walked away with his dignity intact, a silent lamb, not a clown, wrapped in the robe of a king.

IN this world there are dabblers and there are divers. If you want to be well fed, if you want to have your life changed, become a diver.

Throw your whole self in to following Jesus, to this thing called discipleship. Throw yourself into worship, pour your heart out when we pray, sing your lungs out when we praise, reflect and meditate and think bold thoughts when the word is preached. Throw yourself into fellowship, committing yourself to a church, our church if it fits for you, making friendships, visiting members in the hospital, deeply caring about the children and the teenagers and the people your age and the older folks here. Throw yourself into study and service and outreach. IF you want to be fed by Jesus you have to jump in, that's the only way. If you want a new life, you have to offer your old one to him, completely, forever. If you just dabble with Jesus, and go to church here for a week or two and there for a week or two, and you don't like one of the songs this week and you don't like something in the sermon next week and you just keep bouncing from church to church, you will never be fed, you will never change. And eventually you will simply dismiss Jesus as another motivational speaker who let you down, another consultant whose time is past, another fashionable teacher who has become so 2008...

Think of it this way- your life is like a puzzle. You are given hundreds of pieces when you come into this world. And you start putting them together- as a child, as a teenager, as a young adult, figuring out who you are, what your purpose is in the world, how you can find love and live a life that really matters. But the pieces never seem to come together quite right. There always seem to be pieces that are missing. And the ones you have never seem to fit together perfectly. So you go to church and you have a small encounter with Jesus. You are told that he has those extra pieces that fill in those missing parts. And he is able to rearrange your picture so that the parts in the lower corners will be pushed up and those that seem too prominent in the upper corners will be brought to their proper place. And you say that seems like a good idea. But you walk away.

If you do that, your puzzle will stay incomplete. Your life will never change. Incomplete, broken, and searching, is what you will always be.

To complete a puzzle and look at the beautiful picture that is produced you have to patiently hang in there and keep working it. To complete your life and to see the beautiful thing that God wants

to make of you, you have to hang in there with Jesus, stick by him, listen to him, and let him rearrange things, let him help you slowly grow.

Look at that puzzle piece in your hand and think about what's missing in your life. What's missing in your experience of worship? What is missing in your fellowship, your relationships? What is missing in your knowledge of the Bible, in your understanding of Truth? What is missing in the way you serve others- are you missing a servant's heart? What is missing in the way you share your faith with people who have only dabbled with Jesus?

Jesus has those missing pieces in your life. Ask for them. Search for them. Shuffle some things around to make room for them. IN time, if you follow him and don't reject him, they will come.

Let us pray...