

-When I graduated highschool, life was good. I'm not going to say it was the peak of life, but life was good. I had good friends which I had found in mostly through theater and musicals (yeah, I was in that crowd). I was president of the choir and in the chamber singers group too. This was before Abby was on the scene, of course, but I had some love interests that came into my life time to time. It was all good! Looking at graduation was exciting because it meant a "new life and new adventure". But it also was something that was really scary because it meant a "new life and new adventure." As I remember one of my friends who had also found her way with the high school theater crowd, especially by senior year: "I don't want to move on.... I just feel like I found my life here." I know there are many present and past high school students, maybe even in this room, where high school has not been or was not an enjoyable experience. Maybe you are very much looking forward to moving on. But even so, whether you would like to or not, whether you feel like you are at the top of life in highschool or can't wait to see Missoula in the rearview mirror, graduation means a crossroads and new life. Things are not going to be the same and graduation provides an opportunity to look back (once you are done taking finals), recognize and appreciate the life you have currently as well as know a new life lies ahead. For me this was really scary.

-There was a bridge that you had to cross before getting to my high school. After graduation, my high school put on an "all night senior graduation party" which of course was adrenaline packed. Following this party, I remember sitting on this bridge watching the sun come up with a couple other friends. It was over. Holy moly it was over. High school was done. How do I live life now?

-It doesn't have to be high school to know this feeling. Maybe you are a parent of a highschool student who will be leaving the house for the first time and you can't imagine yet what life is going to be like without them. Maybe it's a change of jobs that brings you out of Missoula, a place where you have lived a stretch of your life in. Maybe it's the death of a loved one where you have grown used to caring for them and their needs and now are looking at an empty bedroom. Maybe it's the moving out of your home because you're at the point in life now when you don't have the health to maintain it anymore. Holy moly it is over. This part of my life is done. How do I live life now?

-Our gospel text this morning continues in John where Jesus is giving his farewell discourse. Remember, if you were here last week, these words of Jesus were not just words that his fearful disciples needed to hear but also what John's community of Christians needed to hear. "I am the way, the truth, and the life" were words of comfort and a laying out of a way to live one's life, not exclusive, closed-off theological doctrine.

-This passage which comes right after the words that Jesus said last week also can give us some clues to our life into the unknown.

"In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live."

-This is a fascinating verse that has multiple layers to it, but the layer I think is perhaps most interesting for us today is the word: “to live.” The Greek word that Jesus uses here is *zoe*. This word has a very long history of translation and definition which is kinda covered up by normally translating it as simply “life.” For the ancient Greeks, life was connected with movement and expanse. Xenophanes, a Greek philosopher, famously thought of *zoe* as “fluttering breath”. Taken this way, it is easy to see the connection between the two Greek words *Zoe* and *Soma* (literally: the one that breaths; body).

-This is interesting as it points to a basic act of life that a lot of us don’t really pay attention to: “Because I breathe, (Jesus says) you also will breathe.” It is not really a coincidence in my mind then that Jesus begins talking about the “Spirit” (*pneuma*: also related to *soma* and *zoe*) at the same time which we will talk more about at Pentecost.

-Finally, the Greek word for “I” which Jesus uses is probably one of the most famous words of all time and one I know you have probably all heard of. The Greek word for “I” is *Ego*. It’s know wonder Freud borrows this word for his famous concept of “Ego” which is a person’s “inner self-esteem or self-image”.

-So why am I giving you a lesson in ancient Greek here? Well, because I think it’s very important in the way Jesus frames “life” in this passage. Where Jesus last week is very focused on externally following a “way of acting, behaving, and being”, Jesus now turns to the inner life. Life is possible because of Jesus in each and every one of us. This is where I always disagree with those who say “well Jesus is just a model that we strive to follow.” Well, yes, Jesus is a model for our lives externally but it is also WITHIN US that we also need to live the life of Christ. Our very breath is an act and gift of God. It is also in that breath that our inner and outer selves can be renewed.

-After the sun was up on the bridge, I felt a beautiful, warm, humid, Minnesota breeze come blow through our group. We all began to sob and hug one another. We then walked off the bridge toward the high school all arm in arm all going home. My heart was pumping the whole time and breath was deep. It was a different breath, a different life from when I first got there. Some of those people I have kept in contact with, some I have not seen since that moment 14 years ago. Either way, we all joined in that new breath together.

-Graduates and all of those who are on the precipice of a new life, remember this. Keep breathing. Keep paying attention to your breath and how it centers you and your being. Also we breathe together in our community, too. May these quilts help you breathe sometimes when it is hard to catch your breath. May you always know that Jesus, your savior, is in your breath and will always remain so whenever life begins anew. “Because I breathe you also can breathe.” (breath) Thanks be to God.