

26 OTB.18; Numbers 11:25-29; James 5:1-6; Mark 9:38-48

I have an observation to make: **Life is not a dress rehearsal!**
We live in the Present. Here is where our values are seen, heard, and felt *or not.*

First, a story about the way we see life at times

“A young mother had twins, and the doctor told her to make sure they got an hour’s sunshine every day. *Nothing was too good for her twins*, so every day she put the **little boy** out for a full hour, from noon to one o’clock, and then put the **little girl** out for an hour, from one to two o’clock. “Why don’t you just put them both out at the same time?” asked the puzzled doctor.

“Well,” she said in something of a huff,

“I want to make sure that each of them gets the full benefit of the sun!”

(Source: **Sunday Mornings* 2, 26 OTB Clark)

Thinking small! It seems to be one of *our specialties* as human beings. In our Old Testament reading we find a particularly curious case of this: ***Eldad and Medad*** who were officially recognized prophets, but they *didn’t go* to the tent where prophecies were “supposed” to happen. They let the Spirit speak right there in the middle of the camp! **That was wonderful, right?**

Oh, no! Moses’ assistants were outraged. It was a violation of protocol!

This same thing happened in the Gospel. Jesus’ best friend John was outraged that some outsiders were healing people *in Jesus’ name*.

“Teacher, we saw someone driving out demons in your name, and we tried to prevent him

... because he does not follow us!”

Translated: We lose control and we don’t get the credit!

These two cases would be no more than historical curiosities if they did not reflect

... so accurately what we *still think* and do so quite often.

Where we ought to be happy about someone getting healed, we worry about control and who gets the credit. **Thinking small!**

Where we ought to be building the big family, instead we build big walls and cherish grievances, sometimes for decades. **Thinking small!**

Where we ought to be building big, happy lives like Jesus, we settle for just staying out of trouble, keeping our hands clean. **Thinking small!**

Where we could have the joy of sharing our talents and our gifts, we waste our life worrying about whether we’re going to run out. **Thinking small!**

And where we could have **the joy** of watching God's kingdom evolve and of helping it to evolve, we settle for wringing our hands ... and cursing the darkness.

Thinking so very, very small!"*

God has given every one of us ... *hearts and minds* that have the capacity to grow large and to be filled with *joy, love and friendship*. The life we're living now is the only life we're ever going to get on this earth. Life is not a dress rehearsal.

That means doing things God's way - thinking BIG and loving BIG.
2 And we are prepared because God has given us *the tools: minds and hearts* that can grow BIG! At our baptism we were *truly empowered* to be **Prophets** just like our ancestors of old. We have already been given a *share of the divine prophetic Spirit* which is not reserved for certain people. **That means YOU and me.**

And that Spirit is given *for a reason, for the sake* of our world.

Now listen to an old poem that may strike a nerve or two in all of us....

Isn't it strange that princes and kings,
and clowns that caper in sawdust rings,
and common people like you and me
are builders for eternity?
Each is given a bag of tools,
a shapeless mass, a book of rules,
and each must make, ere life has flown,

... a stumbling block or a stepping stone.

(Poem: *A Bag of Tools*, Sharpe)

This poem eloquently describes the choices we must make.

Each of us is given **that** bag of tools. And each of us must make, *a stumbling block, or a stepping stone*. Preparing the world for *the Kingdom of God* is about

Prophets who proclaim God's love *by* reaching out to the marginalized, using our resources generously, building justice with kindness, speaking truth with courtesy, making peace that respects human dignity, and including everyone in our circle of love. These are the little stones ... that hold the world together

and build the great Cathedral of the Father's Kingdom.

BIG Life is all about being those stepping stones.

Are you and I "dressed" for life?

Are there "Big-hearted, Big-minded" Prophets here today?

The world desperately needs to see, to hear, to feel, our love in action more than ever. Of what value is our faith, if it does not engage real life?

Of what value is our love, if it cannot reach beyond our own family and friends?

We must grow **BIG** enough to take in the whole world.

At this Liturgy of God's World, let us begin by being God-minded and not Humanly small-minded. Let us strive to be like Jesus, not making stumbling blocks,
... but stepping stones!