

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

I used to work with a guy who was color blind. I did not realize it because his shirts, ties, slacks, always went together. One day we were talking and he commented that when he was driving he had no idea what colors stoplights really are, that the only way he knew when it was safe for him to proceed was by the brightness of the lights. He knew the position of red light, amber light and green light and when the green light was the brightest, he could go. I commented on the fact that his ensembles were always well coordinated and he said his wife laid out his clothes for the next day, each night before going to bed. He then told me that he preferred shades that would not clash too badly if his wife wasn't home, basically blues, grays and black, along with white or light colored dress shirts. I asked him what he actually saw when he looked at colors and he said everything was pretty much shades of what he thought was actually gray.

Now I mention this not because I am a paragon of high fashion, although I am, but because I generally know enough not to mix plaids with stripes or polka dots or some such and I can usually tell when certain combinations just are not going to be pleasing to the eye.

One thing I have always marveled at is how some folks can weave together fabrics from various colors and come up with something, maybe a plaid, or some other design that is just striking. I joke that I always like the church season of advent because it goes well with my eyes, but then I say the same thing about just about everyone of our church seasons. But you know some people have a knack for picking out a color that enhances the color of their hair, their eyes, or whatever it happens to be, it is something I notice but I cannot do it myself.

Diverse colors blended together, whether one fabric or several, are truly pleasing. You know, that sounds like something from life. Diverse colors, diverse ethnic heritage, diverse backgrounds, all coming together in a congregation to produce something that is truly pleasing. It is almost like God has taken these things and added a wealth of gifts, abilities and talents and blended us together in a fabric as his people!

Of course that is exactly what God has done. All of us together, and each of us individually, has an impact far beyond the thread of our individual lives. We each influence and impact everyone else in this congregation, far beyond what you might imagine as you sit here this morning. Whatever you have said, whatever you have done, whatever you bring, has an extended impact on all of us together.

We do not always realize this as we think about our congregation, our family of believers, but not only do we have an impact on each other, but we have an impact beyond the walls of this church building, beyond the boundaries of our campus. Over the course of a week we touch a lot of places and people, even beyond Minnesota.

Think of the perspective and the values you bring, along with your concern for one another and the world around us and the world in general. Think of the faith experiences you bring, and those we have shared. Think back on the experience of the Christian church in the last 2,000 years. With the internet, text messaging, instant messaging, Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, and all the rest available through phones, laptops, tablets, and even TV, and we are more connected than ever, more of a global community than ever. We know immediately if there is a problem somewhere and we can react just about as fast. Think of all these things together, think of yourself and those around you and realize that we are indeed a multi-colored fabric of unsurpassed beauty crafted by the master craftsman of all, our Creator. Now think for a moment about Nathanael, mentioned twice in the NT, both times only in the gospel of John. The other gospel writers do not mention him at all unless he is the disciple they call Bartholomew. According to our gospel writer, Nathanael was the fourth disciple called by Jesus, brought in by Philip and only mentioned here and in one of the resurrection appearances. Other than sitting under a fig tree, he pretty much seemed to blend in with the other disciples. Well, we also know that he was a man in whom there was no deceit, in others words an honorable guy who tried to do the right thing, the kind of guy we would like because he sounds pretty decent, probably a very responsible guy who if he said he was going to do something, did it.

As I think about it, I think that sounds like you, each of you that I know, and I know just about everyone of you to one degree or another. Yeah, I know, you are all diverse, different backgrounds, different ideas as to what and how we should do what we are called to do, different gifts and abilities, different resources, different in a whole bunch of different areas. Together you are part of that multi-colored fabric of unsurpassed beauty I mentioned a moment ago.

What does this have to do with Nathanael, or what does he have to do with us? He was just an ordinary disciple. And that's it, an ordinary disciple. Like you, like me. And together we contribute to the momentum and the direction that God would have us go, because God uses us to do his work in this world, to add our individual colors to that multi-hued fabric he weaves using each one of us. We are not like Martin Luther, or Martin Luther King for that matter. We are not leading a revolutionary change in anything. But ordinary disciples like Nathanael, like you, like me are the tools God uses to accomplish change, to make life better for those who cannot do it for themselves.

We think we are a small part of whatever is happening in the church, the world, but we make a difference. We may make a difference one person at a time, but we make a difference. God works through us, and he works through others and works them into his fabric for humanity, for salvation, he uses us, our prayers, the prayers of ordinary disciples to bring justice, healing, peace, sustenance in a world full of turmoil and tumult. God uses the ordinary to accomplish his will. That is us. AMEN