

A rainbow is the sign of the covenant God makes between Noah and his family and all living creatures on the earth. God promises to never again flood the whole earth and sets a rainbow in the sky as a sign of God's unconditional promise and a reminder of God's faithfulness to all future generations. Unlike a legal contract, humanity's inability to live out God's promise of a partnership in the world does not negate God's intention to be in relationship with humanity and all creation. God makes this visible to all generations, including me.



As I hear this story, I do not hear a children's story, but a promise to me that God is present in my life and in the life of all creatures and creation, even if sometimes it doesn't feel that this is so. Double rainbows are especially powerful reminders to my soul, renewing my intention to renew my commitment to our partnership with God in Christ. Strangely it is not so much personal as it is a stirring toward restoration of community-church, family, world—even in the midst of brokenness and wrongdoing. My thoughts are a little over the top, seeing this giant promise as part of my personal story—yet it is there. We all need reminders during Lent, and in our lives that God walks with us, cares for us, and loves us. Family, friends, the rhythm of our breath or steps can be reminders too. Sacraments are promises that the Christ is present—in baptism, the Eucharist, confession and absolution—and more to help us to live a Holy Lent, entering more deeply into the Love of God.

The Mark narrative for this Sunday begins with the Baptism of Jesus and heaven is torn open with words of that Jesus is the beloved—and then the word Mark uses so often, “immediately.” Something has happened. God has broken into our realm and Jesus begins something new. Sent by the Spirit into the wilderness, he is tempted to use God's power in ways other than in serving God's people. We can only imagine the days of prayer, hunger and perhaps communicating with the wild beasts. Mark's brevity is part of his urgency for us to know that something is happening.

Angels serve, or minister to Jesus while he is in the wilderness. Jesus is not alone. Like the stories of Elijah the prophet, where God provides so Elijah can continue to serve God's people, even during drought and disaster, Jesus rests as he is served after the temptation.

The text moves directly to John the Baptist's arrest and propels Jesus not only to a place, Galilee, but into his ministry of proclaiming good news that God is near/here/breaking in. We have only to repent, turn from our falsehoods and delusions and meanness and cruelty and discover God's healing power in our midst.



*Susan+*