

## LIFE BETWEEN THE TIDES (Ken Costa)

- Where have you seen God at work in your life this week? (Share any brief examples and encouragements).
- Was there anything from Sunday's message which you found particularly inspiring or challenging?
- Was there anything else you particularly noticed?

### John 16:22 (NRSVA)

*So you have pain now; but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.*

1. Last week, the history, travel and environmental writer, Adam Nicholson, published a new book with the intriguing title, "The Sea is not Made of Water". Subtitled, "Life Between the Tides", Nicholson writes, "A tidal coast is filled with that paradoxical quality: reliable unreliability, both closed and open-ended, both familiar and strange. Regularity toys with uncertainty there. Nothing is more predictable than the coming and going of the tide and yet nothing about it can be relied on: daily revelation and daily erasure, daily loss and daily reacquisition." Ken Costa suggested that this also describes the life we experience in 'the now and the not yet' of the Kingdom of God, the life Jesus spoke of in his farewell discourse as recorded in John's Gospel – a life of both low and high tides, of both pain and joy. And perhaps never more so than in the aftermath of the pandemic.
  - *Where have you experienced pain in the last 18 months?*
  - *Where have you experienced loss?*
  - *Where has your experience not lived up to your expectations?*
  - *I what ways have you also experienced joy?*
2. Ken suggested that what we need is a new way to frame our experiences and that, in the face of the "present pain [of] purpose postponed" we tend to take one of two options: either to Quit (to withdraw and give up the fight), or to go Quiet (to embrace low expectations, hunker down and avoid risk). He suggested that what we need is to embrace a new purpose – a Quest (a new journey of trust). We may not know the plan or the path, but WE DO KNOW THE PERSON OF JESUS. And Jesus says, "I will see you again." Ken added that you must "allow Jesus to see you where you are, not where you want to be."
  - *Have you been tempted to quit or go quiet? (perhaps you have already quit or gone quiet)*
  - *What might your Quest look like?*
  - *Where are you right now? Can Jesus see you there? What does it mean to be seen by Jesus?*
  - *What do you think it means to say that "Between the struggle and the satisfaction is the seeing"?*
  - *How could post-traumatic stress become post-traumatic growth?*
3. In Genesis 16, we read the story of the Egyptian slave woman, Hagar, who, in a time of trauma comes face to face with God and becomes the only person in the whole of the Bible to name God. Hagar has been pushed out of a dysfunctional family with an unborn child. She is both neglected and unloved. God meets her and says, "I have heard your misery." **Genesis 16:13** reads, "[Hagar] gave this name to the Lord who spoke to her: 'You are the God who sees me,' for she said, 'I have now seen the One who sees me.'" Ken added, "What God sees he sorts out."
  - *Do you have something unborn in you – hopes, dreams, desires, purposes?*
  - *Do you feel invisible to God, or, like Hagar, does he see you?*
  - *If God truly sees you, who do you know who might need you to see them?*
  - *What a difference would it make if you really believed that no one can or will take your joy from you?*