

Sunday Morning Worship at Brentwood, Dec 11, 2016

Notes for the sermon Is Jesus the One (Advent 3 - Joy)



Ps 146 and Matt 11:2-11 Sermon Text = Matt 11:6

“And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”

[Hymns = 368, 358, and 644 in the *Book of Praise*]

Key Ideas

1. I want to pick up on some of the ideas we were playing with at Jazz Evensong last Wed – and note the ways in which we are encouraging each other to engage with the Scriptures’ witness to God’s living Word in Jesus Christ through prayerful pondering each week – Memorize & Ponder, the Jazz Evensong reflections, Bible Study (every second week beginning again on Jan 13), and Sunday Morning Worship
2. Jesus offended a lot of people in his society – he was born in a barn, the child of an unwed mother - he was driven out of the country and became a refugee in Egypt - he astounded the learned men of his culture with his grasp of the most important things in life at the age of 12 - his public mission was announced by his cousin, a mad man from the wilderness of Galilee, who was beheaded for his crimes against the state - he preached a version of Judaism focused on love that challenged the religious and political elites of his day - he hung out with working stiffs, prostitutes, the unclean, foreigners, and rip-off artists - he disrupted the business of being religious in those days by chasing money-changers out of the Temple - he paid for it in the end - the powers he threatened succeeded in executing him for his offensiveness
3. So, promising blessing for those who took no offense at any of this was a big deal in the world of Matthew’s listeners and in ours– this text is an invitation, an encouragement, and a command to be different in order to give a faithful witness to a better way of being together in this world and the next – even the sign that God gave that Jesus was the One in and through whom he was reconciling the world to himself and refocusing the power of love in the world was offensive – a resurrection, of all things – a unique event in human history for the redemption of human history – an offensive sign that Jesus was and is the One in whom and through whom God’s blessing comes to full flourishing
4. It is in this kind of offensiveness that we find the joy of God – it is an offensiveness that insists on standing for gifts of the Spirit that animate and energize the friends of Jesus in this world – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control – think of the forces that seem to be shaping events in our world – to live by the gifts of the Spirit will be offensive, but in that offence is God’s blessing and our joy

At this point in our ponderings, then ...

As we pay attention this coming year to the message of Matthew’s gospel, we will find that he believes passionately that Jesus is the One in whom and through whom God redeemed the creation – that conviction possessed his instincts, his emotions, and his intellect – it saved his soul – and his witness invites us to enjoy the same reality