

How Do We Shine Like the Sun?

Sermon Notes for July 23 2017 at Brentwood

Ps 86 & Matthew 13:24-30 & 36-43



**Then the righteous will shine like the sun
in the Kingdom of their father.
Let everyone with ears listen.
(Matt:13:43)**

Provocative Ponderings that Call Forth Our Potential in Christ

- Let's focus this morning on this image of shining like the sun – there are lots of things that block out the sun these days – in our own immediate context, the smoke from unprecedented wildfires throughout the interior of this province has blocked out the sun for thousands for weeks – our ears have heard stories of stunning losses and inspiring support – what struck me about the image on the screen this morning was how obscured and distorted the sun appears, but that the sun is still there – shining in all its glorious energy and continuing to work its enlightening and nurturing purpose, whatever may obscure it – throughout the Scriptures, the sun appears as an image for God's faithful power of nurturing all of life – that's the sun Jesus invites us to shine like – faithful in nurturing all of life, no matter what is going on that obscures or interferes with that nourishing power
- A second bit of this text that drew my attention this week was the idea of reflecting this light (it's not our light, but it's God's light reflecting through us) in the Kingdom of God – you've probably noticed by now that I normally translate that into the Commonwealth of God – I think that's a more accurate rendering into English of the intent of the Hebrew and Greek words used to point to the kind of community that God is creating for his creatures – it's a community where the well-being of all is cultivated – Karl Barth, perhaps the 20th century's most influential theologian, uses this rendering – it was also the rendering of these words chosen by William Tyndale, the first translator of the Bible into English (the New Testament was completed in 1526 and published in Worms) – so we reflect the shining of God's nourishing glory/energy in the Commonwealth of God
- But are we righteous enough to do that? – on our own, no – but in the loving embrace of the Father, through the acceptance and reconciliation we receive from God in Jesus Christ through the work of the Spirit, we become more and more authentically the friends and partners that God created us to be in blessing the creation – I think we see this happening both inside and outside of the church in crises like the wildfires – people seeing suffering and responding in love – that's the Spirit of God's Commonwealth at work

Notes for a sermon preached by Brian Fraser,
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At this point in our ponderings, then ...

What, then, does God want us to hear – that theme comes up over and over in this section of Matthew's gospel – this message of Jesus, these lessons in love, are hard for many to hear – so listen up, and listen carefully – you shine like God's energy when you hear of suffering and reach out to relieve it – suffering comes when we are separated and alienated from God's love for us – it is overcome when we come to ourselves (to use that wonderful phrase from the Prodigal Son) as beloved friends of God, each other, and ourselves – the glow of that reconciliation will always be seen through a glass or through clouds of smoke darkly in this phase of our lives, but in the next phase, we will be able to look into the brilliance of that love directly and know we are home