

Key Insights for Christian Discipleship @ Jazz Evensong

Week 8 – Oct 25, 2017 The Light of Justice in All that We Do

2 Samuel 23:3b-4 *One who rules over people justly, ruling in the fear of God, is like the light of the morning, like the sun rising on a cloudless morning, gleaming from the rain on the grassy land.*

There's a pretty simple test
for the degree to which we are living justly
in alignment with the purposes of the God who created us.
"Are we caring for the creation that God entrusted to us?"

If thinking about that puts the fear of God into us, good!!
We are judged, daily, by the shadows that we cast
over the light of God's justice in all our circles of influence.
That's the fearful news.

But the freeing news is that this same God of justice
is a God of mercy and forgiveness,
indeed a God who seeks justice through mercy and forgiveness.
In the midst of the complex, multi-generational webs of rebellion
that humans have built up over the generations,
God never gives up and continues to provide the light
to draw us back to what they* truly desires of their* beloved humans –
to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our Creator (Micah 6:8)

Jazz is a music of justice. It arose out of a dense web of injustice
perpetrated on Africans dragged as slaves to America.
It gave voice to a core sense of human dignity
that Christians believe is the image of God in all human beings,
a reality that stretches back to our very creation.
It expresses that voice in a rich diversity of ways
that reflect the delight God takes in the diversity they have created.
It calls on its composer, and players, and hearers,
to imagine a world in which the light of God's justice
shapes the ways we live together as groundskeepers of God's creation.

Jazz touches, as few other art forms do, the depths of human degradation.

The unique blend of instruments that come together in jazz groups
find the tones and textures that we feel in the most forsaken of situations.

But we are not left trapped or stuck there.

This is music and it is being played.

The carefully-formed breath of the players, the dexterity of their fingers,
the connection of their souls in the performance,
all point to the light that has shines on them and through them, the light of God's justice.

* I use 'they' and 'their' to point to the Christian understanding of God as, in God's very essence, a community. This has traditionally been expressed in our doctrine of the Trinity, God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is human language for human concepts trying to capture the mysteries and wonders of God's being in love with their creation.