

## Key Insights for Christian Discipleship @ Jazz Evensong

Week 10 – Nov 15, 2017    The Birth of the Blues

Job 7:11

*Therefore, I will not restrain my mouth; I will speak the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.*

Jazz has deep roots in the laments of Job.  
This is a character in the Bible who suffers deep degradation.  
Everything goes against him.  
All outward signs of well-being and prosperity are stripped from him.  
His closest friends hold him in contempt for his continuing faith in God.  
“How could you possibly be so stupid, Job.  
Look what God is doing to you!”

Many continue to turn away from God for similar reasons.  
Life is too miserable, too painful, too short.  
Why would I ever trust in someone who caused this to happen,  
or at very least allowed it to happen?

And I have to agree.  
That is crazy.

And I don't have a good, simple reason to offer  
regarding the question of why we suffer.  
I've got lots of ideas to explore  
when we have more time than we do this evening.  
But they are hunches, possibilities to ponder,  
rather than clear convictions about the reasons.

I do have profound respect and appreciation for how the blues deals with this.  
I find in the blues and in all blues-tinged jazz  
a way of living with the pain and suffering that comes with being alive.  
I hear it inspired by the wisdom of Job.  
This stuff happens.  
And when it does, don't take it in silence.  
Don't restrain your mouth.  
Cry out in anguish.  
Complain bitterly from the depths of your soul.  
God can handle that.  
He's been seeing and hearing the suffering of his people for generations.

But like the blues, don't let the anguish and bitterness be the last word.  
Sing out, play out, your determination to get through this stuff.  
As long as you have breath to sing or play,  
you have hope to move through the pain  
to enjoy the love the gave rise to the music,  
to let the music of the Spirit raise you up to new ways of seeing.  
That's the soul and blessing of the blues.



## ***The Brentwood Declaration***

### ***How Brentwood Presbyterian Church Understands Its Faith & Mission***

*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth  
and declared them to be very good.*

*God then created humanity, male and female,  
to cultivate blessing throughout the world.*

*Rejecting the limits of their power,  
our ancestors rebelled against God's vision of goodness,  
resulting in toil, tyranny, trauma, and death.*

*But God never gave up.  
In a definitive act of reconciling forgiveness,  
God became incarnate among us.*

*In the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus of Nazareth,  
God restored the original goodness of creation  
as a commonwealth enjoyed on earth as it is in heaven.  
The Holy Spirit continues to work out the fulfillment of that act.*

*Through the church universal in which we participate,  
the Holy Spirit nourishes us to flourish as God's friends  
through worship, learning, fellowship, and service.*

*By God's grace, in Jesus the Christ, through the Holy Spirit,  
we know what it is to be loved and to love  
amidst all the problems of the world,  
and we are equipped, empowered, and sent  
to sow the seeds of God's shalom in all of our circles of influence.*

*In the end, God's love will transform the heavens and the earth,  
and bring justice, peace, and joy to every dimension of creation.*

The Christian faith is a response of gratitude to God's gift of grace in Jesus Christ. It is Gospel – good news - for all. The broad outlines of the story of how these good things happened and continue to unfold are found in the Brentwood Declaration.

There may well be some ideas and language in the declaration that don't make much sense to you. Participants in Brentwood are always open to exploring these matters further, especially our minister, Brian Fraser. He can be reached at [jazzthinkbrian@gmail.com](mailto:jazzthinkbrian@gmail.com).

Part of a 50-week series of reflections at Jazz Evensong, Brentwood Presbyterian Church  
For other insights, visit [brentwoodpc.ca](http://brentwoodpc.ca) and click the Jazz Evensong Reflections Archives