



**Key Insights for Christian Discipleship
@ Brentwood Presbyterian Church's
Jazz Evensong - #14**

Dec 13, 2017

Hope for Help

Psalms 42:11

*Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God, for I shall again praise him,
my help and my God.*

I've been talking about Ben's sax quartet
since they first did a Christmas Jazz Evensong last year.
In particular, I've talked with anyone who would listen
about their version of 'We Three Kings.'
It made me see that part of the Christmas story differently.

You get a strong sense from Ben's arrangement
of three really bright guys
wandering around in the wilderness
trying to figure things out.
They're confused and
they're in conflict with each other.

They launched this wild search with a crazy hope,
but they need help.
And they didn't get it when they went to the palace
in search of a king.

There was something off in Herod's interest in their search.
It just didn't feel right.

Many in our culture dismiss all the stories surrounding Christmas
as just fanciful fables.
Who makes up this stuff?
How can we possibly take it seriously?

Maybe you've got some of those feelings.
Astrology, belief in God, virgins birthing and angels singing –
all delusions designed to avoid facing the realities
of life in a cruel, harsh world.

The only help that's real is facing the truth
and putting up with the suffering.
Become a tough, callous individual strong enough to survive.

Well, this is a place where we see things differently.
We believe in a loving God who is the creative energy
that fills the cosmos.

We believe that much of the downcast disquiet
that plagues our souls these days
comes from a complex and cumulative rebellion
against a humble walk with this Love.

We think it's worth paying attention to the wise men
and their search for meaning,
even today when mindsets are so diverse.
Deep down in their souls, as in ours,
there's a sense that help in finding hope
comes from the love of the God who created the cosmos.
This sense led them on their journey.

And they found this God,
or rather this God found them,
in the weirdest of places.
It not in the palaces of the mighty and the wealthy.
It was in a manger, in a stable,
in the back streets of a town oppressed by the Romans,
in the arms of teenage parents far from their home.

What kind of God is this?
This is a God who cares for us deeply enough to be one of us
so that we become reconciled in this divine love.
This is a God who disrupts our idea of power
in the same way Ben's strangely intriguing version
of 'We Three Kings' disrupts our take on the Christmas story.