

Notes for Brian's Sermon at Brentwood Presbyterian Church

Sun, Apr 21, 2019 – Easter Sunday

What Difference Does the Resurrection Make?

(Psalm 114 and Luke 24:1-12)



The women were terrified
and bowed their faces to the ground,
but the men said to them,
“Why do you look for the living among the dead?
He is not here, but is risen.”
(Luke 24:5)

A lesson from Luke 24

On this day, at the beginning of the Christian era, the ‘D’ words lost their ultimate power over humanity and the creation – despair, depression, destruction, dread, and (the biggy) death – they were replaced in the position of ultimate power by ‘H’ words – hope, healing, harmony, and happiness (in the most profound sense of that word you can imagine and then some) – that’s what we celebrate here at Brentwood – that’s the great gift of God with which Ben will be aligned this morning in baptism – that’s the invitation that the God revealed in the work and witness of Jesus Christ extends to all of us – chose life over death, and, by my grace, you can

Provocative points to ponder – as always, too many to cram into one sermon

- I can’t argue you into a faith in which you stake your life and its significance for the world on following this Jesus the Scriptures are talking about – on seeing in him the fulfillment of all that the Creator wanted for this earth and its teeming life forms – at some point, perhaps in this little space of grace, the Holy Spirit will work her wonders in you and illuminate your soul with the realization that you are a beloved child and friend of God and that living into that reality will fill your life with hope, health, harmony, and happiness – that’s what Ben will affirm this morning in his baptism – that’s where the triune God has led him on his journey through life so far – like all of us, it’s had its twists and turns, its ups and downs, its joys and traumas – they will not magically disappear because of this baptism this morning – but Ben, and I pray all of us, will see them in a new dawn of God’s grace – like the sunrise that first Easter morning – a world bathed and cleansed in the new life given as gift through God’s steadfast, enduring, abundant, inspiring love – a love that casts out fear with the assurance that “I will be with you,” no matter what -

How does this all relate to our witness as a fellowship of the friends of Jesus?

I ran across an article this week from the *New Yorker* originally published on Jan 20, 1975 – Hannah Arendt on W.H. Auden – she found his greatness as a poet in the “unprotesting willingness with which he yielded to the ‘curse’ of vulnerability to ‘human *unsuccess*’ on all levels of human existence – vulnerability to the crookedness of desires, to the infidelities of the heart, to the injustices of the world” – then she quoted from Auden’s poem ‘In Memory of WB Yeats’:

*In the deserts of the heart
Let the healing fountain start,
In the prison of his days
Teach the free man how to praise.*

To bring these reflections on Easter to a close this morning, as we prepare to welcome Ben into his closer walk with Jesus, these words from Auden’s ‘Amor Loci’ might touch your souls:

*How, but with some real focus
of desolation
could I, by analogy,
imagine a love
that, however often smeared,
shrugged at, abandoned
by a frivolous worldling,
does not abandon?*

That promise of God being with us and for us is the difference the resurrection makes

My Notes

My Prayers

