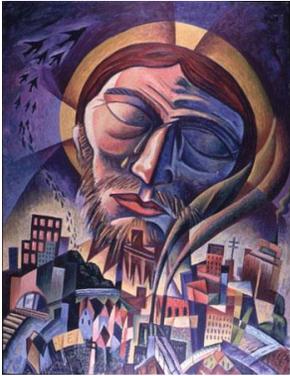


Notes for Brian's Sermon at Brentwood Presbyterian Church

Sun, Mar 8, 2020 – Lent 2

Where's Jesus?

(Ps 27 and Luke 13:31-35)



Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills prophets
and stones those who are sent to it.
How often have I desired to gather your children together
as a hen gathers her brood under her wings,
and you are not willing!
(Luke 13:34)

Fascinations to consider

Jesus is on a hill overlooking the capital city of his beloved country – from what we know, he has not spent a lot of time there – his life and witness has been among the villagers whose lives are being dramatically changed for the worse because of urbanization (with its resulting rural depopulation) – and the largest of those urban centres at that time was Jerusalem – the centre of power, wealth, and promise for many – especially the young and the ambitious – best estimates I can find for population numbers during the time of Jesus are about 60-70,000 – all the temptations and traumas that the prodigal son would have experienced – Jesus stands overlooking the city and weeps – he laments – things down there are not right – Jesus' whole ministry has focused on pointing out how life in and emanating from that city violates the covenant made by God with his people that they will be a blessing to the whole of God's creation – things must change – and this caring God must do it, no matter how unwilling the people are – and on that hill, Jesus weeps – God weeps – tears welling up from the depths of the soul of an unrequited lover – so much offered, so much rejected

Provocations to ponder

Can we stand with Jesus in his lament? – can we feel with him such deep compassion for a city that rejects God's forgiving and reconciling love? – can we follow him into that city with the confidence that he has in God's way of bringing the creation back into a nourishing relationship with its Creator? – those are just some of the invitations offered to us in this story Luke has recorded for the nourishment of God's people – they pose these questions us, "Are you willing to follow this divine love into the places where healing and hope need cultivating?" – "Are you willing to confront the systems and those

who sustain those systems with a prophetic protest against their abuses of God’s good creation that is intended to benefit all its inhabitants?” – that’s the faithfulness that Jesus embodies as he stands on this hill lamenting what is going on in Jerusalem – but he doesn’t stay there, in the relative safety of the outskirts of the city – he goes down into the soul of the city’s delusions, dysfunctions, and diseases – down to his own death at the hands of its rulers – and in that death, bewildering as it is to most people, God acts to bring all her people back together so they can be the blessing they were created to be, embraced, nourished, and protected by the wings of her forgiving and reconciling love – it’s a provocative image to ponder – God as a mothering hen nourishing her children to flourish in the mission of Jesus Christ

Compassion to practice

There are not a lot of us gathering here this morning who wield significant political or economic power as many understand those dynamics today – but all of us, in our unique circles of inspiration and influence, can be ambassadors of God’s caring love with everyone we encounter – in doing that, we co-create with God those spaces of safety under the wings of God imagined as a mothering hen – embracing all who need healing and hope – in the events leading up to Easter that we remember every year during Lent, God takes the initiative in inviting us yet again, with a patience that astounds us, to take another step or two into the willingness that she is nourishing among us to flourish in the grace of Jesus Christ – the action God takes to heal and restore hope can be summarized as self-giving love – that is what led God into this city so long ago – that is what animates the divine family that the Holy Trinity creates with us – that is what guides us as we step into and learn more deeply the willingness of faith that generates abundant life for God’s beloved creation – perhaps the challenge we are confronted with this morning is this – “Are we willing to lament with Jesus, then follow him in the action he takes to bring healing and hope to this city?”

My Notes



My Prayers