

What's The Word Again?

Sermon Notes for Dec 10, 2017 at Brentwood

Ps 85 (532) & Isaiah 40:1-11 (979)



**Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all the people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.**

(Isaiah 40:5)

Provocative Ponderings that Call Forth Our Potential in Christ

- Yesterday, this contemporary rendering of how the nativity might happen today popped up on my Facebook feed – it's by Everett Patterson, a comic book author and illustrator living in Portland, Oregon – he imagines a comfortable couple in their car seeing this scene as they rush by on the way to the mall – here's the link if you want to go and examine the rich messages in the image more carefully - <http://www.everettpatterson.com/?p=1835> – my intent in using this image this morning is to provoke afresh the idea that God's coming is not simply in the past, but is a very contemporary reality – and he comes in ways we least expect, in places that surprise us, and with a Word that disrupts our comfort and complacencies
- But what is that Word? – what do we wait for during Advent this year? – what lies behind all the busyness and bustle that exhausts us at this time of year? – for an increasing number, it's a secular holiday centred on gift-getting – some people now even insist that Santa Claus is a secular symbol, completely unaware of his Christian roots in St. Nicholas, the bishop of Myra in present-day Turkey in the early 300s, renowned for his secret gift-giving – for these folks, there is no Word of God at Christmas - for Christians, however, there is – and it's a Word that is crucial to the well-being of the creation
- the Word we await and celebrate through Advent and Christmas is captured beautifully in our Call to Worship this morning – it is the revelation of God's steadfast love and the gift of salvation that flows from it – and that 'Word' is first and foremost a person – Jesus of Nazareth, the One anointed by this God to show us the straight way in the midst of the wilderness where we wander, longing for our true home – Jesus is the one who embodies God's loving home – our true home is found in relationship with him, in working with him for his Commonwealth

*Notes for a sermon preached by Brian Fraser,
minister with Brentwood Presbyterian Church, Burnaby, BC*

- For far too many in our cities around the world, that home is a temporary shelter on a cold, rainy night that might just have room in a corner for a young couple – or a temporary tent in a refugee camp crowded with the traumatized fleeing the innumerable wars raging around the world – or a heating grate in a back alley where a young girl curls up in a fetal pose as she wonders what to do now that she has fled an abusive family – or a darkened room behind a locked door where an old man struggles with inner demons who besiege his dignity – or the particular wilderness that you face today
- The Word that God has been speaking ever since we began rebelling against the constraints that guarantee wholesome flourishing for human beings is Love – it flows from God’s steadfast love and flows into our salvation – it is for the PEACE of the whole creation, which is God’s ultimate delight – it invites us to stop the car, pull a U-turn, and offer the Holy Family a place in which that Word can be birthed – is there a couch or a floor or a spare room in your home where this Word can come to life again this year? – in that external space, can you feel the compassion of God, offering God’s PEACE, coming into your souls?

So, what are we going to do with this ...

Chances of us driving by a couple like the one in Paterson’s image may be slim – but his comments about doing something provoke us to see things differently – a radio interview with a guy who carries socks around and hands them out to those who might need them – so let’s go out from our worship this morning looking more keenly for those places in our lives where God’s Word of steadfast love and salvation can make a difference – and know that the Spirit will guide you into the right response

Your Notes ...

Framework for our Prayers

Thanks – for the persistence and diverse ways in which you confront and comfort us with your Word, your presence ...

Help – we remember in deep sadness the violence that traumatizes so many in our world – especially, this week, those who mourn those killed in the Montreal Massacre 28 years ago and in the Sandy Hook School Shooting 5 years ago – heal the despair we so often feel these days with your hope ...

Awe – the ingenious ways you devise to get your Word into our lives – into our hearts, our minds, our guts – all with the intent of healing us into your hope for the world ...

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