



## ST. ANDREW'S IN THE PINES EPISCOPAL CHURCH

SERMON  
3-1-15

*“Well my bags are packed, I’m ready to go” .....into the unknown.*

Oh, I have a few plans and ideas, but mostly I am heading off into uncharted territory and uncertainty in what I might think or experience or encounter. But then that’s the same for all of you isn’t it? Who knows what might transpire here in the next three months? We are all – all of us entering into a period I would call “silence” – your voices about me will be silent. My voice and presence in the midst of you will be silent. This period can be like a Lenten season, a season in the wilderness, a season of unknown, a time of disturbance, a time for energizing.

For those are the two words for today – disturbing and energizing. Disturbing and energizing. Our patterns of being, our way of life is getting disturbed – there is no way around that. Change is happening and it disturbs what we know, what we rely on. How does disturbing feel to you? I’m a little tense today, rather focused on being organized; I have some adrenaline flowing, my stomach rolls. It’s all part of that entering into an unknown journey. You’ve probably had disturbing moments or times in your life also.

But we find ourselves in good company. Just think about Abram and Sarai, renamed Abraham and Sarah. Man, their lives got disturbed. Imagine being told you will have a child in your old age and you also have to travel into a new and uncharted country and establish a new nation – following instructions from a God that checks in with your every once in awhile. And you never know when those once in awhile are going to happen. Off you go Abraham and Sarah, just trust that I’ll be with you. It will all work out! Situation to bring on disturbance – that’s for sure!

Or even poor old Peter – he got a bit disturbed listening to Jesus’s words. Peter takes Jesus to the side saying, “By no means, Lord. What you say must not happen.” And can you blame the guy? He’s just been told that his leader is going to suffer, be rejected, and killed. I bet most of us would join Peter in being disturbed. And then here’s the response from Jesus – “Get behind me, Satan!” It’s interesting in light of my sermon a few weeks ago about demons able to be other people or influences that draw you from listening to and serving God. Today that’s Peter. Peter is setting his mind on the human way of things – not God’s way.

And how real is that for each of us as human beings? We get disturbed so we bustle about trying to fix things or solve things or change things or do SOMETHING! We’re pretty sure we can figure out the correct ideology or the right way a life should be lived. We have minds, for heaven’s sake. Yes, and Jesus reminds us that the focus of our minds need to be on God’s ways

– not ours. Huh – that’s rather hard. What if I like my way? What if my way makes me feel safe? What if I would rather be in charge and kind of comfortable.

Well here is where the second word comes in – energizing. It is in the place of disturbance that God’s revelations can be noticed and our lives energized. In disturbance we find ourselves searching, questioning, looking----finding new answers from a new source. If we set our mind on the divine – what we receive energizes us. Go back to Abraham and Sarah – they made it didn’t they? And Isaac was born to them. And the nation of Israel came into being around them. What amazement, what energy must have filled them as their journey unfolded and their pathway into the unknown was taken- quite successfully. And look how old they lived to be.

And even Peter. He is rebuked by Jesus and he continues on following into the unknown, into the scary, into the amazing, into the RESURRECTION, into becoming the rock on which the church is built.

And it can happen to us! They are our witnesses. We’ve been told how to do it. We allow our lives to change, we recognize that the changes disturb us, we turn our minds to finding the divine in the midst of the disturbance, we receive the revelation from God, we are energized, we continue on! It sounds pretty amazing and pretty doable. Yet there is one other word I think must be included with our disturbing, energizing journey – and that word is Trust.

We are told by Paul that with Abraham no distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God. He was fully convinced that God was able to do what God had promised. And Peter – he too must have continued to trust – he continued to follow anyway. I think you can have questions and uncertainty and still let trust be present.

I also am filled with trust. I received an email this week from another clergy person who made a comment that I must be a trusting person to leave all of you for three months. And upon reflection, I’d say that I am a trusting person and I do trust you. Because that is what faith is based upon – trust. Again Paul writes that Abraham’s life was one of righteousness through faith – faith that God’s promises rest on grace. This God who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist – this God is able to do what He promises and be trusted.

And one of the things this God promises is to never leave us alone- to be present with us to guide us and direct our ways and fill us with the Holy Spirit to lead us in right paths and into new life.

I am ready to be disturbed and energized. I am ready to trust the journey. I hope and pray that you are also.

For I’m leaving on a jet plane, pretty sure when I’ll be back again. For my bags are packed, I’m ready to go.....

Thanks be to God.