



ST. ANDREW'S IN THE PINES EPISCOPAL CHURCH

SERMON
9-7-14

- I. Sure see theme in ez, romans, and Matthew about getting along with others, about relationships. And this is no Emily Post, Dear Abby, or Ann Landers advice.
 - a. This is straight shooting, hard hitting, here it is advice. Advice that talks about people's blood on our hands if we don't follow God.

- II. Start with Ezekiel: If we listen to God and hear God's word, then we must go to others and tell them when they are "wicked"- better known as sinning.
 - a. BUT, we start with God's word, so before we feel unleashed to start pointing out other's wickedness, we best make sure we are emissaries from God. How can we tell? What is our motive for pointing our another's sin? To hurt, embarrass, get even with them, to show them up? Or is it genuine concern? We don't want them to lose life? Love motivates our action, love is the source of our courage.
 - b. So, we tell the other person our perception of their choices that are leading them to death, and then what?
 - c. WE turn back from our own evil ways. Turn back, turn back oh people of God. I don't desire the death of anyone.

- III. Then Romans tells us that love is our only guide, hope, fulfilling of the law. We must love our neighbors.
 - a. In both readings you get the sense of how interconnected our lives are. If we don't warn our neighbor of their evil, their blood is on our hands. If we don't treat our neighbors as well as we treat ourselves – then we fall short.
 - b. In none of these readings is the advice/teaching just about taking care of ourself. We are connected. And in that connection it is a waste for us to spend our time in quarreling and jealousy. More relationship advice.

- IV. And finally Jesus' teaching in Matthew. In order to be in relationship with others we must speak directly to them and hope we are heard. Speak directly to each other. How hard that is for so many of us. No gossiping, no telling someone else in hope that they pass your message along, no letter's to the editor, no triangulation- trying to use a go-between. No, we must speak to each other, alone, with others, it is our own voice that must be used.
 - a. And if we feel unheard, then after trying we make choices about the depth and intimacy of the ongoing relationship. Let such a one be to you as a Gentile and tax collector. It's similar to Ezekiel – you can speak your warning, but people can

and do go on living the ways they wish to live. You can not change them so your ongoing relationship will have to be decided upon by you.

- b. But what helps me when it comes to deciding about accepting the ways others wish to live, is the rest of the advice from Ezekiel – I have to turn back, I have to keep account of my own sinfulness. I don't need to dwell on another person's sins – I have my own.
- V. Yet how hard it seems to be to get along with others, how hard to stay in relationship, how hard to love your neighbor as yourself, how much hurt there is amongst us.
- VI. I'll tell you one story of a young parishioner in Nebraska. I pick her story because she is not one of you, but I tell you – your stories are nearly the same.
- a. Jamie's story.
 - b. Her desire to be heard, acknowledged, treated with respect, apologized to.
 - c. She did not wish to sue, she wanted to remain in relationship.

We are created for love. We are created to be in relationships. Sign on my Facebook. "Love and relationship are the bottom line of the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus promoted relationship above the rules."

That is what is found in each of these readings. That is what is taught in this book – "Speaking the Truth in Love." We are to speak from love, we are to be direct, we are to seek reconciliation, we are to leave others to make their own choices, We are to be authentic, open, listening, willing to speak truth, willing to be assertive and not passive or aggressive.

This is the way to live life connected to each other. It is our challenge.

Thanks be to God.