



# ST. ANDREW'S IN THE PINES EPISCOPAL CHURCH

## Sermon by Pastor Jami Anderson, October 30, 2011

- I. Yet another critical look at the life of the scribes and Pharisees
  - a. There they are living as if they are the boss of everyone else
  - b. There they are living arrogantly and elevating themselves as best
  - c. There Jesus is pointing out the problems with these guys, letting us know that we are all to be servants of each other and humble – something the scribes and Pharisee haven't gotten correct.
- II. I'm guessing we can take some satisfaction in having Jesus rip on those irritating, nasty guys. We've all met people like them and can relate. They've been causing problems with their arrogant manners and uppity viewpoints, and their general "better than you" approach to life.
  - a. We all get irritated with people who think they're the cat's meow – or they're special or they've got it right and we don't.
  - b. Who do they think they are – we ask ourselves. Not hanging around them.
- III. But here's the catch for today – here's the teaching that forms us as people of God. Jesus says, "do whatever they teach you and follow it."
  - a. Listen to them???? Jesus wants us to listen to them? Listen to them and LEARN from them? Follow what they say????
  - b. We CAN'T dismiss them. We can't ignore them. We can't separate ourselves from their presence?
  - c. WHY NOT?
- IV. I can think of a few reasons why not.
  - a. Consider a friend I had once who refused to read any writer or book about God and religion. Etc. She said she would only listen to God directly. In fact I met her in my Education For Ministry class and she eventually dropped out because none of us were getting it right. She'd just learn from God alone.
  - b. That reminds me of the joke about the woman praying for God to save her from the flood. She refused to leave with her neighbors, she refused to get in the boat passing by, she refused to be picked up by the helicopter that came for her. She was waiting for God to take care of her.
  - c. Classical thinker Thomas Hobbs once observed that we all think we are more wise than our neighbor.
  - d. Think about that – we wouldn't be living the way we live if we didn't somehow think we'd gotten it figured out – we'd gotten it right.
- V. And when we meet others that sort of share our beliefs and manners – well then it becomes easy to dismiss others or criticize them.

- VI. Sometimes I'm amused and sometimes I'm saddened by the bumper stickers around town promoting certain viewpoints and putting down others. Or the Grins and Gripes column in the Examiner or the ranting on the radios and television.
- VII. It's like we are all ready to walk around plugging our ears saying, "I'm not listening."
- VIII. Jesus knew and knows our human nature and he's saying – not only listen to those jerks – learn from them.
- IX. Because none of us are better than the other – none of us have been made boss. None of us have any reason to lord our ways and our views over others. You are all children of the Lord.
- X. Pleased we sang that song this morning. We are all children of the Lord in one big family. There is only one Father, One Lord, One Messiah, One teacher. And it is not us.
- XI. But what we do have in our mutuality as human beings – with our gifts and talents and varying interests and varying experiences and varying knowledge.
- XII. And we are here to serve each other with those gifts and talents. We are here to teach each other and to learn from each other. We are here to celebrate multiple ministries – even when they come from people we don't like.
- XIII. Jesus lets us know that we are equal in value – no one needs to be accorded special honor. We are one big family
- XIV. And if we can just have the willingness to humble our hearts and minds – we can learn from each other and serve each other and all together say ---

Thanks be to God.