



ST. ANDREW'S IN THE PINES EPISCOPAL CHURCH

SERMON
1-15-17

“What are you looking for?” That’s an amazing Epiphany question for us to consider. For we are currently in the season of Epiphany in our church. Epiphany is about the revealing, the recognizing of who Jesus is and our experience of meeting him. We can talk about Epiphany moments – times when into our conscious breaks the revelation that Jesus is real, Jesus is present, Jesus love us.....and so on. In Epiphany moments we might find what we are looking for because of Jesus.

Epiphany is introduced by the visit from the Magi, or wise men, or strangers from somewhere east of Jerusalem. They are looking for the Messiah, the chosen, the anointed. That is their focus for two years as they search for Jesus and they become some of the first to recognize him and give testimony to the birth of the Son of God. And by their recognizing of Jesus as the anointed one, their witness is evidence that Jesus can be known by outsiders, by those who are not part of the chosen people of Israel. Jesus is a gift to people like you and me – the Gentiles. We can find Jesus if that’s who we are looking for.

But notice that Jesus doesn’t ask “who are you looking for?” He asks, “what are you looking for?” What are you looking for? That’s a worthy question, a deep question. One we may not be able to answer easily. But like the wise men, what we are looking for probably guides our actions, our choices, our focus. If we are looking for wealth – that becomes a priority in how we live. If we are looking for fame, or notice, popularity or awards, and so on then we spend our time and money trying to acquire them. So stop and think a moment – in your life – what are you looking for? Deep inside of you – what are you looking for?

I’d like the record our short answers – answers that connect us to each other as humans searching, focusing on our journeys. Does anyone want to start?

The disciples first words to Jesus were Rabbi. They might have been looking for a teacher. That’s how they identified him. They also wanted to know where he was staying? Where do you stay, where do you come from, who are you? They wished to establish some roots for Jesus. Or perhaps they were looking for a place to stay, a place to remain, a place to belong, shelter.

What else?

Certainty of who to follow?Answers? Hope? Strength?Safety?Comfort?Respect?

You see Andrew tells us that they have found the Messiah – and that is certainly an Epiphany revelation, an amazing moment, and amazing find. And they decide to stay with this Messiah,

they decide to journey with this Messiah, and all who find Jesus, all who find the Messiah can go on the same journey as Andrew and Peter. But that's the answer to WHO? Not what?

We may be looking for the Messiah and find the Messiah and travel with the Messiah, but our lives, our choices, our actions will still be directed by what we are looking for. If love, then we will be loving, if comfort we will spend time learning where we feel comfortable.

In my Pastor's Pen this month – I wrote a bit about what I am looking for. I'd say today that I am looking for an end to the "us" versus "them" mentality in human beings. I believe that if all of creation was seen and treated as equally valuable and respected, then we'd be unable to kill and maim and harm and denigrate other people. We'd work for a balanced, diverse, loving, challenging, active community of all people. I know this gets close to sounding like the vision John Lennon sang about in his song "Imagine." It's a utopia that is not yet seen on this earth – but it is what I am looking for.

So, as I wrote in my Pastor's Pen – next week I will join in the Women's March on Washington. It is one small action in the millions of actions that it will take before women are viewed as important as men in how they are treated by law, by relationships, by the respect, honor, and safety accorded to them. I know my voice next Saturday may not make a pivotal difference to anything that comes next in our world. But I do know that my joining with our four daughters and daughters-in-law does make a difference in the legacy I share with them and the conviction that will grow in them to continue to be strong, active women in this world. And their witness will be shared with their daughters and tiny action by tiny action, lives for all women may change.

I found the Messiah and I will continue to find the Messiah. Because of Jesus I know that all lives are valuable and loved by him. As his disciple I will continue to look for equality and care for all of this creation. I am looking for a community of care, justice, and love.

Keep figuring out what you are looking for and live your life accordingly.

Thanks be to God.