



ST. ANDREW'S IN THE PINES EPISCOPAL CHURCH

SERMON
11-22-15

- I. It's been a confusing, discomfoting week. The more I learn – the more I am overwhelmed and disheartened. I long for truth – but it sounds like many other do also.
- II. My eyes are being opened to the existence of a Caliph Ibrahim – the supreme ruler of a Caliphate that covers territory in Iran.....
- III. And this King and this kingdom contain the true faith and all the rest of us unbelievers need to change our loyalty or die.
- IV. Then I listen to authorities and they debate the claim and power of this Caliph and whether Isis is Islamic or not – true faith or not – acknowledged by other Muslim sects or not.
- V. I sense the same confusion in Pontius Pilate today. A decision is being demanded of Pilate – what to do with this person Jesus. He appeals to Jesus to identify himself- because they are chief priests and others claiming different things about Jesus. Pilate has to sort through Pharisees and Saducees and Essenes and differing demands and he's not a Jew. What should he do with Jesus?
- VI. Some claim he is a king – some claim Jesus will get them all in trouble with the current Emperor (ruler). Conflicting demands, conflicting choices, what action to take?
- VII. Poor Pilate – I can sense his uncertainty – especially when he asks Jesus – “What have you done?” What have you done? So you are a king?
- VIII. Notice that Jesus never claims to be a king. He does claim to testify to the truth – and that the truth can be found listening to his voice.
- IX. So – what has Jesus done? He has chosen to live humbly in the world. He has chosen suffering and rejection over might and power. He has chosen to spend his time teaching people – anyone who wants to come listen. He spends time healing people, feeding people, asking people to share what they have with each other. He has spent time speaking his truth to power. He has criticized those who take advantage of others. He has criticized unfair treatment of people. He has criticized false values, false judgements, greed, wealth, and cruelty. He has responded with compassion to all who come to him with their hurts and their needs. He has spent his time asking people to turn away from worldly pursuits and follow him
- X. That's what Jesus has done. And now he stands before Pilate and denies that his life is about being a king and having a kingdom.
- XI. That is hard for us. When we call Jesus a king – I believe it is easy for us to associate Jesus with power, rightness, authority, ruling, the wiping out of enemies.

- XII. Instead, after this visit with Pilate – Jesus is led away to his execution. Jesus is executed – never lifting a hand to defend himself.
- XIII. How do we translate that into how we must/should live today? We who crave security, we who crave rightness, we who crave peace with power, we who live with fear and want answers that satisfy rather than challenge us.
- XIV. It's hard – it's hard to live as a witness in this world – as a witness to love, a witness to compassion, a witness to kindness and caring. It takes bravery and courage – the courage to live as Jesus in both our actions and in our thoughts – not giving in to our fears and our sense of helplessness- not giving in to the powerful voices demanding our allegiance and our acquiescence.
- XV. I tell you – it is getting easier for me to live without a need for security because I'm getting old. But here are some lyrics of a song that captures some of my decision of how I wish to live my life until the day I die.

It is from a CD titled – Revival in Belfast and I don't know the name of the singer.

“When it's all be said and done – there is just one thing that matters. Did I do my best to live for truth, did I live my life for you? When it's all been said and done – all my treasures will mean nothing – only what I've done for love's reward will stand the test of time. Lord, your mercy is great. That you look beyond our weakness and find purest gold in mirey clay making sinners into saints. I will always sing your praise – here on earth and ever after. For you've shown me heaven's my true life. When it's all been said and done -You're my life when life is done. When it's all been said and done – there is just one thing that matters – Did I do my best to live for truth – did I live my life for you. Lord, I live my life for you.