



ST. ANDREW'S IN THE PINES EPISCOPAL CHURCH

SERMON

December 6, 2015

Prophets must be important to God. Today and next week we hear about and are challenged by the words of prophets. People like Baruch, or Zechariah or Malachi or John. People like the person sitting next to you this morning. What might they say that speaks to word of God to you?

A story – Hans Christian Andersen – “The Emperor’s New Clothes”

That child was a prophet- he spoke the truth – he didn’t run or hide from reality – he wasn’t bound by or hushed by fears or powers or pressures to fit in with others. Prophets speak up even when it threatens their security or conflicts with the law or the institutions in a society.

I think it sounds wonderful to be a prophet. A prophet is an ordinary person who speaks up for God’s ways, for God’s presence, for God’s reality. The words of prophets are words that always light the way to truth.

I can remember situations – similar but different in which vestries were debating the place that people with Aids or people who were homeless or people who were mentally ill or people who were sinners might have in the church. Could they take communion with us? Could they stay and sleep in our space? Should we be friendly or might that encourage their “bad” behavior. And every time, every time someone has spoken up and said, “If all are welcome, ALL are welcome.” A prophet speaks.

Prophets are the voices crying out in the wilderness. They take us all to a “larger place” in this world if we listen. They radically change the hopelessness or confusion that is holding us captive to ways of living that are harmful and self-righteous. Prophets don’t buy in to peer pressure or manipulative power tactics. Prophets keep their eyes clear and are willing to risk disapproval in order to name God’s way in a conversation.

Never think that God’s prophets aren’t in your midst right now. God’s is still speaking – God is still speaking – through you, through me, through the child that names the truth. We know God’s word when we hear it – living it might be more difficult. But when the word of God comes to you – you must speak it.

Don’t you think that sounds amazing! To listen for God’s word and to speak it! May each and every one of us experience a prophetic moment at least once in our lives.

Thanks be to God.