

Sermon: Good Friday

The Rev. Mike Wernick

April 14, 2017

Year A

Wisdom 2:1, 12-24

Psalm 22

Hebrews 10:16-25

John 19:1-37

Well... we blew it... not you [point]... or you [point]... or even me... but together... we all did... collectively... corporately... and for thousands of years... God said it was all good... and God wasn't wrong... but we took that piece of whatever-it-was from the Tree of Knowledge... and we ate it... and it became a part of us... and formed us... in some ways that knowledge gave us a moral compass... made us like God... knowing the difference between good and evil... but it seems as though we have chosen the good far less often than we could have... and it vexes us... and pulls on our hearts... because that kind of knowledge makes us realize that everything is deeply interconnected... like a Gordian Knot... and when you pull on one part of the knot... all the other parts move too...

That kind of knowledge enables us to see things the way God sees them... it enables us to feel the pain we inflict on each other... either unintentionally... or sometimes... with malicious mean spiritedness... but too many of us have become masters at averting our gaze... or have learned to numb that pain... with emotional barriers or addictions... and have done all we can to convince ourselves that we have nothing to do with it...

We blew it... all of us together... we had a chance to reject pride... power... and possessions... but we decided that those things were more important than humility... and powerlessness... and being unencumbered... you know... that take nothing with you instruction that Jesus gave... but even with all that power... we don't act like God... in almost every situation... we don't choose the best for the most... we don't love our neighbors as ourselves...

And we blow it individually... when we take the incomprehensible gift of free will... and use it to rationalize whatever we want... or whatever we don't want... we use it to justify our actions... even when they bend or break the laws in ways that seem to benefit us... but may be at someone else's expense... like speeding on the highway because we're angry and causing an accident that kills someone... or we gossip about someone else... hoping in a very passive way to hurt them because we've been hurt... or we think it's OK to minimize our actions when we realize that they have hurt others... because we want to protect our public image at the expense of Truth...

We blow it when we continue to think it's OK to ignore the hungry and the homeless... not the ones at our street corners... but those all over this country... by electing those who vote for laws which ignore them... or laws which don't unravel the systems which keep them there... we blow it when we don't transcend party politics or support reforms in those systems which could pay for and provide health care to those who need it...

We could use God's gifts... to clothe the naked... provide clean drinking water where it's needed... provide meaningful rehabilitation to those in prison... and lower tuition costs... to beat our swords into plowshares... instead of dropping the mother of all bombs... we could end our dependence on oil no matter where it comes from... and finally become serious about solar and wind power all around the world... we could be the stewards of the Earth that God wanted us to be instead of exploiting it... but our eyes are cast down... so we don't have to see the solutions...

We blow it when we continue to pay women less than men... or abuse them... or make sexist comments... or keep that glass ceiling neatly and tightly in place... we blow it when we make racist or homophobic comments... or tell sexist or racist or differently-abled or homophobic jokes... we blow it when women anywhere are forced to undergo genital mutilation... and we blow it most of all when we think the Bible empowers us to do these things...

We blow it when chemical weapons are used against innocent men... and women... and children in Syria... so a few men can accumulate pride power and possessions... and when the international refugee crisis becomes more than industrialized countries can or want to help resolve... we blow it when we are certain that what's normal for us ought to be *normative* for everyone else... or when we use the diversity of God's creation as something divisive... and we blow it when we fail to advocate for justice and peace among all people... and respect the dignity of every human being...

Because for now at least... we have decided that it's important to protect the ultra-wealthy and our war machine at the expense of the poor... to undo laws that protect the environment... and expand those that may make it harder for people to vote...

Things could have been so much better now... if only we had seen the Christ standing in front of us 2,000 years ago... if only we had seen the Incarnate God... offering everything for nothing... but too many of us... can't see past our own interests... we either rely on our own limitations... and fear that there's not enough to go around... or we think that like the rich man who built silos... we need to keep something for a rainy day... but that kind of hoarding can't possibly withstand Noah's Flood...

Jesus came that we might have Life... and have it Abundantly... but we can only see through a mirror dimly... and we didn't want to change... don't want to change... things could have been so much better now... but we didn't want to give anything up... and so we said No to Jesus... and crucified him... but Jesus didn't die for Michael Wernick's sins... though I don't help things any when I avoid the issues... Jesus died because humanity misses God's mark... because we are not living into the full potential for which God created us...

But even though we didn't trust Jesus... even though we betrayed him... even though we have been stupid... or selfish... or scared... or just plain wrong... God still trusts us... and forgives us more than we deserve... more than we can fathom... Christ is

here... and is available to us... in each and every moment... we only need to get out of our own way... so our God-self can flow through us... through each and every one of us... we said No to Jesus... but God said Yes... and God says Yes to us... as St. Athanasius said... God became human... so that humans might become Divine... after all... religion ought to be more about transformation in the here and now... than about salvation in the hereafter...

Mike+