

## What's The Point?

What are we doing here?

What's the point of it all?

Of course, when we have a moment to breath in our frenetic lives, these are the questions that gnaw at the edges; that whisper into ears that often wish such questions would pipe down and go sit in the corner.

Some say we're here as a test.

Pass and go to heaven; fail and see you in hell.

Others say there's nothing more than what we have here, life is a cosmic accident, and when we die, we're as dead as any animal.

But Isaiah, old Isaiah, has something different to say about all of this.

For Isaiah, our life is irrevocably and forever tied to the good God who made all that is.

There is, for Isaiah, a natural order in the universe, a natural order mirrored in the heavens, a loving God is its heartbeat, its breath.

Just as naturally as our garden across the parking lot sees plants spring up from seeds, just so, the Lord GOD, in his own good time, and for his own good purpose, will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

In other words, despite all the seeming evidence to the contrary, we are made for a good purpose, and God promises to bring us all,

Polynesian and white, Asian and Jew, Muslim and Hindu, to a good end.

And with that promise, perhaps we can exhale.

Isaiah brings it home today that the core of faith is found not in picture perfect doctrines, nor is it found in having just the right answers to theological mysteries.

God pierces the thin veil that separates heaven and earth, and shows Isaiah that the core of faith is found in bringing good news to the oppressed, the core of faith is found in binding up the brokenhearted, in proclaiming liberty to the captives, release to the prisoners, sight to the blind!

Whether your prison is a 5 by 8 cell at OCCC or memories of a childhood fraught with abuse or neglect; whether your hunger comes from having nothing in your belly since yesterday morning or from the ache of relationships that seem more an endurance contest than a love affair, whether your blindness comes from cataracts or from being stuck in a world view that is far too narrow, the truth is that this good news sung out by Isaiah, reborn through John the Baptist and made complete in Jesus is good news for each and every one of us, no matter our affliction, no matter its cause.

If we would but open our eyes, unplug our ears, you will see, you will hear, that God's tenderness touches all of us, clothing you and you and you with the garments of salvation, covering us all with the robe of righteousness.

What is the sign of God's presence among his people?

I can assure you it is not church buildings or fat bank accounts.

The sign of God's presence among his people is found in Jesus'

response to John when John needs to know if Jesus really is the one:

“Go tell John everything that you have seen and heard; that they who were blind are seeing, and they who were lame are walking, and they who were lepers are cleansed, and they who were deaf are hearing, and they who were dead are raised, and those who were poor are given Good News!”

All of which confronts you and I with a singular question:

Will we risk our lives on these promises from the past?

Isn't it safer, smarter, to pay lip service to the promises of God, all the while doing what we need to do to take care of number one?

Our world seems so full of futility and injustice, and the Gospel, held up to the light of what we call reality, seems so utterly foolish; a suicide mission really.

What is the point of it all?

Fr. Daniel Berrigan reminds us that, thankfully, greater things than injustice and futility are true:

It is not true that creation and the human family is doomed to destruction and loss —

This is true:

“For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.”

It is not true that we must accept inhumanity and discrimination, hunger and poverty, death and destruction —

This is true:

“I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”

It is not true that violence and hatred should have the last word, and that war and destruction rule forever —

This is true:

“For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, his name shall be called wonderful councilor, mighty God, Everlasting Lord, Prince of peace.”

It is not true that we are simply victims of the powers of evil who seek to rule the world —

This is true:

“To me is given authority in heaven and on earth, and remember, I am with you, even until the end of time.”

It is not true that we have to wait for those who are specially gifted, who are the prophets of the Church before we can be peacemakers —

This is true:

“I will pour out my spirit on all flesh and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams.”

It is not true that our hopes for liberation of humankind, of justice, of human dignity, of peace, are not meant for this earth and for this history —

This is true:

“Behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.”

It is not true that we are alone and abandoned in this world -

This is true:

“That neither death, nor life, nor Angels, nor Authorities, nor Powers, nor things present, nor things future, nor height, nor depth, nor any created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God in our Lord Jesus The Messiah.”

And perhaps that is the point of it all.

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