

Sermon for Sunday 8th August

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

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Readings:

- Isaiah 1:1, 20-20
- Ps 50:1-8, 23-24 (APBA p.49,50)
- Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16
- Luke 12:32-40

Friday was Hiroshima Day --- the anniversary of the dropping of the Atomic bomb on Hiroshima in 1945.

Today marks the bombing of Nagasaki two days later.

The stories of destruction and ongoing suffering are frightening; --- at least 117,000 people were killed --- most just vapourized in their tracks.

Friday was also on the old church calendar Transfiguration, when we remember Peter, James and John going up the mountain with Jesus and witnessing the brightness of the glory of God --- Jesus is not just another teacher, but the Ancient Son of Man.

One image is transfiguration --- changed in appearance

The other is disfiguration --- appearance is obliterated; changed forever, but in a destructive way.

But, as we ponder Hiroshima Day 44 years ago, we ought no blame individual

- pilots
- scientists

but we ought to remember a world divided and torn apart by war which brought it about.

Strangely enough, the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were significant in bringing an end to war.

Isaiah calls upon the people in Jerusalem to remember the horrors of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and he calls upon them to abandon empty religion. (Isaiah 1

vss 16 and 17)

and to make changes --- that is what the task of faith is about.

The author of the letter to the Hebrews writes about faith as being willing to move on; to move forward even though where we are going is NOT yet visible or clear even amid what seems like contradictions.

He is writing to Jewish Christians who were wanting to go back to their old ways and he wants them to see all their old stories and hopes fulfilled in what Jesus had said and done and continues to do.

Some people speak of God as having a plan or a map for their lives --- I've always had a sense that God and I continue to work on making the map for me.

Now not everybody is the same and what is a big change for some is NOT for others. Someone said to me the other day "If you've got a job it is easier to get another one" meaning you've got to make a start somewhere. The old proverb makes the same point. "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." **Faith is about taking that step.**

The connection of Hiroshima Day with Transfiguration points to the two options:

1. The disfiguration of the world which is possible
2. The transfiguration --- the changes for good which is possible --- the revealing of light and beauty in Christ which is a possibility for all of us.

In 1988 the US novelist and journalist wrote "What has kept the world safe from the bomb since 1945 has not been deterrence, in the sense of fear of specific weapons, so much as it has been memory....."

The memory of what happened in Hiroshima....

Memory of both possibilities is important:

1. the disfigurement we humans can bring
2. the transfiguration that God gives to us to bring to the world.

Our worship has a lot to do with memory.

remember God's place in our lives

remember stories of the people of faith of other generations

remember each other and the world in prayer (as well as taking their needs to God.)

remember the events surrounding Jesus' last meal with his friends and we relive them.

we remember as we take the gifts of bread and wine that Jesus continues to live with us and walk with us.

we remember too that we are his and we are his transfiguring agents in the world.

We remember!

(Pause)

In our gospel today, Jesus paints a picture of servants waiting! So I began to wonder what they would do while waiting because it sounds boring just waiting! --- It reminded me that much of life is ordinary, mundane, even boring, routine.

In the story, Jesus points out that in the midst of the boring and mundane, they are to be ready --- ready to act either to deal with a break in; a robber; the evils of life,

OR

to be ready to receive the master; the Lord of Life;

and to begin the journey of faith time and again...

Amen.

[written conclusion: these words were not used at 10am:
Faith is about that readiness amidst

the boring and mundane
to deal with and face the problems
to receive the master
to begin the journey again and again
to remember the Lord is with us

to be transformed.]