



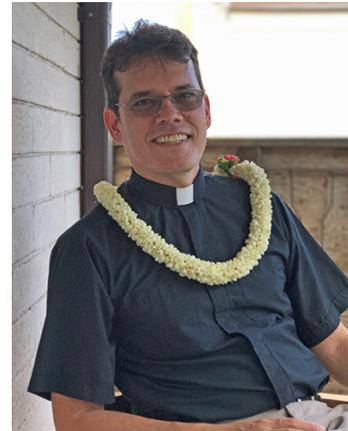
The Cathedral of St. Andrew - Honolulu

Sermon: Year A – Proper 15 – August 20, 2017

When Jesus says in this reading that he came only to the people of Israel, I think he was saying that to prove a point for the people who were around him because we know that Jesus was definitely not about exclusivity. He constantly reached out to those who were marginalized.

It's interesting, on Friday I spent all day on my grandmother's couch on the Big Island; yesterday I spent all day on the couch over in my apartment across the way. And I think it's because there is a part of me that just wants to be oblivious to what's going on in the world. Like if I don't have to think about it or deal with it, it doesn't exist.

But we know that's not true, there is stuff going on out there. A couple of weeks ago, there was the threat of a nuclear missile being sent to my home town and blowing up that island. Looking at the news at the things that went on in Charlottesville, Virginia – it's not strange to me that I just want to sit on the couch and read a book and escape from it all.



The reading ends with a very interesting line: Great is your faith, let it be done for you according to your will. And then it says that her daughter was instantly healed. I find it interesting that it doesn't say that her daughter was instantly cured. It says that her daughter was instantly healed.

I was thinking before coming over here, the last time I was at the cathedral, I did a lot of hospital visits, and I went to see a lady at Queen's Hospital who was dying of colon cancer. And this poor lady had been at Queen's for six months. I had never heard of anyone being at Queen's for six months, so it was really unusual. And her brother didn't know what to do with her and her sister didn't know what to do so they sent me. So off I go. And we talked, over the course of about a week. One day we were talking and she was talking about how she was homesick for Ka'u, which is on the Big Island and a place where she spent a lot of time as a school teacher. And so I took a picture I found on the internet – a photo of Ka'u – and I took it to her and showed it to her, and she began to cry because she was so homesick. And two days later, that was it, she was gone. Now I could not cure her, but I think that I helped to heal her. Because the definition of cure is when you intervene with medication and treatment and the disease disappears. Healing means restoring balance and harmony to the spirit. And I think she was restored to harmony and balance of the spirit to the point where she could let go. Her body could let go and she could move on to God. And God bless her for that.

Pentecost 11 – Proper 15 – August 20, 2017, cont'd

It seems to me like the world is a little out of balance right now. And it seems to me that there is a bit of disharmony. It just seems a little out of balance. And so I think we are called, if we are going to be Christ-like people, and if Christ healed, and if we are called to be Christ-like, then it is incumbent upon us to do what we can to be a healing presence in the world today, to help restore some of that harmony and balance of spirit. I'm pretty sure violence is not the way to do that and achieve it. It used to always bug me, I had a stepfather back in the day, and his thing was if somebody does something to you, you just punch 'em. I am so glad I did not embrace that lesson in life. Number one, because I would probably have gotten in a lot of trouble. And number two, I probably would have gotten killed by whoever I punched. It's just not a good way to go.

Non-violence is the harder path. Not easy. Gandhi did it, Martin Luther King did it. There were a group of clergy in Charlottesville, Virginia, who had taken training in non-violence and who showed up at these protests, including Cornell West, and were committed to non-violence. And I think that that, in and of itself, was a healing presence in what was a difficult situation.

How can you and I be a healing presence? First of all, I think we can be a healing presence by committing time to prayer. To serious prayer. Taking ten, fifteen twenty minutes out of the day and praying for balance and harmony of spirit on this planet. It sounds like a platitude but it's not. It will help to bring a healing presence to this world. I think the other thing to do, and this is why I like the Episcopal Church, in this cathedral community, there are people who are very left of center and there are people who are very right of center. And yet they come to this altar and they take communion together. They do not let the love of Christ made manifest in the bread and in the wine separate them from one another. It happens here every single Sunday. I think that is because as the Episcopal Church we are committed to what is called the "via media", the middle road. We may have views and ideas that are extreme but the goal is to come to the center and to be together in community. And I think that if we can commit to that, that will help to bring a healing presence to the world.

Imagine that group of people who were in Charlottesville coming together at this altar to take the bread and the wine. I have to believe in a world and in a humanity where that is actually possible. I really, really have to believe that. Because if I cannot commit my life to that, I might as well not even show up. We are called in our baptism to seek and serve Christ in all persons, to strive for justice and peace among all people, and to respect the dignity of every human being. That is what is going to get us to the middle of the road. That includes white supremacists and neo Nazis. We're called to seek and serve Christ in every human being. The neo Nazi and white supremacist is called to seek and serve Christ in me. We have free will, and we may choose to live into that call or we may choose not to. My prayer is that everyone that is here today will use his or her free will to make that positive choice and to seek out Christ in every human being because that's what is going to heal the world. It's not an easy task. But I'm committed, and I ask you to join me in being committed. Because hatred and violence are what took Jesus to the cross. They always say that Jesus came to die for our sins. Well, I don't think so. I don't believe in that theology personally. I think Jesus came because God so loved the world that he gave his only son and God loves us so much he wanted to experience us as fully as possible so he came in human form. I don't think Jesus came to die for our sins, but I

Pentecost 11 – Proper 15 – August 20, 2017, cont'd

think that Jesus died because of our sins. Our need for power. Our need for vengeance. Our need to be right rather than happy. So let's bear that in mind, that violence and hatred led to the crucifixion of Jesus. Now, he was the Son of God so he redeemed that. And he resurrected from that tomb and made things possible for us that were probably impossible before that event, including the possibility of world peace. And including the possibility of peace and harmony of the spirit not only of each individual spirit but of the entire world. Because we are all connected whether we like it or not. And so, when we come forward for the bread and wine, let's remember that, and let's take it back out into the world and let's be disciples and let's be agents of the peace of God. And as you come forward today, I ask you to commit to that.

Amen.