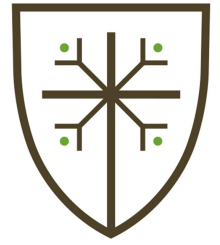




PALPABLE DISSONANCE

Advent Sermon Series

SERMON NOTES



December 4, 2022

SERMON INFO

TITLE

Palpable Dissonance: The Proper
Response

PREACHER

Rev. Tim Frickenschmidt

TEXTS

Isaiah 1:10, 13-18

Romans 5:1-5

Matthew 3:1-12

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does it look like to bear fruit in keeping with repentance?
2. What are practical ways in this season that we might live into John's call to "repent for the kingdom of God is near?"

SERMON IN SUMMARY

In this week's sermon, Tim began by unpacking the title of our sermon series, "Palpable Dissonance." Dissonance in music is the clash between inharmonious sounds. We see a similar phenomenon in Advent, the clash between what we hear in the world, and what we hear in church. In the lectionary readings in church, we hear a warning that something is coming. Advent is a season of preparation for when God comes to us, not just the first time in Bethlehem, but also the second coming. And what is our proper response when God does suddenly appear? Tim answered this question with two points: first, the assumption of Advent, and second, the power to change.

The Assumption

In between the first and second coming, Jesus still comes to us. He comes to us in the reading of scripture, the sacraments, and through prayer. So, what is our response when Jesus comes to us? John the Baptist is clear that the proper response to God's coming is repentance. John's assumption, and the assumption of Advent, is that something is wrong with each of us. It is not a problem that lies in whatever or whomever is on the opposite side from you, it is a problem in you - a problem in all of us. And so, the first answer to the question is to repent.

The Power

John can seem harsh in the gospels, but, as Tim reminds us, John preaches a God for whom judgment and redemption always come together. The truth of the Gospel is that you are far worse than you ever dare admit and far more loved by God than you could ever imagine. He comes to us out of that love and in him is the power to change. John speaks of two implements of change, the ax and the winnowing fork. God cuts out and burns away that which is dead in order to bring forth new life. Jesus is the one with the ax and with the winnowing fork, prepared to judge the world. But again, judgement and redemption always come together. He uses the ax and the winnowing fork to cut out from our lives that which keeps us from him, keeps us from salvation.

Repentance is possible for us for two reasons: First of all, the ax has already been swung. Jesus, the one who brings judgement, took upon himself the full force of the ax and the winnowing fork for us on the cross. We do not have to live in fear because Jesus came to bring redemption. Secondly, Jesus came not only to bring forgiveness but to change us. And he does that through the Holy Spirit. Everyone goes into a fire, but for the Christian, that fire is the very all consuming life of God.