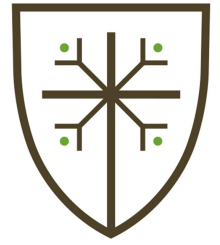




PALPABLE DISSONANCE

Advent Sermon Series

SERMON NOTES



December 11, 2022

SERMON INFO

TITLE

Palpable Dissonance: Joy in the
Darkness

PREACHER

Rev. Tim Frickenschmidt

TEXTS

Isaiah 35:1-10

James 5:7-10

Matthew 11:2-12

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Remaining in the position God has placed you may not require your physical death, but what are other sacrifices, other "deaths" that may happen as a result?
2. Tim gave us two action points at the end of the sermon: first, to be patient; and second, to lift up those who are bowed down. In what areas of your life can you practice patience, being still instead of acting and reacting? How might this help you to see those people who are bowed down?

SERMON IN SUMMARY

This Sunday was "Joy Sunday" in the church calendar, marked by the lighting of the pink Advent candle and the hint of joyful expectation in our scripture readings. And this week, Tim began his sermon with the question, "how do those sitting in darkness experience joy?" How are we to rejoice with so much darkness around us in the world? Tim considered three points: first, our position; second, our expectation; and third, Advent's promise.

Position: This week we return to looking at John the Baptist, but instead of all the nations flocking to him by the banks of the river to hear him preach and to be baptized, he is in prison ultimately awaiting his execution. John's position is flipped and he is asking Jesus questions. John never imagined himself in this position. He is there because he prophesied to the powers of the world that their end is coming and the world responded. John, and so many others throughout history, stayed and continued to do the work given them often at the cost of their lives, because it's the position in which they were placed by God. Advent is a time to reflect on our position and ask the question, are you holding the ground in that place God has put you even in the face of opposition from the world?

Expectation: John's expectation of Jesus was that he would overthrow everyone in power. And as he sat in prison, he wondered why Jesus, the Messiah, wasn't doing this. Jesus responds to John's question by telling him that he was turning the world upside-down. He was causing a disturbance, just not the kind John was expecting. John was offended (Greek: skandalon) by Jesus and so are many of us when we see our expectations of Jesus not matching what we perceive to be happening. Jesus and his kingdom can't come easily or softly or quietly. He won't come to us without disruption. We should expect disruption, difficulty, and for all our claims upon Jesus to fall away before him.

Promise: So, where is the joy in this? It is, after all, Joy Sunday. As Tim said, the joy is in the list. The list in our Psalm – the prisoners, the blind, the bowed down, the sojourner, the widow, the fatherless, the list in Isaiah – the blind, the deaf, the lame, the mute – and the list of the same in Matthew. This is who Jesus comes to lift up. He didn't just come to them in their suffering. He came to bear it. The darkness in which you sit died with Jesus on the cross. And so, the promise of Advent is that you will not struggle forever. The joy of Advent is for the suffering in this world.