

**“What Will God Do?”**

Luke 1:47 – 55, 2 Samuel 7:1 – 16

We are still waiting. The season is still Advent, although I do bend the rules a bit by having us sing “Joy to the World,” a Christmas Carol, at the end of worship today. We are still waiting. We are a people who are waiting.

Some of us are waiting, literally. Maybe you are waiting for a job to come through for you. Maybe someone you know and love is waiting. Maybe you are waiting for justice. Maybe you are waiting to hear from someone you love dearly who has not been in touch for a long time. Surely, there is some part of your life in which you are waiting!

The people who have been waiting have seemed to come lose at the seams this past year, in the year of our Lord, 2011. We have watched the people of the Middle East stop waiting, and go into the streets. We’ve watched the people in Russia do the same these past weeks. As the scriptures say: “the people who walked in darkness have seen a great Light.”

The people to whom the prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures – what we call the Old Testament – spoke were a people who were waiting. The ancient Hebrews had waited a long time to return to the Promised Land which had been theirs at the beginning of the ages. The ancient Hebrews had wandered, wandered for years. The ancient Hebrews had waited and hoped for a Savior, a Messiah, someone who could break their chains of bondage and set them free.

Surely, the one who would become the Savior would be someone important, someone in a nice, expensive suit, like the members of Congress who we have elected to speak on behalf of the people, here in this country. Surely, the one who would become Savior would come from the educated folks, the leaders in the Temple, the ones who knew the ancient, ancient Law.

“What will God do?” I asked this week. What will God do? What did God do? God, rather than going to the powerful white men in their Brooks Brothers’ suits, sent an angel to a young girl, a virgin, a young Hebrew girl, Mary. “What will God do?”

God will – apparently – not do what we expect, or wait, or hope for God to do! Those who are powerful among us better watch out, because God is doing a new thing! “What will God do?” God will send an angel to a virgin to tell her that she will give birth to the promised One, the Savior, the Messiah, the one who the people have been waiting for, the liberator, the Light.

This is indeed a reversal of expectations! This is not the place we expect God to go! This is not the place we want God to come from! We want to know that our votes have not been in vain!

Today’s lesson is a great and powerful song of liberation. How the story of the angel and the Magnificat – the Latin word given to this passage – came to be together in this text is lost in history. That they are together – this telling of the way God came to announce the Savior to these waiting people and the Great Hymn of Liberation – is beyond our comprehension.

This young girl – picture in your mind a young girl, about 13 or 14, not quite a child anymore, and yet not quite a woman. This young girl, upon being visited by the angel, this Cosmic Creature, this mystical being, opens her mouth and speaks a great song of liberation which turns the tables on the powers that be, the powerful ones

we know in their expensive suits, always with the right words, the right education, the right answers coming from their lips.

“What will God do?” What will God do when we look back at these present times? What will God do in your life, with all your waiting? What will God do to those who hold power now, who doubt the power of God? What will God do?

From the story, this ancient, beautiful, miraculous beyond words story, we know that God works through a young woman, a virgin, to bring the Savior of the World into being. God gives her consciousness – apparently – consciousness that who she is and what she will do will have historical and cosmic importance.

“What will God do?” God will raise your consciousness so that you know that what you do, that your place in history, that your being here at this time has importance.

I’ve always loved those words, in the Revised Standard Version: “ And the rich he has sent empty away.” Our richest, our smartest places are not the most conscious in us. The most conscious places are the vulnerable, the young, the virgin places, places untouched by life, but connected to history and to all people.

“What will God do? “ What will God do with you, with me, with these times?

“It’s exactly what God promised!”