

What Wants to Happen

Jeremiah 29: 10-14, 31:27-34

Jazz Sunday, October 17, 2010

There is a voice that feels like it is missing in these times of unease and distrust. We have grown accustomed to the voices of fear, anger and blame. We hear these words all around: **Somebody** is responsible for our situation! And that **somebody** is always *somebody else*! Fill in the blanks as you wish: **somebody** to blame is Republican or Democrat, rich or poor, conservative or liberal, black or white, red or blue, banker or airline steward. **Somebody** is getting more than their due! Moreover, **somebody** is lying about it! If the truth were known, **somebody** would be in big trouble!!!

Imagine with me, for a moment, a different voice. It is a voice that says we are all in this *together*. It is a voice that says: *I have plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope (Jeremiah 29:11-12)*. And then we hear that God will *watch over us all to build and plant* – not to overthrow, pluck up and break down (Jer. 31:28). Not only that, but there will be no one to blame, for at the end of the day each one of us will answer only to God!

So, this is a sermon about a voice missing in these times of ours. Or, perhaps, better, a voice that we have forgotten or ignored! It is a voice telling us we *are* in this all together. It is a voice that says our destiny is cared for. It is a voice inviting us to see miracles in places where others see catastrophes in the making!

Perhaps you have been captivated these past weeks – as the world has!! – by the plight of the Chilean miners. I can't even imagine what what it has been like for those 33 miners to be trapped 1700 feet down in the earth for *two months*! Especially the first 17 days when the miners had no contact with the world above! After 17 days rescue workers were able to drill a small hole down to the trapped miners. At least then they knew they were not forgotten. But can you imagine the voices in the miners' heads those first 17 days! Panic – anger –

sorrow – despair – who knows what went through their heads! And up 1700 feet on the surface, fearful families and media and others proclaiming disaster and culpability!

But there were other voices. Among the trapped miners was a man named Luis Alberto Urzua. Urzua kept the miners talking to each other and supporting each other. He rationed food. He kept talking about their choices – how fear can kill you. And then on the surface was a man named Aguilera, a mining engineer who planned the rescue and communicated with the miners after the first hole was drilled. He told the trapped miners nothing but the truth – this is what we’re doing, this is what we see happening, this is what the risks are. And then there was a third man on the surface, an American named Greg Hall whose company supplied the drill that finally broke through 1700 feet of rock. Eighty percent of the experts in the mining industry warned Greg Hall not only that the drilling could not work but that his own safety could be on the line from angry families and disappointed Chileans when he failed. Hall told them that the rescue could be done, and God willing, with prayer, his equipment would find the miners alive.

There was never any guarantee that the rescue would happen. But there is also absolutely no doubt that ***if those in charge above and below had listened to the voices of fear and blame, the rescue would never have taken place.*** {Let me repeat that} So the miraculous success of the rescue of 33 Chilean miners rested finally on the willingness of key individuals to listen to the voice that speaks of welfare and not of harm!

You see, there is something that wants to happen in each of our lives. Something real. Something good. Something trustworthy. It begins with a voice that wants to be heard. Listen to the voice that says to you: *I give you a future with hope.* You know this voice. We all hear it as Jeremiah heard it. Can you let yourself trust the voice? And follow the voice wherever it takes you – even though the voices around you may be saying, “It won’t work. It’s too risky. You’re crazy!”

What wants to happen is that we recognize that we are not alone and helpless after all. When we seek that God and find that voice, there comes a conviction that in ***all*** things we have choice and opportunity. And on choice and opportunity are built all things that look miraculous.

In my own life I have seen such a shift! I have come to believe in miracles. What's a miracle? Watching a community change its mind! Are you aware that you and I are part of a miracle this morning? A miracle is happening before your eyes. It is a miracle that may not be quite as dramatic as the rescue of Chilean miners, but it is no less important or powerful.

Once upon a time here in this church, you see, there would not have been a Jazz Sunday. Not like this one, anyway, where you (the congregation) are really part of the service. Once upon a time you wouldn't have clapped your hands, or sang, or danced. Once upon a time you would not have come together and sat together, black and white, gay, lesbian, transgendered, Anglo and Hispanic, rich and poor. Once upon a time you would have been embarrassed to know that some of us are poor, or newly poor, or unemployed, or were once in jail, or divorced or feel alone and lonely. Once upon a time we only talked about such things in the parking lot. Once upon a time only the ordained pastor prayed out loud. Now all the people pray. Once upon a time we were called a "fortress" in the city. But now we call ourselves, *Where the city takes heart!* Once upon a time we were afraid that South Church would never again look like it used to. And now it doesn't, and we are still here today – having a great time on Jazz Sunday!

A miracle has taken place! Why? Because we listened to another voice! Because we decided that the voice of choice and opportunity is highly to be preferred over the voices of fear and blame. Because something wanted to happen here that is beautiful. Because we see that our God does not leave us helpless. *Because we ask.* Because we ask God to show us the way!

There's something that wants to happen *today*. There's a call out for people who can take a stand without blame. Tell the truth in spite of the risks. Keep the conversation going among frightened people. Bring their "A Game" when others say the game's over. Believe that those who are trapped are worth the effort. Understand that we really, truly and without exception are all in this together!

The call is out! The voice is God's! The words speak of our welfare and not our harm!
Imagine the miracles that want to happen when we suddenly realize that the **somebody**
everybody keeps talking about – is **you and I!**

Amen