

Bristol Lutheran
Pentecost
Isaiah 6:1-8
11-13-2016

It is always a good rule with family, to never talk about certain things...like Religion and Politics.

But over this past week, past month – our lives have been captured by politics. We are probably worn out by the talk.

But God and politics – aren't off-limit topics. They are intimately connected, because we so often look to faith, religion, God, church – to help us figure out life when it gets out of control.

And politics – if you haven't noticed - can send us into Chaos. Instability. Uncertainty.

We look for God. We seek out God. We hope for God. And God shows up. To Elijah and the widow. To Jonah and Nineveh. To Isaiah in the temple.

Israel is going through a political transition, King Uzziah has died. It is a marker of time. It would be life if we said...in the year Donald Trump became President Elect.

But from the very beginning the people of Israel are reminded no matter who is leading their nation, the King above, never will transition. God who was, who is, and who is to come.

The same constant God, changeless. Even as the people who serve God are always changing – faithful one moment, unfaithful the next.

Isaiah realizes this. We want God to be with us always, but admittedly we don't deserve God's grace and love. God is worthy to be praised, but maybe we are not worthy to be in God's presence. Isaiah admits the "lostness" and "uncleanliness" in him and the people.

Yet Isaiah is cleansed with a burning coal, sin forgiven, guilt removed. Cleansed – so that he can go and be the prophet God has called him to be. His ministry and words, sanctioned by God, prove powerful, and push God's people to lives of holiness.

To show the people of Israel God's promise...that no matter our fickle nature, God sticks by us. And no matter the political leadership, God will be the one to protect and lead the people.

I pray the same words for us.

This election, our own transition voted on last Tuesday, has caused real fear and uncertainty.

We can't dismiss the feelings of fear– even though God tells us Do Not Be Afraid. It is not enough to say it will be okay. We show it.

Nothing has changed for the church.

Whether your candidate won or lost. Anger, fear, sin, and hate the runs through the streets of our country, was true before the election, only amplified by recent events.

We still have hungry and homeless. We have families dealing with cancer and death. We have sadness and pain. We have war and tears. We have insensitivity and bigotry. We have tension and division. We have problems in our families, neighborhoods, schools, and churches – to continue to worry about, work on.

No matter who is president. No matter how the election effects and affects us. We still are disciples of Christ. With the same mission. Same ministry. Same goal in which to continue. Still grounded in the same promises by which we live.

Those baptismal promises spoken to Grant. To worship God. To teach Jesus' love. To eat together. To forgive and be forgiven. To work for justice and peace. To proclaim Christ in word and deed. To take care of others and the world God made. To pray. And to be an answer to prayer.

None of us are worthy, but God makes us worthy. God cleanses us, and gives us words, to speak prophetic truth to one another. Not fortune telling prophecy, but witnessing to God's glory. Speaking out against the powers of the world that have corrupted us. We can do that. You can do that.

It is not wrong to name the sin that controls us. No guilt for proclaiming God's promise, will, truth and love. We are freed from sin. Freed to serve.

As Peter fell before Jesus and confessed unworthiness to be a disciple – Jesus reminded him that he is made clean, like Isaiah, forgiven, made worthy – to go and fish for people. To go and serve God, by serving neighbor. To go and speak, to be God's voice in the world – especially for the voiceless, oppressed by the rulers of the world. To proclaim the word of God.

God's Word, written and spoken - the word made flesh– is more powerful and life changing than any campaign promise. In the words of Bishop Eaton – “no human candidate can guarantee our place in life or future. That is the work God has done in the life and death of Jesus.”

Pursuing better healthcare, fixing income equality, taking care of creation, respecting diversity among us, welcoming the stranger, protecting civil rights, building relationships with other countries, and people who share different opinions – bringing a divided nation together, is the job of our President elect. But more than that. It is our hope as people of faith.

Not as a political agenda, but God's agenda for our life together.

If any president, any leader, any pastor, any boss, any neighbor of ours for that matter, acts with racist language, or in a misogynistic way, or bullies, or okays sexual assault, or abuse, or religious intolerance, or hate against fellow humans – the church is allowed, and commanded to speak out.

Because hurting and hating people, is never acceptable. The work of the church, our place in the community remains the same.

If our country is going to be great. If our world is going to be great. It is because of God's promises lived out in our lives.

That is why we embody the words of God, our bodies become the hands and feet of Christ, our lips are cleansed to be a prophetic voice.

In an unjust world, chaos, and brokenness in our own homes, who will speak for the Lord?

We will. Politics included.

We are made worthy God's grace, sin blotted, guilt removed, confident on God's power, that maybe we too can say - "God, Here am I. Send Me."

And we can risk sharing God's message, because no matter what happens - God still remains King.

“Still sitting on the throne, With the whole earth full of God’s glory.”

Only God’s message will make our world great. Only God’s people, acting in the ways God expects and demands, can turn hate to love. Only through trust and respect – will we be able to work together. No leader – ever - takes the place of God.

Except the one that was God. Is God. Always will be God. That leader who disrupted society, and the political landscape, and was hung on a cross. Raised three days later. To show us life. To give us life. To be life for us.

To destroy death, and resurrect life for all sinners and saints alike. Because God makes us great again, new again, removing the old, over and over, cleansing our lips, so that we may serve God with humility and thanksgiving.

Here am I. send me.