

## THE LOUDEST VOICE IN YOUR LIFE (MK 4: 26-34, 2 Cor 5:6-10)

The Rev. Corinne Hodges, Sunday, June 14, 2009, SJOC

- I. Talk at the Kosciusko County YMCA on spirituality and wellness.
  - A. Group of 12 people, last of 55 people participating in LL challenge, take off from the TV show, “The Biggest Loser.”
  - B. Purpose was to remind them of the incredible gift God gave us in our bodies and how we are expected to be good stewards of them.
  - C. Using scripture, talked about how we were created in God’s image; body as a temple that is to be cherished, cared for and respected; our bodies are important to God because they enable us to do God’s work.
  - D. Where the group really seemed to come together was when shared story by Lauren Winner, “Mudhouse Sabbath: An Invitation to a Life of Spiritual Discipline” (p. 65-66, 74-75)
  
- II. One does not have to participate in the LL or any other kind of contest to relate to this story. For all of us are challenged when it comes to listening to the voice of God above the many other voices that play so prominently in our lives. For one it may be the voice criticizing our appearance, for another it is the voice that tells us we do not earn enough \$, have not done enough with our lives, we don’t have what our neighbor has. We are not as good looking, smart, noticeable, well regarded, not as important or worthy. These voices sound out in the lives of human beings throughout the world everyday.
  - A. Paul in 2 Cor reminds us what is truly important in life through the use of contrasts:
    1. At home in the body vs. at home with the Lord
    2. Aim to please others vs. aim to please God
    3. Outward appearances but what is inside the heart that counts
    4. Led about this earth by things we can see vs. walking by faith
  - B. Yet despite this, so often we do not take our cues for God, but culture, the stuff of this earthly world—we can’t help ourselves
  
- III. When we read other readings today, we see how foolish and wrong this is. We have set our priorities on temporary things. We have bought into the wrong pictures. Both Ezek & MK speak of the reversal of God’s order: that what you see is not always what you get...our expectations can be way off.
  - A. Ezek:
    1. Youngest, greenest, least mature sprig is the one that bears fruit and becomes the noble cedar
    2. The low is made high and the high is made low
  - B. MK Parable of mustard seed:
    1. Smallest, seemingly most insignificant seed yields huge growth and becomes the largest bush

2. First parable: growth is taking place without our intervention
- IV. These stories help us deal with the disappointments and challenges of this life
- A. For the best person does not always get the job, make the team, receive the credit or win the contest
  - B. If we look to this world for reason and understanding, firm explanations, we will not always find them
    1. Our hope has to be in something greater than this, more sustaining, more permanent
    2. Paul today draws this contrast between homes—one physical and one spiritual. It's a good metaphor for Paul, for he was a tentmaker. He knew about the ease by which a tent could be dismantled, torn apart, destroyed—all physical homes, no matter what they are made from, are destructible. But the Kingdom of God, Paul knew nothing could tear that apart.
    3. Kingdom is a home worth investing in, a home we can count on
- V. When we look for fairness, judgment and reasoning, we have to turn to God and I think in our heart of hearts we know this and actually want this:
- A. Desire turning off the other voices that tempt us, at least turning down the volume
  - B. Want the confidence Paul talks about, the confidence that God's Kingdom does indeed reign and that in the end justice will prevail
  - C. How do we get from here to there—from persons who put their trust in the many competing messages of the impermanent world to a community that is strong, stable, reaches out to provide for others, and calls God's Kingdom home?
  - D. How do we seek the rewards of God's kingdom first and foremost?
- VI. We need to change our focus, new way of seeing and being in our world. Try to come at life not from the human point of view, but from God's.
- A. What is the loudest, most influential voice in your life? From whom or where do you take your direction?
  - B. When other voices try to woo you and take over your life, keep your focus, say a prayer, do whatever you have to do to tune them out.
  - C. Let God's voice be the strongest in your life. Let God speak the loudest.