

Found by God
January 14, 2007
(Epiphany 2 - Year C)
Isaiah 62: 1-5

St. Alban's Episcopal Church, Waco, Texas

Sometimes you have to adjust your plans and give in to where the Spirit is leading.

Once every three years, in our three year cycle of scripture readings, we read the story from the Gospel of John about how Jesus changes water into wine at a wedding at Cana of Galilee.

In anticipation of this reading from Scripture about the wedding at Cana, Heidi and Bennie Buchanan are having their marriage blessed in this church today, because their wedding in 2000 had taken place outside of a church, in a courthouse.

But, yesterday, as Waco was deluged with rain and cold temperatures, and as the weather forecasters were predicting an ice storm for this morning, it became questionable whether Heidi or Bennie, or anyone, would be here this morning.

So, sometimes you have to adjust your plans and just give in to where the Spirit is leading.

I had fully intended to preach today on the Gospel reading, about how Jesus changes water into wine at a wedding at Cana of Galilee.

Yet, at our new weekly Bible study last Wednesday morning, our group studied all of the Scripture readings for today.

We studied the Gospel reading about the wedding at Cana in detail.

However, at that Bible study, a lot of energy and questioning was generated by today's Old Testament reading from the Prophet Isaiah.

You see, sometimes we must lay aside our original plans and give in to where the Spirit is leading.

And, yesterday, as I prayed for the Holy Spirit to give me the words to preach about, regarding the wedding at Cana of Galilee,

Yesterday, as the plans for today's service began to be questionable in the face of an impending ice storm,
Yesterday, I found myself glued to the TV, watching the unfolding story of two teenaged boys in Missouri who had been kidnapped and who now were found.

So, yesterday, I gave in to the Spirit, and dove into the Old Testament reading, diving into the words of the Prophet Isaiah, who speaks, saying:
"For Zion's sake, I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her vindication shines out like the dawn.
For...as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you."

Last Monday, a 13-year old boy named Ben Ownby disappeared in Missouri, in a suburb of St. Louis.
Then, the frantic search for Ben began.
This search ended on Friday night, as police entered the apartment of Michael Devlin, and found Ben, the boy who had been kidnapped.
And, in an amazing stroke of luck, the police also found Shawn Hornbeck, a 15-year old boy who had been kidnapped over 4 years ago.

Yesterday, I watched the news conference on TV, the news conference which showed Shawn Hornbeck, who had been missing for over 4 years, and who was now reunited with his mother and his stepfather.
In this news conference, Shawn's mother and stepfather told about how, over those 4 years when their son was missing, they never gave up hope, they were never silent in their attempts to recover their son, they never stopped searching.
For years, Shawn's parents worked tirelessly to find their son and to give hope and help to thousands of other parents of missing children.

As a father, it was impossible for me to watch this story unfold without being moved.
As I saw Shawn and his mother embracing and rejoicing over being

reunited, the words of the Prophet Isaiah seemed very real:
“For Zion’s sake, I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will
not rest, until her vindication shines out like the dawn.
For...as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice
over you.”

There is good news, there is Gospel, in the words of the Old Testament
prophet Isaiah:
God will never keep silent,
God will not rest,
Until we are found.
And, when God finds us, God rejoices over us as a groom rejoices over
his bride.

During the season of Advent, we used Form II of the Prayers of the
People.
In those prayers, we prayed:
“I ask your prayers for all who seek God, or a deeper knowledge of him.
Pray that they may find and be found by him.”

Our relationship with God is a two-way street.
We find God and God finds us.
However, sometimes in Christianity, we act as if it is all up to us.
We act as if we are the only ones who must make an attempt to find
God.
But, God will never keep silent,
God will not rest,
Until we are found by him.

All of us know people who are lost.
Maybe they have not been kidnapped, physically.
But, all of us know people who have been kidnapped by drugs or alcohol
or clinical depression.
Or people who are kidnaped by an abusive or an emotionally distant
spouse.
And, in the words of Isaiah, for God’s sake, we will not keep silent, we
will not rest.

We will give them hope and help, until their vindication shines out like
the dawn.

Maybe that person who is lost,
Maybe that person who has been kidnapped,
Is you.

And, the good news of Isaiah is that God will not keep silent, God will
not rest, for God will work tirelessly to find you.

I had planned this Sunday to preach about the wedding at Cana of
Galilee,
But, instead, the Spirit led me to good news in the Old Testament, good
news found in the words of the prophet Isaiah.
With the threat of an ice storm in Waco and the news of the recovery of
2 teenaged boys, God revealed to me, that God is relentless in his
search for us, never resting, never silent.

And, just as a groom rejoices over a bride,
Just as those parents rejoice over the recovery of their sons,
When you are found by God,
God rejoices over you.

Therefore, I ask your prayers for all who seek God, or a deeper
knowledge of him.
Pray that they may find - and be found - by him.

AMEN.

© The Rev. Jeff W. Fisher, 2007