

What if, what if...

12/3/2016

2nd Sunday of Advent- 3 weeks to go until Christmas.

Are you pondering, or panicking,
all the things that have to be done between now and then?

But what NEEDS to be done, really?

We have lots of preferences, lots of expectations,
but are those things REALLY necessary?

What would happen if we can't do those things,
like the Hoos down in Hooville,
who had the "all those things" taken away from them,
and all they had were each other,
and the songs in their hearts?

What if, what if... do you ever ponder the "what ifs?"

1. What if you had married somebody else?
2. What if you had finished getting your degree?
3. What if you had waited to have children?
4. What if Jesus had never come? What if?

Would that be making a difference in your world...

lots, little bit, at all?

What if... you were an angel,

before that moment when Jesus was preparing
to empty himself of divinity and wrap himself
in human flesh, and enter into human experience?

And so if Jesus emptying himself of his divine privileges
seems incomprehensible to us,
imagine how it must have looked to the angels,
who continually dwell in God's presence.

You know about man's inhumanity to man,
the cruelty and savagery that humanity is capable of,
and yet the eternal Son of Almighty God
is agreeing to go to planet earth,
live in the constricted sense of 3 dimensional reality,

(and since we don't know that angels know the future),
There is a good chance that as an angel,
you don't know what the Father and Son are up to.
You only know that the Son of God is going to earth.

So-

1. What would you tell him to pack for the journey?
Jesus- got your tooth brush? Clean underwear?
2. The crown prince of heaven
is going on the most brutal of missions,
how do you tell him- "Good bye?"
3. What does the incarnation look like
from a Heavenly point of view?

Fun little thought experiment, Bob,
but what does any of that have to do with me?

1. I'm fighting for my marriage.
2. I'm struggling with should I even bother to
try to stay in my marriage.

3. I have cancer, or my spouse or parent does.

Who cares what the angels might have thought
2,000 years ago?

Well, Paul challenges us

to think about this whole subject differently.

Back to messed up, dysfunctional church-

II Cor. 5:14-21

For Christ's love compels us,

because we are convinced that one died for all,
and therefore all died.

¹⁵ And he died for all,

that those who live should no longer

live for themselves

but for him who died for them and was raised again.

¹⁶ So from now on

we regard no one from a worldly point of view.

Though we once regarded Christ in this way,

we do so no longer.

We do not view Christ

from "a worldly point of view" any more...

Well, what other viewpoint is there?

The viewpoint of Heaven.

Sometimes all we can see is our messes, our screw-ups,

or, all we can see are other people's screw-ups.

We see piles of bills, dirty dishes, dirty diapers,

holes in the drywall, holes in our hearts.

We see piles of dry bones,
 but God, looking through eyes of love,
 sees His hurting children, and says,
 “Jesus, we **MUST** do **SOMETHING!**”

And so, from a Heavenly point of view,
 Christmas, every bit as much as Easter,
 is all about sacrifice.

And I think the angels must have marveled,
 even after being around the love of God perpetually,
 to learn the extent that both Father and Son would go
 to do something about
 the wreckage that humanity had become.

That passage continues in [II Corinthians 5:17-](#)

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation;
 the old has gone, the new has come!

¹⁸ All this is from God,
 who reconciled us to himself through Christ
 and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:

¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ,
 not counting men’s sins against them.
 And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

²⁰ We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors,
 as though God were making his appeal through us.
 We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.

²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us,
 so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

“God made him who knew no sin to be sin for us.”

That's a pretty big boatload of love.

God paid that kind of price to reconcile us to himself.

What if, what if...what if.

What if God just said about you, "Forget it."?

- 1. They are not worth a second chance.**
- 2. They are not worth forgiving.**
- 3. They are definitely not worth**

the death of my Son.

From a Heavenly point of view,

Aren't you glad it was God who did

the calculations of value, instead of us,

instead of other people in your life for you,

and you for them?

From a Heavenly point of view,

God did the math, and Jesus said, "it's 'go' time."

So now God says to us-

"I've done the math.

The people in YOUR life are worth it, just like you are.

Like Jesus, who gave himself up for you,

you need to give your life up for them.

- 1. They need forgiveness; so did you.**
- 2. They need mercy and grace; so did you.**
- 3. They need second, third and fourth chances; so did you.**

As Jesus was a minister of reconciliation on your behalf,

you become a minister of reconciliation on their behalf.

**It's Advent- time for reflection, penance, and prayer.
Here's our take-away for the morning-
some thought questions to act on
throughout the week-**

- 1. Who have you wounded,
that you need to ask for forgiveness from?**
- 2. Who has wounded you,
may STILL be wounding you, that you need to forgive?**
- 3. Spouse, sibling, coworker or friend?**

**To be a minister of reconciliation means to work for
peace in our relationships, make peace with others,
help others make peace with God,
in the name of the Prince of Peace.**

Think, ponder, pray, then act.

**On the surface, planet earth seems quite robust,
almost infinite.
Depending on what you choose to look at,
it can look quite ugly,
like when you drive up the Eastern side of New Jersey,
with all the oil refineries.**

But what does planet earth look like from space?



**Just a little green and blue orb suspended in space,
surrounded by darkness and nothingness.**

But it is our home.

**So fragile, so vulnerable,
compared to the vastness all around it.**

That's what our home looks like from space.

- 1. I wonder what our home looks like from Heaven,
from a Heavenly point of view?**
- 2. I wonder what your heart, God's home,
looks like from a Heavenly point of view?**
- 3. I wonder what the angels see,
when they look at us from a Heavenly point of view?**



Does this image feel a little different than the other one?



What if, what if...Jesus had not come?

**What would planet earth look like,
what would your heart look like, if Jesus had not come...
but He did.**

And He calls us to put our hearts around others,
just as he did.

Where are you going to start?