

4th Sunday after Epiphany (C) or 4EpiphanyC

Jeremiah 1:4-10

Psalm 71:1-6

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Luke 4:21-30

- remarkable results of being known, claimed, called
- equipped to accomplish far more than...
- proclaim God's word and embody his will
- one sees this in all four lections
- God's claim on us?
- remember our baptisms during Epiphany
 - o we are known, claimed, called by God
 - o belong to God
 - o primary identity = God's children
- this can arouse opposition
- a share of God's spirit is ours
- equips + empowers us to live + love in accordance with God's purposes

Jeremiah 1, Texts for Preaching year C

- each major prophetic book includes a call
- Isaiah 6, Ezekiel 1 (Rw – it's not clear Isaiah 6 is in fact the call event)
- differences + similarities
- (1) Yhwh summons individual to speak
- (2) negative reaction -> weakness or sin
- (3) infusion of Spirit (lips or mouth)
 - o Jeremiah kind of private person for whom public life of prophet is repulsive
 - o yet cosmic dimension of Jeremiah's self-understanding enabled him to withstand sufferings, deprivations
 - o modern ears dislike God ordained a person for function or vocation
 - o reeks of predestination, constrains freedom
- (1) for some their vocation is essential
 - o also outpouring of their freedom
 - o some who believe in power of Spirit -> they discover they are called to do that
- (2) we regard lifelong commitments with suspicion

- that is nature of commitments to God
- (a) God's ideals are lifelong ideals... we shape our lives + world according to his ideals
- (b) a life toward justice + compassion = life committed to certain persons
 - commitment to ideals, persons inseparable
- Jeremiah shrank, God persisted
- prophet submits to act of God, symbolizes ability to do work of God, also internal presence of God's word to prophet's life
- Yhwh does not violate free will
- summons individual to make Yhwh's will our own
- mystery of one's personal call from God
- no mystery about -> God embraces hopes for each person, shares with us those hopes

Jeremiah 1, Ronald Clements, Interpretation

- 1st person account of call + commissioning
- 1:1-3 = general superscription
 - introduction offers divine overview on event to which prophecies were originally related
 - word of prophecy interprets an age
 - this age has great significance for Israel
 - victims + survivors of these events
- these things have happened
- hope -> gain understanding of why
- "prophecy is divine word of hope + explanation which is antidote to human despair"
- they were shocked, bewildered, disillusioned
- (a) gods cruel + despotic?
- (b) Yhwh is remote and detached?
- here a man aloof from opinion, speaker + interpreter of God
- provided us a message of faith
- "God has been involved in tragic sense of history"
- reality of human freedom, consequences, people may choose evil + spurn good
- God is more than arbiter of human deserts (?)
- he loved, there is hope for new beginning

- God consistently warned
- Jeremiah as vindicator of truth about God
- Jeremiah 627-626 early activity
- strong national revival
 - o oneness of Israel + Judah
 - o chosen people of Yhwh
 - o reaffirmed loyalty to Yhwh their God
- (a) he welcomed the Spirit + goals of revival
- (b) suspicion that hope + optimism -> complacency
- God would protect no matter what!
- Jeremiah spends 40 years warning against its folly
- 1:4-10 – date? 20 years later?
 - o divine authority, compulsion, empowering
 - o tested + breaking point at crisis times
 - o sense of call took shape over long period
 - o “no one could prove/disprove prophecies save events themselves”
 - o private yet public, national, international
 - o 1:1 from among priests
 - o Anathoth, shrine, Abiatha, tradition of religious political social opposition (17)
 - o Jeremiah would have looked beneath surface of religious + political scene
 - o tested against older traditions (!)
 - o Jeremiah ready to criticize policies of (1) house of David (2) Jerusalem temple
- 1:5 – prophet to nation and other nations
 - o (basically significant that Jeremiah was from priests of Anathoth in Benjamin)
 - o pattern for call + commission
 - o (a) protest
 - described in tangible terms
 - genuine vision? inner images + feelings?
 - one clear feature:
 - God gave him authority + strength to be prophet
- 1:9-10
 - o pronouncements become facts + realities
 - o also words of hope + assurance
 - o two visions
 - o (1) almond tree
 - o (2) cooking pot

- not until 605 meaning becomes clear
- objects he had seen (?) provide a theme
- why a threat from the north?
 - oh good Assyria is waning!
 - ah but here comes Babylon
- Jeremiah's religious spiritual prophetic thinking imbued with political relevance
- 1:17-19 – personal injunction from God
 - also a preface to the book
 - Jeremiah's words would prevail
 - not the entire leadership of the nation
 - Jeremiah's words could bring light + understanding
 - tragedy = few listened
 - how much he had to bear for telling the truth as God revealed to him!