

7th Sunday after Epiphany (C) or 7th Epiphany C

Genesis 45:3-11, 15

Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40

1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50

Luke 6:27-38

- Luke 6 and “love your enemies”
 - gives several concrete illustrations
 - leads to general exhortation 6:31
 - compare love God intends with love in culture
 - God’s love not feeling or self-centered
 - merciful treatment of others
 - ground in God’s character
 - God will provide for God’s people
- Genesis 45
 - conviction of God’s provid-ance
 - God mysteriously at work through hostile actions of brothers
 - God sent me
 - enables Joseph to love his enemies
 - Joseph passes up chance for revenge
 - forgives, blesses, does good to them
 - Joseph is merciful as God is merciful
- Psalm 27
 - same provid-ance enables psalmist
 - to say, Do not fret because of the wicked
 - an assured future can transform the present
- 1 Corinthians 15
 - resurrection: future transforms the present
 - faith in God’s provid-ance of life beyond barrier of death
 - enables Corinthians to know that in the Lord their labor is not vain

Genesis 45, Texts for Preaching year C

- mirrors human nature in every age
- must not lose sight of central thrust
- in and through all events of Joseph’s life God works to save the people
- immediately? Jacob and his family
- ultimately? all humankind
- Joseph now virtual ruler of all Egypt

- survived many threats
- “juicy turn of events” -> face to face with brother they sold into slavery
- Joseph could wipe them out or imprison them
- not Joseph’s way or God’s way
- emotional energy of Joseph
- awestruck dumbness of the eleven
- incredulous? or terrified?
- whole point of the narrative: God at work to bring good out of evil
- (10-11) Joseph outlines what kind of new life
- years of famine?
 - o peace + plenty under Joseph’s protection
- God at work in dark and destructive moments
- it is not possible to identify grace or redemption in many human experiences
 - o we wonder, God is never present?
- Ruler of the universe: caring friend will ultimately have a friend’s way
- Joseph = paradigm of what grace of God can do
 - o transform curse into a blessing
 - o Joseph as metaphor for God
 - o reason to reject wayward humanity
 - o loves them to point of participating in their suffering

Genesis 45, Brueggemann, Interpretation

- setting: royal urban ethos of Solomon
- international ways sharply critiqued old tribal traditions
- old modes of faith were embarrassing
- old idiom of faith... unconvincing
- how does one speak about faith in a context where older ways are found wanting?
- narrator’s theological claims are subdued, implicit
- “in contingencies of history, purposes of God are at work in hidden, unnoticed ways. But the ways of God are nonetheless reliable and will come to fruition”.
- attentive to mysterious ways of God’s providence
- high view of God... human action is irrelevant
- movement = dream of Joseph -> settle in and under governance of Joseph
(47:27)
- disclosure statements of 45:4-8 and 50:19-20 interpret the whole

- influential hypothesis: attempt around 10th century BCE to explain hidden role of God in world affairs
- constructed to link ancestral promises to Exodus narrative
- God's way triumphs without contribution of any human actor (including Joseph) (Rw – hunh??? seriously?)
- theme: “soft” word = providence
- between “hint and dodxology”
- let the dream be at work, outcome is less clear
- God's goal is create community of liberation
- issues of power
- “new ways to think about faith + power in relation to public realities”
- what good God intends in spite of us (50:20)
- dream must work its way between family and empire
- 45:1-28 (45:3-11, 15)
 - moving appeal of Judah (44:18-34) triggers this scene
 - entire narrative moves toward this point
 - 45:3-4 presumed world irreversibly shattered
 - this is complete break with past
 - 45:3-5 lament and salvation oracle
 - Joseph's speech breaks conspiracy of Genesis 37
 - Joseph's speech echoes Yhwh, Second Isaiah
 - 45:5-8 is crucial
 - basis for salvation assurance (5a)
 - formula of commission
 - (1) God send me to preserve life
 - (2) ... to preserve a remnant
 - (3) ... and made me father, lord, ruler
 - completely redefines salvation for everyone
 - God is free in spite of, through, against human effort
 - God does his own work and at same time honors work of his creatures (Barth)
 - main claims =
 - (1) God's purpose is finally sovereign
 - (2) God's purpose can create real newness
 - (3) God's purpose is utterly gracious
 - God wills life for his people
 - (4) God's purpose is hidden and mysterious
 - does not linger to explain
 - (5) worked out in concrete history

- through action of identifiable persons
- “decisiveness of God not expressed here with active verbs of in terms of great interventions”