

Second Sunday after Epiphany
Sermon text: John 2:1-11
Date preached: January 17, 2010

Grace to you and peace from God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. AMEN.

When a crisis occurs it brings out the best and the worst in people. We've seen this nation rally around the citizens of New York and Washington D.C. in the first days following 9/11.

We've seen this nation rally around the city of New Orleans and areas of the gulf coast in days and weeks following landfall of Hurricane Katrina.

Likewise, I expect this nation and other nations to rally around the people of Haiti in this moment of catastrophe. Like other crisis, we'll hear stories of how lives were saved. We'll see people respond generously with monetary donations, with celebrities leading the way in making appeals.

Of course, words of caution must also be expressed. Not only will we hear stories of looting and hoarding taking place in what was already one of the poorest countries in the world, there are some who will take advantage of peoples desire to help setting up bogus websites for you to make a donation. This is offered not to discourage, but to be most efficient in how we

can help and know the legitimacy of who is collecting.

One of the questions that frequently are raised in the midst of crisis is the question, “Where is God?” “Why could God not have prevented this from happening?” To this specific question let me be abundantly clear about one thing. Pat Robertson does not speak for the majority of Christians when he states that Haiti made a pact with Devil and they are now paying for that misdeed. Such comments are not in keeping with the good news of Jesus Christ that is proclaimed in pulpits across all denominations.

We will see God at work in Haiti, as we’ve seen God at work in many a catastrophe. God is at work through the hands of those who are treating the injured. His grace is with those calming the fears of survivors fearful of aftershocks, and how they will live in the uncertainty of the next several weeks and months.

A couple of generations ago, God appeared silent as another group of people suffered. These people suffered because they were different. People suffered from discrimination, being turned down for jobs, paid far less than what was fair for their labor and denied

even the basics of education, medical care and transportation, all because of the color of their skin.

Tomorrow this nation celebrates the holiday of Martin Luther King Jr. King had a vision for this nation, for African Americans and Caucasians alike. That vision was one of reconciliation. It was a vision that God is at work.

In the years since his death God has certainly been at work on behalf of all God's children. God loves his children and is not turned away by skin color, or by where people live or their economic states.

Yet in the midst of all his children, God is present. God loves us, even when he seems most distant. And we know this through the Scripture.

It is in the scripture that Jesus shows God's abundant love. In Scripture, Jesus pours out his love lavishly be it at a wedding, with a woman at the well, among a man born blind whose sight Jesus restores, and among those grieving the death of his friend Lazarus. Each of these events in Jesus life point to God's abundant love that has continued through the life of the church, as it proclaims the death and resurrection of our Lord.

Since the ascension of our Lord into heaven the Holy Spirit has been at work among all believers, Jew and Gentile, woman and man, rich and poor, young and old, and among every ethnic group.

The earth can shake. Catastrophes strike on large communal and individual scales alike. Through it all, the Spirit is alive in us, calling us to use our God given ability for the common good of all God's children. In using our God given gifts the Lordship of Jesus is proclaimed in Word and deed. Lives are changed. God is glorified.

In the end death seems far too often to prevail. It is precisely in that moment when God meets His children and says the best is yet to come. What comes is abundant life. What comes is eternal love. What comes is unmerited grace. What comes is freedom from fears of racism, injustice, extreme poverty, earthquake, bitter cold, and all other catastrophes large and small.

The best God gives is yet to come. The foretaste of God's best is present for us now. AMEN.