

The Rev. Jason Churchill  
Sunday, November 13, 2016

## Letting the Light In

Praise the Lord, my soul.  
I will praise the Lord all my life;  
I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.  
Do not put your trust in princes,  
in human beings, who cannot save.  
When their spirit departs, they return to the ground;  
on that very day their plans come to nothing.  
Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob,  
whose hope is in the Lord their God.  
He is the Maker of heaven and earth,  
the sea, and everything in them—  
he remains faithful forever.  
He upholds the cause of the oppressed  
and gives food to the hungry.  
The Lord sets prisoners free,  
the Lord gives sight to the blind,  
the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down,  
the Lord loves the righteous.  
The Lord watches over the foreigner  
and sustains the fatherless and the widow,  
but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.  
The Lord reigns forever,  
your God, O Zion, for all generations.  
Praise the Lord.

Taken from Psalm 146

Have we put our trust in princes and mortals? Has our trust moved from the Pharisees to the pundits and the faith in the pollsters as if they were soothsayers of the ages past? Have we declared our candidate of choice prince or princess before God - have we gone so far to turn our political process into one where there is an anti-Christ and a messiah? Is the division we see in our nation the condemnation of God because we had the audacity to enter the ballot box and pull close the curtains as we cast our vote on an altar of false hopes and empty promises of salvation? Is this national division because we have turned our preferred candidates into idols of worship and forgotten they are just mere mortals of whose breath is a gift of God's and their words only as enduring as is their bodies which, even if neither of them believe it, will turn into the dust from whence they came?

On Tuesday night, I went to bed, in hopes of waking up to a result and some consolation of who the next president would be. There were no hanging chads or recounts the next morning, just a nation divided. Some were joyful, others were fearful, but all were relieved for an end to what has seemed to be one of the most brutal bouts fought for the highest office of our land.

But you know what, we all woke up, together, in the same country.

Jesus warns us, he warns us that we should beware that we are not led astray; for many will come in his name and we are to not go after them.

No one human being can be the savior of this nation, of this city, or of this church - for we already have been saved in the life and death of Jesus Christ where his blood on the cross has sealed us in a new and everlasting covenant where our sins have been forgiven and we are guaranteed eternal life everlasting. It was in our waters of baptism of which we remember every single Sunday that we are claimed as members of Christ, claimed by the waters as daughters and sons of God almighty.

Our help is in the Lord God who made the heavens and the earth, not in the election or defeat of mortals and princes on earth. Jesus Christ is Lord, no one else for if we allow a human person to become our Lord or martyr we are creating an idol and straying away from the greatest commandment of God's that is...there is no other God but God the creator of heaven and earth.

Our country is divided because I believe we have placed our trust in the hands of mortals and princes, in people and politicians. Where the ballot box has become the altar where we make our sacrifice and forget that it is God that made the ultimate sacrifice in Jesus Christ. We are a broken world, where the cracks of sin have allowed us to forget that no matter what side of the aisle we sit on, whether we are a red or blue state - we are all children of God and our Lord is Jesus Christ.

One of my favorite artists just passed away, Leonard Cohen. If you don't know the name you probably recognize his song "Hallelujah" - kind of a haunting tone with a great deal of biblical references. He also wrote another song called "Anthem." Again, another song that has a strong scriptural tone.

The chorus goes...ring the bells that still can ring, forget your perfect offering...there is a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in.

Some bells can ring, others cannot. Leonard Cohen seems to like the symbolism of the cracked bell, of which we are familiar with - being in the shadow of Philadelphia. On Wednesday morning, we woke to a nation that was obviously hurt and divided - a crack that seems more like an impassable chasm between those on the left and those on the right. But to carry the metaphor a bit further, even a small crack can allow light to get in, and in the darkness of a world without the Gospel message of the love and grace of Jesus Christ - we need all the light we can get. For a world that is cast into darkness forgets the light of the nations, the light of God in Christ Jesus.

Can you imagine just how much light is rushing in through the crack between people in this nation?

In lieu of placing our trust in the breath that departs from those that return to the dust from whence they came - we can put our trust in the Lord God and allow the chasm that has been formed by our divisive sinfulness to let the light of Jesus Christ shine forth into this nation and bring us out of the darkened pathways that lead to wars and insurrections - and into the peace known only by those that carry the cross of God in their hearts.

We. Can. Overcome. We. Shall. Overcome.

Remember that all human beings are created in the image of God no matter who they voted for. That we are called to not restrict ourselves with labels and borders when it comes to recognizing the humanity in others, but we are called to look at every breathing person and see the image of God reflected back to us.

We MUST pray for our nation. We pray for our elected leaders for understanding and for the

openness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ as being one that calls for loving one another and not casting people aside for being different, we pray for a nation where all are created equal and in the image of God.

Welcome the stranger. Feed the hungry. Clothe the naked. Because in so doing for those you are doing for Christ - and we cannot ever neglect our duty as people of Christ. Happy are those whose hope is in God - happy are those whose faith is in the Lord - happy are those who do not put the princes and mortals of this world above the God in whom they have been created.

In so doing, Jesus tells us that we will be despised and hated. I say good. I'd rather be hated for putting my trust in an everlasting God than in putting my trust in any earthly prince or candidate. I know we are tired from this divisive election, but let us not see this division as judgement passed on us, let us take this time and in the words of Paul to the Thessalonians, "brothers and sisters, do not be weary in doing what is right."

Do not be idle for if you allow the Lord to set you free and open your eyes, if you live righteousness over all other things and if you watch over the strangers and foreigners, if you keep faith in the righteous judgement of God and you revere the name of God and cast away all idols that stand in the way of putting God and Christ first, then as our prophet Malachi says, you will rise with the sun of righteousness whose wings will heal all divisions and chasms - where the cracks in the world are there so that the light of Christ may shine in and we will not be walking in darkness, but we will be walking in the ways of the God and proclaim Jesus Christ is Lord.