

Jan Hus Presbyterian Church and Neighborhood House
January 2, 2011

“Caught off guard by the marvelous...”
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Sermon Notes:

I am regularly daunted by the fact that here I and other preachers are, forming words and comments around readings from Scripture that have given birth to thousands of scholarly and other works – and in 12 minutes or so, my job is to glean historical accuracy, the literary intent of the writers, the theological thrust, and wrap it all up in some meaningful way to today, in this world – in the case of Jeremiah – some 2500 years later and in the case of John, a mere 1900 or so years later.

To put that in perspective, it would be like the writers of the times described trying to understand the writings on cave walls during the early neolithic period some 2500 years *before their time*.

We have an obsession with history as answers to the times in which we live. Even first hand history is tainted by the perspective of the author or caveperson.

Events are a different story, in the sense that we can connect with specific events that center around the emotions, the human emotions we understand:

Primary human emotions, such as: fear, joy, love, sadness, surprise, anger and their secondary and tertiary counterparts such as: anxiety, alarm, amusement, fondness, homesickness, amazement, fury, and so forth. At one level or another, everyone relates to these and so, too, has the human race since it first crawled out of the primordial ooze.

It seems that in the stardust of which we all are created, a bit of the stars remains and wonder, in all its forms, drives us today.

Even if just to “wonder” what I am getting at at this very moment.

Well, we cannot be who we are, human, without expression of through familiarity or identification with the emotional impact, no matter how slight it might be, of events.

Why, for example, did I suddenly find myself all filled with tears in the middle of some of our Advent and Christmas services and events? I was touched, and in that touching something else was stirred – a deep sense of resolve – a firm decision that God was still present and it was in the stories of season and our

Bible that I am sure I experienced a revitalized conviction, as well, in the work I have been called to, in the work we have all been called to, God would be with us, just as God has always been...and we are to carry on, regardless of what we might see as impasse. And, perhaps, the impasse that is often the most difficult for me, the one that creeps up on me, calcifying my clarity and soundness of mind is in looking for the results of human endeavors and emotions to be satisfied, culminated, somehow, in this life. Yes, in a way, I am back to the +1, but even more. The fullness we seek, the "stardust component" that is with us from the start is completed only after the fullest and fullest of life we know in this form, we share, and the future forms we are yet to know.

After all, what could possibly move us beyond ourselves than something beyond ourselves?

To put that in perspective

Synopsis: The late director Norman Rene and writer Craig Lucas made a pretty fine creative team on the stage and in the movies, and this 1990 drama about the evolving impact of AIDS on gay New Yorkers is their best cinematic achievement. The ensemble story follows the lives of nine or so characters as word of the so-called "gay cancer" eventually becomes a real force, killing several of them as the years go by. The film works well on a number of levels, not least of which is the enviable closeness of the characters, the script's wit, the bittersweet experience of loss, and a celebratory attitude at the end mixing wisdom with defiance. --Tom Keogh

Film Clip from "Long time Companion" Trailer:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mGCeQC805vY>

Closing Comments.