

# Liberation Theology

Liturgical Year A

Meditate on This

January 22, 2023

Isaiah 9:1-4

I struggled with this week's suggested Scriptures. The proper reading of any Scripture can be very challenging yet very enlightening within the same paragraph. I had forgotten how difficult it was every week preaching on a topic you did not choose. Upon reading both Old Testament readings, looking through several commentaries, and three Old Testament books on theology one word began to emerge. The word that came from Isaiah's reading was LIBERATION.

The first chapter in Isaiah opens with Isaiah's most beloved, reassuring words. Our text creates a powerful hopeful picture of a righteous king offering light to our dark lives through justice and righteousness. Too often like the people in Isaiah's time we live in a land of deep darkness and the anguish of spiritual death.

Creation was victory of light over darkness. C.S. Lewis labels this darkness as "horrors of the Same old thing." People with static lives tend to continue in this situation until some light brightens their darkened world. Not only is the "light" for us, its healing, transforming powers is available to all.

In order for us to get beyond our "potted thinking," with shallow roots we need to re-plant our thinking, so it includes everyone. Thus, enters Liberation Theology. Liberation Theology is NOT about sending missionaries to Haiti to convert the "heathen." Liberation Theology is about liberating the oppressed, confronting poor labor practices, getting involved in the rights for women, politics, economics, the gay, the poor, those having no voice.

Our Old Testament reading talked about liberating those living in darkness, Jesus continued liberating women, children, the sick and those ignored by the community. Following apostle Paul, the church has all but ignored being a change agent for EVERYONE.

In 1968, at a Bishops conference in Latin America, they began to turn up the volume on the poor and the disenfranchised. Hopefully we all become agents to help those in darkness to a better, safer, fuller life.

Someone much wiser than I said, “the Bible can only be understood through the eyes of the poor.” May we all be the light for those around us.

Dennis Siebert

New Testament Reading

1 Corinthians 1:10-18

Whose side are you on? Have you ever been asked whether your republican or democrat, follow the Packers or the Bears, or a follower of Jesus or Buddha? Those are the type of questions apostle Paul was confronted with.

Word was sent to Paul that the church in Corinth was filled with disunity. Paul’s task was to mend the fighting that was going on in the church. Since Paul was so far away, he sent a letter to correct the wrongs.

The dissensions in the church are as old as organizations have been around. Who do we follow the minister who baptized us thirty years ago, the one who married us, the one in the pulpit now? The people in Corinth were divided with who they were following, some claimed they belonged to Paul, other followed Apollos, still others Cephas and others claimed they belonged to Christ.

Then Paul writes something that tingles my insides. Paul says, without trying to belittle baptism, “thank God I never baptized any of you for you would be using me as a pawn.”

Paul asks the question, “was Christ divided?” Instead of being focused on loyalties we are all challenged to become unify. Paul talks about the necessity of differing opinions to discern the truth, but we are called to be one America, one neighborhood, one church.

When Pope Benedict XV1 resigned for health reasons in 2013 I had hoped the two Popes would show a strong bond of unity, but co-habitation was sometimes cumbersome and caused more than one headache.

Headaches in the church, the workplace continue because we all at times forget what is best for the neighborhood and we follow some group who will best aid us in our search to take control, to be on the powerful side.

In the Corinthian church Paul accused them of dividing up Christ, who are we dividing? It might seem that I follow just Walter Brueggemann, but I do follow God and along the way I need teachers like von Rad, Napier, Barclay, Wherli, Barth, Bultmann, Niebuhr, Borg, Wink, Tillich. Kierkegaard, to keep me focused on the goal that is best for all.

We are not Jewish, we are not Christian, we are not Gentile we are not Buddhist, WE ARE ALL ONE.

Dennis Siebert