

Easter 6C 2010
John 17:20-26; Acts 16:16-34
Sermon for Advent LC
May 16th, 2010

“What are you Doing?”

Dear sisters and brothers, grace to you and peace from God the Father and our risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

I have one question for you today to think about– just one. I figure we can all handle that this morning. Are you ready? What are you doing to make God’s love known in the world through your life? That’s it friends– that’s the only question that you need to think about today. Simple right, a simple question of your identity really, of who you are and how you are open to what God is calling you to be. We heard in the reading from Acts today about some of the amazing journey that Paul and Silas were a part of in their ministry. We see the power of testimony and what happens when one lives out their faith– people’s lives are changed, God becomes real, and hope is restored. All from two people simply working hard to make’s God’s love and God’s word known in the world. So in the same vein of Paul and Silas, simple workers in the kingdom– what are you doing to make God’s known in the world? Don’t answer yet– I don’t need an answer from you today– rather I want you to think about to ponder it as we look at the call that is issued to you by Jesus this morning in the Gospel. And then I want you to answer that question by living out your answer in your life– not just today but every day. Dear friends, what are you doing to make God’s love known in the world through your life?

Our Gospel from John for today is a unique opportunity for us to see Jesus being open and honest with God the Father– we get a glimpse of Jesus’ hope for the church that he has called to action in this conversation between Father and Son. I feel kind of uneasy really– Jesus is praying, and we are essentially eavesdropping into this sacred moment. I don’t know about you, but when I am alone– be it driving, or in my office, or whatever and I am praying I am pretty honest with God. I let my desires, fears, hopes, sins, etc, be known to God. I hold nothing back. And if I knew someone was listening I might change my tenor a bit. Yet, here in this Gospel we have Jesus approaching his death, praying for his followers; praying for you. And Jesus is being very honest and open about what he hopes will happen for those who come to follow him and bear his name. Here we have Jesus extending a call to those that are Christian, to those that are part of his community. And guess what folks, that’s you– and that calling of Jesus this morning is pretty darn clear, and pretty empowering because in it he promises to be with you and in you. And because of that promise, you then can answer his call. So what are you doing friends, to make God’s love known in this world? That’s the call of Christ– to be a people that are unified and who come together around the central promise of God’s love for the sake of the world– Jesus’ prayer this morning is lifting you up– your Lord, your Savior, the one who dies for you on his way to his death is praying for you to have the strength to carry on his mission in your life. God has called and has anointed you through his son and now asks you to make his love known in the world. So what are you doing about that?

Dear friends, let's talk frankly for a minute. Here's the plain truth- God loves you- God sent his son for you- if you know that great, if you don't let us help you believe it- God in his infinite wisdom sent his precious son to die on the cross for you and nothing can or will change that ever. You belong to God. Sorry- he's got you. That gift, of God's love for you is now knocking on your door and begging you to open your life up a little more, begging you to work together in unity of love and hope to bring light in the midst of our dark world- that love is begging you to realize that you are the Paul and Silas of this generation- you are the ones who have been called and sent, you are the ones who God needs at this moment to be community, to love one another, to love the world and to change the world with the promise of the Gospel. That's your call- that's the call that Jesus gives you, that's the call that Jesus prays to the father that you will know- that the world will know the love of God through you. Yes, that's a big call, yes that's a hard call, yes it seems impossible- but God is here in this place and in your life to give you strength and God needs you. So what are you doing in your life to make God's love known?

I had a friend once who really bugged me. He bugged me because he was always so nice to everyone, never outwardly showed being annoyed or angry or frustrated. He bugged me because he was almost too nice and too loving. I asked him once why he acted that way, certainly he had to have a little darkness in his life and I wanted to see it. He told me it was simple, he strived to live his life in a way that was joyful and happy and full of gratitude because each day was a gift from God. And furthermore he told me that we all are called to live in a way that allows love to flow from us in every interaction we make- in what we give, in the simple act of being us and in making decisions that puts God before other things in our life. He said we had to do this because the world was watching- and we might be the only Bible that people have to read. That remark, about being the only Bible people might have to read has always stuck with me. It's powerful to think of our lives in that way- what you do, how you live, what your priorities are, what people see in you reflects on your God because hopefully people know you belong to God and call yourself a follower. So friends, let's get to work, let's put an end to the lip-service of saying we believe in all this God stuff and actually living it out- outside of this building, let us actually live in a way in community that makes people aware we believe in this Jesus, let us get serious about our faith and maybe make people notice that God's love is for them too. But if we just sit here and go through the motions week after week, and just expect God's word to be known because someone else will do it we miss the point. So think again, what are you doing to make God's love known in the world through your life? Answer that, by living your answer every day.

God loves you and so do I. Amen.