

## eLectionary Readings Discussion for Sunday, August 9, 2009

A Ministry of Christ the Redeemer Church, San Marcos, Texas

### **“Ignorant” versus “stupid”**

*This discussion is the opinion of Bert Cobb and is not necessarily the opinion of anyone else. Do not interpret these reflections to mean anything other than what Bert Cobb thinks and feels. They are for the exhortation, encouragement, and edification of the Saints and may be used freely for that purpose.*

#### The Lectionary Readings for the week:

2 Samuel 18:5-9, 15, 31-33

Psalm 130

Ephesians 4:25-5:2

John 6:35, 41-51

### **“You can’t fix stupid.”**

Ron White, comedian

### **“The police acted stupidly.”**

– Barack Obama, President of the United States

Pardon me if I offend some parents and readers by the use of the words “ignorant” and “stupid”. I have, at one time or another occupied BOTH groups. IF the “police acted stupidly”, there is no hope to CHANGE THEM THROUGH EDUCATION and the “beer summit” was a total waste of time from the conception. Did the President “miscalibrate” his statement? There is an important distinction between the two “conditions”: ignorance versus stupidity. “Ignorance” is amenable to education therefore it can be “fixed”. “Stupid”, as Ron White so eloquently proposes, is unfixable because it will not allow change through education. Many hearts are so calloused that they cannot be penetrated through education. Only God can penetrate the hearts of the unrepentant and “stupid”. Please, God, allow me to be ignorant and not stupid when it comes to your “truth”. We continue to trace the results of the actions of people unwilling to accept the truth and those who refuse to tell the truth.

### **2 Samuel 18:5-9, 15, 31-33**

***The king, David, ordered Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, "Deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom." And all the people heard when the king gave orders to all the commanders concerning Absalom. So the army went out into the field against Israel; and the battle was fought in the forest of Ephraim. The men of Israel were defeated there by the servants of David, and the slaughter there was great on that day, twenty thousand men. The battle spread over the face of all the country; and the forest claimed more victims that day than the sword. Absalom happened to meet the servants of David.***

***Absalom was riding on his mule, and the mule went under the thick branches of a great oak. His head caught fast in the oak, and he was left hanging between heaven and earth, while the mule that was under him went on.***

***And ten young men, Joab's armor-bearers, surrounded Absalom and struck him, and killed him.***

***Then the Cushite came; and the Cushite said, "Good tidings for my lord the king! For the LORD has vindicated you this day, delivering you from the***

***power of all who rose up against you." The king said to the Cushite, "Is it well with the young man Absalom?" The Cushite answered, "May the enemies of my lord the king, and all who rise up to do you harm, be like that young man."***

***The king was deeply moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept; and as he went, he said, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!"***

Nathan's prophecy from last week's discussion is in the process of coming to fruition. David suffered disunity and intrigue within his household and family. This is the story of just one of David's rebellious children. To fully grasp the entire story, one must back up and read 2 Samuel chapters 15 through 18. (Put down this discussion and read the chapters. It won't take long and it will give you the "big picture" surrounding these events.) There you will discover the gradual take-over of the hearts and minds of the Israelites to turn them against their king, David. Absalom was a "snake in the grass" who lied to cover his other lies? Where have we heard this previously in the story of David? What goes around comes around. This the "end story" of the father/son battle for power in Israel. No one can "hurt" me more than my friends and family. The problem arises when we lose the sense of everyone as part of our "family". Absalom's secret acts of treason forced David to retreat from his own capitol and for his top advisor to commit suicide. Lies KILL the hearts of people and their bodies. The murder of Uriah was only the beginning of the "slippery slope" for David and his "household". This list of passages omits verse 18:14 in which Joab puts three javelins into the heart of Absalom as he hung by his hair in a tree. David's lament over Absalom is reflected in Christ's lament over the City of Jerusalem recorded in Matthew 23:37-39 and Luke 13:34-35. Read them and compare the two people in grief. David grieved for his son and wished that he had died in Absalom's place. Jesus grieved for the people of Israel (us) who rejected the gift of the Son and He DID DIE in their/our place. Does God grieve when you and I reject his Son? Is this what is meant by "do not grieve the Holy Spirit"?

## **Psalm 130**

**1**

***Out of the depths have I called to you, O LORD;  
LORD, hear my voice; \*  
let your ears consider well the voice of my supplication.***

**2**

***If you, LORD, were to note what is done amiss, \*  
O Lord, who could stand?***

**3**

***For there is forgiveness with you; \*  
therefore you shall be feared.***

**4**

***I wait for the LORD; my soul waits for him; \****

**2**

*in his word is my hope.*

5

*My soul waits for the LORD,  
more than watchmen for the morning, \*  
more than watchmen for the morning.*

6

*O Israel, wait for the LORD, \*  
for with the LORD there is mercy;*

7

*With him there is plenteous redemption, \*  
and he shall redeem Israel from all their sins.*

Who can read this psalm without sensing the deep remorse that David must have felt for all that had gone wrong in his life? Did David intend to sin and bring down his kingdom? Did David wish to be estranged from his wives and kids? What is the lesson of David's family life? Think. It won't hurt that badly. Choices in life always have consequences, some good, some bad and some mediocre. All of us have a little bit of David in us. We should pray to have the wisdom to choose wisely. Wisdom does not mean that we will always make the "right choice" or "not sin". Wisdom means that we will learn from our mistakes and try to not repeat them. Good luck on that one. Who among us is "wise"?

### **Ephesians 4:25-5:2**

**Putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another. Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not make room for the devil. Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labor and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy. Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.**

Paul addresses the issue of lies among the community at Ephesus. When do we tell lies? It is usually to add stature to ourselves or to diminish the stature of some other person or group of persons. Can you imagine this happening in a church? Are there "white lies" and "black lies"? It is either the "truth" as we know it or it is "not truth" as we know it. More than "facts", the truth is always helpful, kind, and corrective by nature. "Lies" are usually the opposite. Lies hurt both the teller of the lies and the objects of the lies. Anger is usually based on "lying to ourselves" because we do not want to admit the possibility of OUR being wrong.

Stealing is nothing more than lying to ourselves that we “need” or “want” to possess something more than someone else who “does not deserve it”. God says we have ALL sinned. If we say we have not sinned, we make God a liar and that is the slippery slope into perdition that we all face. If the Biblical record teaches us nothing else it is that “one lie leads to another and another.” The secret to living lives of truth is to “imitate God, as beloved children, and live in LOVE, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” It is usually hardest to stop lying to OURSELVES. As William Shakespeare said, “To thine own self be true and thou canst be false to any man.” Truth is truth and we KNOW it when we experience it. Paul only points out the obvious to us so that we can read it and convince ourselves.

### **John 6:35, 41-51**

***Jesus said to the people, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.***

***Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." They were saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" Jesus answered them, "Do not complain among yourselves. No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day. It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven.***

***Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."***

The opening line of this week’s passages is the closing line of last week’s passages from John’s gospel. It bears repeating because it is reason for our hope and reward for seeking Jesus. The Jews rejected Jesus (some of the Jews because all of his disciples and Apostles were Jews) because he did not fit their “truth of Messiah”. Does Jesus “fit” your idea of “Messiah”? Most of our time is spent seeking entertainment and “fun” when what we really need is the “bread of life and the living water”. Both are free for the asking because “Jesus paid it all”. Once we have HOPE for never being hungry and never thirsty, we can spend our time on other things and other people. Ultimately, evangelism is “one beggar telling another beggar where to find ‘the bread of life’ and ‘living water’”. Imagine the frustration and disappointment of Christ. He became flesh, suffered as a human form, gave up his life for you and me and yet, we REJECTED the gift he offers? No one deserves to be angry more than Christ but, what was his reaction? Read again the laments cited above from Matthew and Luke. Does that sound like an angry, bitter Savior? Rejecting the truth and lying about

ourselves is one thing, rejecting the Savior and lying about Him is another ball of wax. "You shall KNOW the TRUTH and the TRUTH will set you FREE."  
Hopefully, we are ignorant and not stupid concerning God's "truth".