

Year C  
 Proper 5  
 June 6, 2010

1 Kings 17:8-24  
 Ps 146  
 Galatians 1:11-24  
 Luke 7:11-17

*Tell me a story*

- I suspect we have all said those words at one time or another in our life
- *Tell me a story!*

As children stories help us learn about life

- That there are people we can trust, and people we should be cautious of
- That people and pets grow old, and change

Stories help fire our imaginations to think of life beyond our current circumstances

- That frogs might be princes
- That beans just might grow into a beanstalk.

Every people, every family has their stories of where they've come from, what has influenced their lives... and stories of where they're going

- As families we tell these stories when we gather -- birthdays, weddings, baptisms

Churches -- spiritual families -- tell these stories every time they gather as well

- And we Episcopalians -- along with several other liturgical churches -- pile them on!
- Our first lesson each week is almost always from the writings of our Hebrew ancestors -- with their image of God as Creator, moving and acting through human history and events
- Today's lesson makes the point that God acts powerfully -- giving new life even to the child of a foreigner, an outsider
- God not showing any favorites.....
- 
- Our second lessons is almost always from the writings of Jesus' first followers -- about what he meant to them, and how they tried to follow him
- Today's from St. Paul writing about how he changed from being someone who opposed Jesus to become a follower
- 
- The third lesson always from Jesus own teaching
- Today's echoing that theme of God giving new life, as Jesus gives new life to a young man
- 
- And if that wasn't enough, in our Eucharistic prayer we weave all of those themes together:
- And we talk about God, acting through human history, acting through Jesus, to change *our* history, change *our* story, and restore *us* to wholeness in God's love

And today as we gather we tell additional stories:

- We tell the story of Isaac -- just a little over 8 months old -- come here today for Baptism
- And we tell the story of Marion -- also more than 8 months old -- here today as she so often is, but now retired after 21 years of being a choir member.

And in telling Isaac's story today, we change it:

- For in bringing him to the waters of baptism we believe his life is changed forever
- That he is mystically given new life -- reborn
- No longer just Isaac, son of Sarah, but Isaac, child of God -- joined with Christ in both his death and resurrection, marked as Christ's own forever
- And through that rebirth loved beyond his wildest imagining
- given gifts beyond measure -- skills, abilities uniquely his
- And called to use those gifts, celebrate those skills as an agent of God's love in the world
- To bring that love more and more fully into the world just through his being

That's an awesome story! -- And one we hope he will never forget

- And yet we know the world will try to tell him different stories as he grows up
- Stories that allow others to define him, control him
- Stories that tell him his worth is tied up in being cool, or fitting in
- That he needs to use this, or buy that, or act this way towards others in order to be accepted
- That in and of himself he's not worth all that much

You and I have fallen for those stories in our own lives, haven't we?

- We've let others define us..... define our worth
- We've sold ourselves short all on our own too -- we've sinned in our own unique ways
- And as we pray that Isaac always will return to this true story we celebrate today - - this original blessing in his life
- So we pray that each of us will return to that story too -- over and over again
- And that we'll support each other -- and Isaac -- in remembering just who we really are
- Loved beyond our wildest imagining
- given gifts beyond measure -- skills, abilities uniquely ours
- And called to use those gifts, celebrate those skills as agents of God's love in the world

And that's part of the story of Marion that we celebrate today

- Marion -- 21 years of faithful service to us all as a choir member
- Coming to rehearsals and services -- in good weather and in bad
- Climbing those long stairs from the square up to the church, making sure she wasn't just on time, but always early
- Early enough to gather bulletins so that each choir member had one at the ready when they arrived

21 years is a long time -- and we can be pretty sure each day wasn't always splendid

- There had to be days of pain, days of sorrow, days of being tired or fed up or afraid
- And yet Marion sang, faithfully
- Sang before God, sang for God -- in the face of all that may have been less than wonderful
- Knowing in her very being those words of our first hymn this morning:
  - Did we in our strength confide,
  - our striving would be losing;
  - were not the right one on our side,
  - the one of God's own choosing:
  - dost ask who that may be?
  - Christ Jesus, it is he
- In her simple actions modeling for us -- modeling for Isaac -- faithfulness
- Faithfulness is using her gifts – uniquely hers -- as an agent of God's love in the world.

And there is the story of each one of us, gathered here today

- Come here for our own reasons
- Come here thinking it was our idea to do so
- But its not.....
- Sorry....its not
- It is God's idea that we be here this morning, with each other
- God's idea that we be here with Marion, and with Isaac
- God's idea that we hear once again that we are loved beyond our wildest imagining
- given gifts beyond measure -- skills, abilities uniquely ours
- And called to use those gifts, celebrate those skills as agents of God's love in the world
- And all we need to do is say *Yes.... I believe..... I will*
- *Amen*