

A Sermon for Robbinsdale United Church of Christ
by. Rev. T. Michael Rock
Sunday, September 27, 2009

Scripture Readings: Esther 7:1-6 and Mark 9:38-50

Sermon Title: "Telling the Truth Isn't Always Easy"

(open with prayer)

Folks committed to a life of servant leadership often remind themselves of the disconnect between the "right" thing to do and "easy" thing to do. The temptation to do the "easy" thing has been the source of pain and hardship for many. Going through the motions of life, allowing the day to day machinations to drive our lives are often the greatest barriers to being people of faith and truth. I appreciate so much the passionate feedback of those that disagree with me, because my heart tells me that it is time to learn. I must admit that it isn't always my first reaction, but as soon as go to that place of truth, as soon as look in the mirror, I have to examine the ways to learn.

This is Esther's story. She is the queen. Life is good. Everything she could possibly want in the material world is at here disposal. But the story of Esther reminds us, the clothes we may wear, the house we may live in, and the bank account we may have, do not define who we are. It is what is inside us that become our most defining characteristics. It is about who we love and how we love. It is about our commitments and desires. These are the things that define us. Even though Esther had "made it", she knew that what really mattered was her connection to her family of faith and the worship of God. Her uncle did not challenge her or condemn her, he just reminded her who she was. Her identity was not as Queen. Esther's heart revealed that she was really just another humble child of God, and even if lost all those comforts, the truth was going to matter most. So, Esther told the truth of who she was. The amazing thing, was that the worst did not happen. It rarely does. By claiming her truth, her people were spared and Esther paved the way for others to claim their truth and trust in God.

Esther "came out" of her religious closet and felt liberation, freedom, and joy. It is the story of those that tell their truth in their families and also in their churches. For those struggling with addiction, "coming out" is never easy, but it is the only way to heal. For those with history of abuse, "coming out" is never easy, but it is the only way to heal. For those who live with mental illness, "coming out" is never easy, but it is the only way to heal.

As a church, it would be easier to simply sing the hymns and prayer the prayers that were familiar and comfortable to us. We could just go through the motions and appreciate the roof over our heads and our amazing potluck suppers. We could do our easy missions of raising money helping those in need, but how truthful would that be. I believe that we must be a church striving for truth, even if we make mistakes along the way. We have to take risks in order to proclaim who we really are. If we were to follow the pattern of our Christian brothers and sisters and get stuck in our easy pattern, we will surely either die, or risk the admonishment of Jesus when we complain about the way those "other" people heal and love. Searching for the truth is the messy, holy, and lovely calling of Robbinsdale United Church of Christ, and there is not a better time than on Blessing of the Animals Sunday to proclaim our messy, holy, faith in the God of liberation, freedom, justice, and love. May your truth set you free, over and over again.

AMEN.