

“Are You Singing the Blues?” – December 3, 2017
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St. Luke 7:16–17

I love music, especial music from the Baroque period. I also enjoy Classic Rock and some of the New Country. It is only recently that I have begun to appreciate the “Blues.” Webster’s dictionary says that the blues are “*songs of American Negro origin that are marked by the frequent occurrence of blue notes.*” I researched this to make sure the sadness I felt in listening, was what the composers and artists were shooting for. The sadness comes from a love lost, or a life unfulfilled.

As we begin this Season of Advent we recognize that during that first Christmas, as today, there is something wrong with our world. God’s creations are ‘*singing the blues.*’ There is a disconnect between the Creator and the created, but God has heard the painful cry from the souls of the people, and God acts. God commissions his Son to clearly model his love of, and desire for, a relationship with *all humanity*. It is an appropriate message then as it is today.

Jesus is the Messiah, come to save the world; but he is also the prophet of all prophets. He came not to tell the future necessarily, but to tell forth the Good News. And, while preaching this Gospel, he raised the lifeless body of a widow’s son to new life. “*A great prophet has arisen among us!*” (St. Luke 7:16). It may be my imagination, but before Jesus arrived on this scene, this widow was ‘*singing the blues.*’ I also believe that the moment Jesus uttered the words, “*Young man, I say to you, arise!*” she was singing the Hallelujah chorus!

In St. Mark and St. Luke's gospels we find that Jesus believed himself to be a preacher (St. Mark 1:38/St. Luke 19:10). The apostle St. Paul also taught it boldly: "*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.*" (1 Timothy 1:15). Jesus was a prophet of hope. Usually, with Old Testament prophets, you discover threats and condemnation. But, with Jesus you find "Good News." With Jesus, death has died and sin is no longer triumphant. Salvation is now available to everyone, a gift freely given, an honor and blessing presented to those who believe.

No matter where you encounter Jesus you uncover preaching and teaching. Jesus always told the truth, and he often did so by parable or story. He began and completed his ministry with healing and helping. Water turns into wine; a few fish become a feast; the blind begin to see; evil spirits take a hike, and broken lives become whole again, because Jesus preaches a song that drives off the blues.

While Jesus was primarily a 'forth-teller,' a preacher; he was sometimes a 'foreteller,' too; a prophet because he spoke of his death and resurrection. His coming into our world is to paint us with joy, to alter our shades of sadness into a panoply of praise and a rainbow of hopefulness. A "*Follower of the Way*" from Japan, Shusaku Endo writes that John the Baptizer preached a 'terrifying threat.' Words from a God who expects good fruit and who punishes when there is no fruit. But, the Message of the Messiah is the Good News of the Gospel. The word 'gospel' means 'something joyful.' Jesus' message does not make us fearful; it is news of great joy.

The difference between the major prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Elijah, compared with Jesus is how Jesus speaks. Ike, Jerry, and Eli spoke for God while Jesus spoke as God. That is how he chases 'the blues' away so successfully. In a way, Jesus comes as a singing prophet who is "The Author of Life." (Acts 3:15).

This Messiah-Prophet comes to paint our Advent season with forgiveness and love. Approach the Communion Table today, so to experience this personally in the bread and the wine, the body and the blood, given and shed for you.

There is a marvelous Messiah coming again to take us to be with him. In our time, where sin is blatant and guilt entraps us, how profound is our need to hear such "Good News!" The Season of Advent then, becomes the opportunity to listen to Jesus the Prophet again, who desires to transform our dread into hope, and turn our sorrow to joy. Allow him to inhabit the lectern of your life daily, to preach the "Good News," so you no longer sing the blues. Alleluia. Amen.