

God's Post-It Note

December 1, 2019

Isaiah 2:1-5

Post-it notes: a simple office item with a surprising number of uses. Sure, you can use them to leave reminders for yourself or a family member or to tell someone “Hey, I had to run to the store for something. Be back soon.” However, over time, post-it notes have found greater purposes, like turning those notes into passive-aggressive critiques of your roommates in college. In case you’re curious, no, I never did that, but I had it done to me. One of my roommates my last year was a germaphobe and neat freak, to a point where he left a sticky note on everything that was dirty. Suffice it to say, he wasn’t much liked by me or the other two men in the room. Then again, you can also use sticky notes to prank friends. If you go online and search “post-it note pranks,” you’ll be given hundreds, if not thousands, of pictures of people who have had their car, room, furniture, etc. covered in post-it notes. Regardless, it’s a simple item with many uses for relatively cheap.

Now, we all know what we’d personally use a sticky note for, but I have to wonder “If God left us, God’s children, a sticky note, what would it say?” This is what the Scripture reading for today answers for us. Today, we read the beginning of the second chapter of Isaiah, what some refer to as the “second start” of Isaiah. It’s referred to this because of how Isaiah 1 starts off. In Isaiah 1, we, God’s people are described as “a wicked nation,” “a people fat with wrongdoing,” and “a litter of miscreants.” It describes cities reduced to rubble, farms consumed, and the country as a waste. In v. 25, God even says, “I will take action against you, my sinful children, burning off whatever is worthless, purging whatever is impure.” Much of the rest of the chapter has this same tone, God accusing God’s children and bringing to light their wrongdoing, talking of how they will be punished. In short, Isaiah 1 is very judgmental, filled with ominous language meant to strike fear in the hearts of all who hear.

Then, we get Isaiah 2, a chapter that begins with this vision of abundance, peace, and hope. The Lord’s house (i.e. Jerusalem) will be “set as the highest of the mountains” (i.e. it will be reestablished as the great center it was intended to be). All nations stream to it, wishing to be a part of it and experience it, a sign of God’s limitless reach, that it reaches not just those whose families have believed for generations, but new ears, people far and wide, far beyond the bounds of the Middle East. These nations, these people saying this, they will “beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks.” These nations are trading in instruments of war for instruments of farming, essentially leaving themselves defenseless, but perhaps that’s the point. “Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.” The world is at peace, and the Word of God, a word of peace among all persons, of love between brothers and sisters in faith, of the joy felt knowing the war and bloodshed shall stop, gives us hope. These nations have traded in tools that take lives for tools that cultivate life, supporting those who are known (family and friends) and those who are not known (the stranger, the orphan, the widow, the neighbor).

This world that is drawn to mind in this passage, this is the hope we have in the coming of the Christ child. Jesus, the Christ child, is the Word made flesh. The Word of God is one of hope, as God gives through this vision of Isaiah. The Word of God is one of love, embodied in a

man who hated no one, not even those who scorned and executed him, but instead loved every one of them. The Word of God is one of peace, spread through this Love of God shared with us through Jesus Christ and which we are charged to share with the world. The Word of God is one of joy, where no more shall there be sounds of weeping, but all are at peace and joyful in living in God's presence, wherever they may be. This is a big component of Advent: being reminded of what has been given to us through Jesus Christ, both his life and his death. Advent is like a giant sticky note, one that reminds us all of what Jesus brought to us and has charged us to share with one another, known or unknown, friend or foe, faithful or not. Christ brings us hope for better things to come, love that has no conditions, peace of mind that the war and bloodshed too shall end, and joy that God loves us so much that God would send His only Son that all who follow him may not perish but have everlasting life.

In the end, after reading and reflecting on the passage for today, as well as the context of when it was written, I have to think that God's note, given to us through the Advent season, would say something like, "Hey, I just want you to know I'm thinking about you and I'm here if you need to talk about anything, good or bad. Love, God." Short, simple, to the point, but full of the love, peace, hope, and joy the Christ child brings with his birth and that the Israelites then as well as we in the present day prepare for. Lord only knows we are yet to beat our swords and spears into farming equipment or that this word of Love has yet to reach all hearts, but yet there is hope. We have hope that, Jesus Christ, the fulfillment of both the Law and the prophecies, might work through us to reach all peoples in all places and times, that one day, we will no longer know war, but that nation will join hand with nation and say, "Come, let us go up to the house of the Lord together." With this hope in your heart, what will you do to prepare for the arrival of this "Heaven on Earth"?