

SERMON 939

Saturday, June 6, 2015

The Marriage of Haley and Michael Price

1,000th Week as Priest

827th Week at St Dunstan's

92nd Week at Epiphany-Tallassee

THE STORY OF MICHAEL AND HALEY: JUSTICE PREVAILS

Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. AMEN.

It's been said that the arc of the universe bends ultimately toward goodness.

It's the belief expressed in an old Shaker hymn that "things turn round right," that God's intention, God's ultimate will, is for good.

When I was a boy growing up in Auburn in the 50s and 60s, with five brothers, our mother would often say, "Justice prevails."

It had several meanings.

Like, *your sins will find you out.*

Or, *you can't get away with anything in a town the size*

of Auburn.

But it could also mean, *We're all in this together. Take care of each other. And believe with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength that everything is going to work out just fine. It's going to be okay. Or even better than that.*

I've never held to the idea that God punishes us with tragedy or adversity, illness or accident.

No, the world as we know it is filled with plenty of that, all on its own, without any help from a vindictive Creator.

And besides, we are plenty capable of bringing hardship, suffering, and ruin upon ourselves. Jesus himself said that he came into the world not to judge the world, but to save sinners. No, I believe that God's ultimate will for us is goodness, reconciliation, abundant life, and transformation.

And it is God's good pleasure to save us from our own sad selves, our poor choices, and those reasonable consequences that follow.

In a word, God's purpose for us is Love. And for that very

reason, the past is approved, because it has brought us to the present moment, a fullness of time, in which all things are fulfilled in him, all things are made right and good and holy. *Justice prevails.*

I know you must be wondering where I'm going, but the answer is simple: *The Lord of heaven and earth makes all things new.* We are always living in a state of possibility and potential.

Here's how the story goes:

A confirmed bachelor, the one who seems never to need anything or anyone else, finds true love. He discovers within himself that he has always been yearning for her, the one person in the Great Wide Universe who actually understands him, knows him through and through, and yet loves him completely and fully and without any harsh judgment or condemnation. *And he willingly makes whatever sacrifice, whatever choice, whatever commitment is necessary to obtain that pearl of great price. Justice prevails.*

There's more to our story:

A child finds hope, and patient wisdom, and calm strength when and where she did not expect to find it.

Sometimes she calls it Price. Occasionally she slips up and calls it Dad. Over time, they will work it out. And her life will be changed, transformed, and made new. Before long, the shy, little red headed girl (who looks so much like her grandmother) finds that she is fully loved, encouraged, protected. *Justice prevails.*

Her mother, that beautiful young woman who wondered whether the arc of the universe *ever really turned toward goodness*, and whether life could ever be more than hard work and disappointment and unrealistic hopes and dreams, has to her surprise and delight discovered that God is not dead, or blind, or uninterested--that instead, her life is in fact of infinite importance to God, and that all things are being made new, because of Love. *And justice prevails.*

I hope you see that this is the way that the world could be, that God's best intentions for us are to live in lifelong, healthy, life giving relationships.

And that God's justice is *not* harsh judgment, or stern punishment, or condemnation--rather that the Father has been reconciling all things to himself *all along* through the love, and sacrifice, and overwhelming goodness of his only and eternal Son, Jesus Christ.

And now, may God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit bless, preserve, and keep you. AMEN.