

St. David's Presbyterian Church

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St. John's, NL

"eLov: Finding a Home Called 'Love'"

Advent IV

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Two universal quests seem to be a part of all our lives. One is finding our home. For some of us, this is a relatively easy task that simply causes us to remember to be thankful that this is our home. This is the home of our ancestors and our family. For many Newfoundlanders, the sense of being home is stronger than many other parts of the country. Just as Dorothy says in the Wizard of Oz, "there's no place like home." And she's right.

While few of us have purchased ruby slippers, many of us have used airplanes and other transport to make it home for Christmas. There's something special about this place, about Newfoundland, about St. John's, about St. David's. And there is a peace and a harmony that comes with being home for Christmas, not necessarily a quiet and noiseless Christmas.

I've had more of the quiet Christmas season this week, as I injured my leg playing racquetball with the Minister of our other congregation, St. Andrew's. Nevertheless, it's the not the quiet that you come home for. It's the love.

And many of us are not from here, but now this is home. And many others of us are from here, but need to go away to appreciate what it means to be here. Home is more than a haven, more than a shelter, more than a place where you keep all your stuff. It's where you belong.

Some of the Scriptures we read are about finding a home. There was a point in David's life when he had finished going to war. God had given him "rest from his enemies." He had decided to build himself a palatial house, which was well within his rights and ability to do. But once he had completed it, he felt like he wanted to do the same for the Lord. He wanted to build a house for God that would be God's home. This was more than a real estate transaction, it was David's heart felt feeling of giving God a place to belong in the city just as he had now his own place. He felt it wasn't right for God's ark (the symbol of God's presence) to be in a tent while David was enjoying a cedar palace.

God responded to David's longing to build something for God. But it wasn't what David expected. In another passage in Scripture, God would say that heaven is his throne, and the earth his footstool, what kind of house would he build for God? The planet and beyond are merely the furniture in the universe of God's house. What could this little one, whom God had rescued from looking after sheep build for the Creator of the Universe? God wasn't ashamed of going about in the tabernacle, the tent that was used in the desert, that was built at God's command. God didn't need a house. But God did respond to David's heart of longing for a place for God, looking for God's best. God began instead of giving permission to build a Temple for God, to build a house for David. This would be an everlasting home, more than just the feeling of moving into a lovely new house or structure, something that most of us have experienced with great joy. God instead was looking for the long term solution, the longest term solution, and his solution would be the fulfillment of the longing of all humanity. And it would come through David's family.

And that's when we realize that as God responds to David's prayer, God begins to look for a home for a brief while on the earth. Again he doesn't go to a real estate agent, but to a young woman in Israel named Mary. The home that will fulfill David's prayer is in the person of Jesus Christ. (repeat) Several interesting details were spoken to Mary by the angel sent from God.

Not only that Mary would have a child by the Holy Spirit, without ever having sexual relations with a man, but also that God would be coming through her. She answered that she was willing to be God's servant for this. And did you notice that one little phrase the angel says in between the announcement of the pregnancy and the agreement of the woman involved.

That little phrase "For nothing is impossible with God," literally means "No word of God comes without power." He has enough creative ability to find a way to have relationship with human beings through Jesus. What God says is reliable and able to sustain us in our quest for a home. That home is ultimately found in Jesus. "In my Father's house are many rooms..." The fulfillment of our quest for a sense of home and belonging are found in Jesus. When you come to Jesus' Table today, you come home.

And there is another universal quest I mentioned at the beginning of the sermon. That quest is for love. We go through all kinds of acrobatics and gymnastics for love. We please our parents, our boyfriends or girlfriends,

we look to please our spouses, and try so hard for the acceptance and wonder of that love relationship.

But those love relationships never quite turn out the way we expect. And so we keep looking for love, most of us. And we keep trying to earn it. But all our efforts cannot measure up to what is available as a gift.

In this season of gifts, we remember today the greatest of all, the Lord Jesus Christ himself. He gives himself to us, as we give ourselves to Him. And that is what this Table is set for us to remember. The love we long for is available in Him. So is the hope and the peace and the joy, all the themes of advent are summed up in Him, the Center, the White Candle of Light.

As you come to Him today, look for what He has to say to you in kind words of love. If you cannot hear Him, ask someone you trust to help you hear His words of love.

Make sure you take time to listen, as you hold the elements during our communion. The only way to unscramble the scrambled love of our day, the eLov, is to listen.

Let us pray.