

## *Equity is rooted and grounded in love*

A couple of weeks ago, we heard the story of the feast of death. It was the story of Herod and his gathering and the way that he got stuck. Stuck, in some ways, between the forces of evil and the forces of evil. But he was stuck and had really nowhere to go.

Today we heard about a feast that leads to life. The two are very different. The feast of death is full of a mountain of stuff. Stuff, I say. Stuff. Got stuff in your house? Got stuff in my house. I've been downsizing for twenty years. The feast of death is the feast of lots – which is different from plenty. The feast of life is a feast of plenty; it's the kind of feast that we have when there is abundance in the hearts of the people. Abundance. Now the life of Herod didn't lead very much through abundance, really. Herod's life was based largely on greed and power, how to stay in power and being greedy enough to grasp at power. The life of Jesus in his life of abundance shunned power.

I'm sure after 45 years of doing this, I still hear something every single Sunday when someone else reads the scripture and all I have to do is kind of sit and take it in. And this morning, something was: "They were about to come and take him by force to make him king." Who has to force somebody to become king? Really? I mean, most of us would run at the chance, I think. Imagine, I mean we get to decide, you know, "make me God for a day, I'll work things out!" Well, maybe not. Maybe not. And I see some heads shaking out there and I agree. No thanks, no thanks, not even king for a day. The responsibility is too overwhelming. I've also never heard yet in the whole history of humanity, someone being forced to become king. Now I know you'll all text me or send me an email – that'll be great. To let me know all of the historic figures to whom that had happened, but in the meantime... it's an odd turn of phrase to me. They wanted to force him to be king and he didn't just turn away – he went and got in a boat and took off. Not a chance. Not a chance was Jesus about to be trapped into all that one gets trapped into when they become the key leader. The politics. The machinations. The greed, all of that. No, Jesus was about one thing and one thing only, and that was abundance. Generosity. Equity. The stuff that we wish sometimes people in authority would focus on and sadly, it happens rarely. We want someone in authority to ensure that there is equity.

Well, here's the rub, my friends. Here's the rub. It's in Ephesians: "To God who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine. That God be glory in the church in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever..." Once again, it's back to us, isn't it? We want equity in the world and...well, please, couldn't somebody else do it? I'm kind of tired. And yet we know. We know that if there is to be equity just like downsizing our stuff, we need to upsize our abundant generosity. As we let go of the trappings around us, it also becomes important for us to take on what matters. The offering to the next-door neighbour. Lifting up the child. Educating. Marching for justice and peace. Standing firm in the face of the challenges of right relationship that we are faced with in this time. Engaging conversation that brings us to new understanding of what it means to walk away from the invitation to be powerful. And to walk instead into the responsibility of being humble.

I posted a thing on Facebook this week that said, "Repost if you stand with Aboriginal people." That's easy to do, right? You click share and it's gone. And my brother wrote underneath that and said, "And then set aside your privilege and walk with them." We're called, folks, to live in the abundance that we know to be true of the generosity of love and care and faithfulness that there is to be offered in the world. We have one task: set aside the stuff. The stuff which is our privilege and embrace what appears when we do that and we too may write a new story. A good story. A healthy, wonderful story. Amen.