

## A No Fault World

Wayne Waibel – 01/07/2024

Epiphany – a season of appearances. This episode in human history ushers in the transformation of the world away from empire and toward the kingdom of God.

And this movement is accomplished by a singular force – a divine force in the person of Jesus the Christ. Of the many tribulations the Son of Man will endure, perhaps the most difficult in human terms will be the fact that He is obedient to a voice no one else hears. Obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross.

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In the beginning, God. The oral narrative that opens the Holy Bible is profound and complete with the first four words. In the beginning comma God. All that follows is secondary. Everything that exists depends upon the creative and sustaining power of God.

To acknowledge that truth is to lead a grateful and reverent life. And another way of interpreting reverence is as a deep understanding of our limitations.

It is the virtue that keeps us from acting like gods. We aspire to much and we desire even more, but, as Dirty Harry was fond of saying, "A man's got to know his limitations."

I aspired to be an astronaut, but it didn't break my heart when I finally realized a couple weeks ago that I probably was not going to be visiting space.

We do that as Americans – we shoot for the moon. Admitting our limitations does not feel like a reverence. But it is an obedience. It is an overt submission to the power of the Holy Spirit.

Any form of submission runs contrary to the prevailing cultural norm, because – you see – we are led to believe that we live in a no-fault world. There are many who not only believe that, but behave as though they truly are above the law.

Take a critical review of just about anyone in a position of power. There are very few even willing to admit there is authority of any kind over them, much less an accountability or even legitimacy to documented violations.

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When you encounter rough seas, and the ship begins to list severely to one side – you hold your breath. Not because you’re dipping so close to the ocean, but because the snap back to the other side is going to send you crashing into the opposite bulkhead if you are not paying attention.

That’s what we’re on the threshold of encountering as a nation – the snap back from this unprecedented and highly contentious electoral process has already fractured the union, and unless our leaders stop sniping and exacting vengeance, there will indeed be dire consequences.

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In Luke’s time, to prophesy was to speak about the present; it was to speak in God’s name on behalf of God’s work in the world. This speaking was done with the power of the Holy Spirit. And that power extended the good news of the gospel to the ends of the world.

When Jesus came up out of the Jordan River, and the heaven’s opened, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him, and He heard a voice no one else heard, and the hope of a world redeemed unto God the Father began.

Through Christ's first followers, the Spirit was a powerful wind that blew through the ancient world and transformed it. The Holy Spirit has absolute freedom to come and work in whatever way the Spirit sees fit.

Just imagine, we are able to talk about salvation and hope even in this very broken world in a very dangerous time because of the incarnation through Jesus Christ and the efforts of His band of twelve flawed men to preach the Good News in a time when the world was very broken and exceedingly dangerous. The more things change, the more they stay the same.

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For our part as a community of faith, we embrace the truth that the Holy Spirit is an empowering force to accomplish the work of Christ. Nothing in the recent past has knocked us off our game. What transpires in our no-fault world's tabernacles of power bends our resolve and our purpose not at all.

There is a certain peace we feel in this part of the world as winter sets her claws deep into our bones. This is what is known as the dead of winter. And into that dark night we will walk with a firm gait and deliberate intent. There are many relying on our commitment to serve.

We may not hold an office, but we understand fully that through the words and deeds of Jesus we encounter the enacted intentions of God. And those intentions - are always, and forever - very, very good. Amen.