

From The Rector's Study, Rev. Bryce Sangster
Sunday, July 11th, Pentecost VII, Sin and Forgiveness
2 Samuel 6:1-5, 12b-19, Psalm 24, Ephesians 1:3-14, Mark 6:14-29

At first glance, there doesn't seem to be much we can learn from this Gospel. The context of this passage is from a different time and place. We have a difficult time relating to King Herod and his actions.

However, Diana Butler Bass in her book, *Christianity after Religion* has some insights about this; when she writes about the doctrine of sin. *This the sin of pride, and setting ourselves up as God, man knows he is part of the whole, but tries to convince himself and others that he is the whole,*

That is only half the picture, and is suggested by such items as triviality, distractibility, and diffuseness; dependent on others for one's self-definition, negation of self.

In other words, the Herods of the world take themselves too seriously, while others don't take themselves seriously enough. Or to follow our confession/absolution;

*we confess that we have sinned
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.*

So if we think too highly of ourselves, we can do things we should not have done, and if we don't think enough of ourselves, we can leave undone the things which can help others in their lives.

But before we get depressed because we not only worrying about doing the wrong thing, now worrying about not doing the right thing, let us consider the idea from Ephesians.....

That there is redemption and forgiveness offered to us.

We tend to think about forgiveness as the end, after we have done wrong, but maybe it is the hope for the future, and giving us the courage to risk action, thus knowing if we fail and get it wrong, we will still be forgiven and have another chance to get it right. Without forgiveness, we will be paralysed with fear of failure, that we will not attempt any action, and also feel bad about missed opportunities to help others.

In Ephesians we are also said to be adopted children of God, and therefore each of us has a part to play in the community of faith. We have gifts which can be of benefit to others and have needs and imperfections which others can help us with.

And the words of the opening sentence of this service next year; *The words you have spoken are spirit and life, O Lord; you have the words of eternal life. See John 6.63, 68*

Amen