

The Rev. Calvin Jones:

Good morning.

Congregation:

Good morning.

The Rev. Calvin Jones:

Welcome to Morning Prayers. All who able, please stand for our responsive reading. We'll be reading Psalm 46, in your black psalter.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Congregation:

Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

The Rev. Calvin Jones:

Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled. Though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.

Congregation:

There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.

The Rev. Calvin Jones:

God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.

Congregation:

The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted.

The Rev. Calvin Jones:

The Lord of Hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our refuge.

Congregation:

Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth.

The Rev. Calvin Jones:

He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.

Congregation:

Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

The Rev. Calvin Jones:

The Lord of hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our refuge. You may be seated.

(singing)

Kabl Wilkerson:

[foreign language 00:07:19]. Hello everyone. My name is Kabl Wilkerson. I'm a member of the Citizen Band Potawatomi. Now, I'll begin today by reflecting on the words of the great Shawnee leader, Tecumseh, from an 1810 speech delivered by Tecumseh to then Governor William Henry Harrison. "

How can we have confidence in the white people? We have good and just reasons to believe we have ample grounds to accuse the Americans of injustice, especially when such great acts of injustice have been committed upon them by our people, of which they seem to have no manner of regard or even to reflect. When Jesus Christ came upon the earth they killed Him, and nailed Him to the cross. You thought he was dead and you are mistaken. You have the Shakers among you and you laugh and make light of their worship. Everything I have told you is the truth. The Great Spirit has inspired me."

In the history of this country, it's often the case that we find ourselves confronted with man's avarice. The destruction of Indian country, which was so central to the energies as it was to the enrichment of men like William Henry Harrison was apparent to Tecumseh, as was to his brother, Tenskwatawa, the Shawnee prophet, that Harrison and the other Americans in the Ohio River Valley had the liberty to return to their own country, yet wanted all, and would not do with less, were important points to recognize by Tecumseh in open forum. One could easily read these words, indeed read the words of any and all native people from what is today Massachusetts, all the way to California, and find their lamentations merely the products of fate.

From this perspective, history is irreversible. All that has happened was perhaps doomed to happen. This overtly pessimistic perspective suggests that we must attempt the Sisyphean task of regulating our innate behaviors in a world where the divisions between us are immutable attributions of our physical and spiritual characters. Understood in these terms, Tecumseh is just one of many native leaders who's cutting words serve as a reminder of the United States' dark origins, without actually requiring us to probe them for deeper meaning. But I'm inclined to read Tecumseh words differently. That we possess the power to do harm is a fact of history, but to understand why we harm, as Tecumseh suggests to in his admonitions of American's lack of reflection, can serve as a more potent source of optimism.

In a speech that could so easily be understood as a fleeting moment of unified Indian resistance, this point stands out. Tecumseh delivers a resounding critique of Americans' disregard for actions, yes. But he seemingly presents them and us with something greater. What Tecumseh offers us is not a vision of human nature as immutably avaricious, but instead, immutably empathetic. Our future is a shared one, a point that has long been made and remade in communities across Indian country, to walk hand in hand into the future demands empathy and understanding. And I'm grateful across these generations to have Tecumseh's words to illustrate this point.

So I wonder what it might look like to imagine a future in reconciliatory terms, to accept our fates are intertwined, and understand that our connections to one another are bound up in centuries of pain, fear, love, patriot, death, life, anguish, turmoil, and hope. If history is the earth, let the rains wash over it, that we may find our way forward without becoming mired in its muddy grip. And if our past is the stars, let them not haunt us with the terrible visions of dying sons, but instead, guide us to the sunrise of a new morning.

To express one's love through hatred, no matter how well justified, seems a solitary and muddy path that eschews the generosity of the stars overhead. Instead, what can it do for us to listen to these words of the people like Tecumseh, who came before us and acted on our behalf having not seen our faces? How might we go forward, led by the knowledge embedded in their words, to make our future our own,

for our children and their children with empathy rather than malice as our guide? [foreign language 00:11:49]. Thank you.

The Rev. Calvin Jones:

Let us pray. Loving God, unite us, guide us with your love. Help us to imagine a better and just world. Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.

The Rev. Calvin Jones:

Now, let us pray the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples saying.

Congregation:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

The Rev. Calvin Jones:

Now let us sing together, hymn number 39, Lord God of Morning and of Night, found in your Crimson Harvard hymnal.

(singing)

As we leave this place, but never away from God's presence, may we be reminded that God is the God of the day and the night. May we face the night imagining the sun. Go in peace.

Congregation:

Amen.