



WTS Chapel February 27, 2008
Norma Cook Everist
Reader's Theatre of John 7 (combined text and sermon)

First Lesson: Jeremiah 2:4-13

This morning our Gospel Text, John 7, and the sermon are combined in a Readers' Theatre

This past week we have heard lessons at the well:
Sunday's text from John 4, The Samaritan woman at the well who gave water to Jesus, tired from his journey. She listened and believed, even when his disciples were thinking "Why are you speaking to her?" She went and told the people in her city and they believed because of her;
And the long story of Rebekah who willingly served, quenching thirst from water from the well;
And Jacob who rolled the stone from a well's mouth and watered the flocks of Laban which Rachel tended.

Water at the well: encounter, faithful servanthood and new possibilities

And then the Jeremiah text we have just heard:
"For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and dug out cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns that can hold no water."

People of God who have entered today by the waters in the font, how have you forsaken the fountain of the living God? How do you doubt and disbelieve? How do you, how do we as a people, dig cisterns for ourselves and crack them so that they hold no water?

Now listen as we travel with Jesus. Listen and reflect on today's Gospel story from John 7.

NORMA: (from lectern) Jesus traveled around Galilee
He didn't want to travel in Judea because the Jews were looking for an opportunity to kill him.

Now the Jewish festival of Booths was near
So his brothers said to him,

BROTHERS:

BROTHER 1: Leave here and go to Judea (Brother two “finishes” his sentence.)

BROTHER 2: So that your followers will see the things that you are doing.

BROTHER 1 No one who wants to be well known acts in secret.

BROTHER 2 (enthusiastically) Since you are doing these things, let the whole world know.

NORMA: Even his brothers did not really believe in him.

So Jesus said, “My time has not yet come, but your time is always here.

The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I keep telling it that what it is doing is evil.

Go to the festival yourselves.

I am not going to this festival because my time has not yet come.

He said this and then stayed on in Galilee.

But after his brothers had gone to the festival, he also went.

But he did not go publicly, but secretly.

(Norma walks toward the pulpit and pauses at the bottom of stairs.)

The Jews were looking for him at the festival.

JEWS

JEWISH LEADER 1: Where is he? (inquisitive but also demanding)

NORMA: And there was considerable complaining about him among the crowds

CROWD (Readers and people around them stand up and look at each other)

CROWD VOICE 1 “He’s a good man.”

CROWD VOICE 2 “No, he is deceiving the crowd”

NORMA: They spoke to each other, not openly, because they were afraid of the Jews.

About the middle of the festival Jesus went up into the temple and began to teach.

(Norma goes up into the pulpit)

NORMA: The Jews were astonished

JEWS

JEWISH LEADER 2 “How does this man know so much when he has never been taught?”

NORMA: Then Jesus answered them

“What I teach is not my own teaching, but it comes from God who sent me.

Anyone who is willing to do what God wants will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own. Those who speak on their own are seeking their own glory, but the one who seeks the glory of the One who sent me is honest—true—and there is nothing false about him.”

“Didn’t Moses give you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why are you looking for an opportunity to kill me?”

CROWD (This time just the readers’ theatre men stand up, addressing Jesus)

CROWD VOICE 2: “You have a demon!”

CROWD VOICE 1: “Who is trying to kill you?”

NORMA: Jesus answered them,

“I performed one work, and all of you are astonished.

Moses gave you circumcision (It isn’t, or course, from Moses, but from the patriarchs), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. If a man is circumcised on the Sabbath so that Moses’ Law is not broken, why are you angry with me because I healed a man’s whole body on the Sabbath? Don’t judge by appearances, but judge with true standards.”

ASSISTING MINISTER DARRELL: (from first reading from Jeremiah):

“For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and dug out cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns that can hold no water.”

NORMA: Some of the people of Jerusalem said,

CROWD (Just readers’ theatre men)

VOICE 1 “Isn’t this the man the authorities are trying to kill? Look! He’s talking in public, and they say nothing against him! Can it be that they really know that he is the Messiah?”

VOICE 2 “But when the Messiah comes, no one will know where he is from. And we all know where this man comes from.”

NORMA: Then Jesus cried out as he was teaching in the temple.

“You know me, and you know where I am from. I have not come on my own. But the one who sent me is true, and you do not know this One. But I know, because I come from that One, the One who sent me.”

Then they tried to arrest Jesus but no one laid hands on him, because his hour had not yet come. Yet many in the crowd believed in him.

CROWD:

Voice 1 “When the Messiah comes, will he do more signs that this man has done?”

NORMA:

The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering such things about him, and the chief priests and

Pharisees sent temple police to arrest him. *(Pause while Jewish leaders move up the aisle)*

Jesus then said “I will be with you a little while longer, and then I am going to the One who sent me. You will search for me, but you will not find me; and where I am you cannot come.”

JEW:

Jewish man 1: Where does this man intend to go that we will not find him: Does he intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks?

Jewish man 2: What does he mean by saying, ‘You will search for me and you will not find me’ and ‘Where I am, you cannot come’?”

NORMA

On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. ‘Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.’”

DARREL:

“For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and dug out cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns that can hold no water.”

NORMA:

“Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. ‘Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.’”

Amen.... So be it, truly.... Amen.