



northminster presbyterian church

2400 old alabama road
roswell, georgia 30076

01-Apr-2007 Palm Sunday

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 50:4-9

SERMON: A New Song (Rev. Dr. Jim Simpson)
(Meditation on 'Requiem' by John Rutter)

In the digital world, with the help of Tivo, we get to choose when to watch our favorite TV shows, and we can fast forward through those darned commercials. We can setup a season pass and feel sure that we will never miss an episode and we can watch a one-hour show in just 42 minutes, if we are quick on the remote control!

In the digital world we choose the ring tones for our Cell Phone. We can use songs or music or voices from around the world. We can assign different people their own ring tone and a different sound for a text message and a voice mail and an incoming call.

In the digital world we can store music, pictures and video on our iPod. We can set up music mixes for different moods or occasions: light rock when dad or mom is in the car, some smoochie tunes when our boyfriend is with us, some Lynard Skinner when we go out with the guys! We can choose only to hear the music we want to hear.

In the digital world using our Satellite Radio, we have hundreds of stations to choose from, all with crystal clear sound quality. No static as darkness falls, no signal fading in and out as we drive. We can hear the news from around the world, the traffic in Los Angeles or New York city. Janice gave me satellite radio last Christmas. I can get the BBC and soccer matches. Heck, it even has a feature in which I can program in the name of a performer or a song and if that band or song is on the dial anywhere, the radio beeps at me. I press one button and voila: U2 or Queen or The Eagles! We get to pick the music we hear, the beat we want to enjoy, the story we want to can listen to. It is our choice - we decide.

In the world that is my clothes closet I sometimes brush past or bump into my tie selection hanging on the hook on the back of the closet door – Jingle Bells! I didn't mean to do it, I didn't choose, I didn't want to hear the song. But there it is. It intrudes into my day, unwanted, unasked for, unnecessary, uncalled for. But there it is nevertheless, and for most of the year it is quite at odds with the mood of the day.

I say to you today that we limit ourselves *if we stick to only those things we choose to hear.*

I say to you today that we need to listen for and give our attention to other songs and tunes and music and stories that we might not make as our first choice.

I say to you today that Lent, and Holy Week and Easter is a much-needed opportunity to lay down our preferences and to listen for another beat, a different song, God's story, *divine music!*

I say to you today that we will only gain as we allow the symphony of God's love to intrude into our hearts and minds. That God invites us to tune out and tune in. To tune *out* of the babble of the world around us and to tune *in* to the length and height and depth and width of God's love expressed in the life and Passion of Jesus Christ.

I say to you today that in Jesus Christ, in life and death, we belong to God and God has stuff for us to be and do in the world, stuff that really matters, matters to God and matters to our neighbors.

I say to you today that we have been given a great musical gift this morning and we have now the ability to make this week a week of listening to and for all that Easter means and demands of us. This week is for hearing God, hearing God's love song for the world, so we can offer back our heartfelt thanks and praise – in the hymns we sing, in the prayers we offer, in the creeds we affirm, in the forgiveness we offer, in the justice for which we speak, in the friendship we offer, in the reconciliation we nurture, in the love we share through service to others, in the peace we share, in the lives we live. We *have* a new song. We have *heard* a new song. *We have a new song to sing and share! Amen.*

Isaiah 50:4-9

4The Lord God has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning he wakens— wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught. 5The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward. 6I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting. 7The Lord God helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame; 8he who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me. 9It is the Lord God who helps me; who will declare me guilty? All of them will wear out like a garment; the moth will eat them up.

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