



Hosanna Preaching Seminar

“Eat, Drink, and
Overturn the Tables”

Addie Domske

McCormick Theological Seminary

STATEMENT on SERMON GIVING

It was an honor to give this sermon for my seminary community. McCormick is a very diverse community: it is ecumenically diverse, ethnically and racially diverse, with a diverse range of age for its students. This sermon was for my senior chapel, where students are able to reflect on their time in seminary and to “say their piece” to the community.

Because that context gave this sermon a lot of agendas, I decided to give it in three “movements” separated by interruptions of other voices within the sermon. I entered seminary without a lot of ecumenical experience, so it was a reflection of how I’ve grown to include interruptions of boisterous song, poetry, and praise dance into a worship service that was still Reformed, but looked different than services I had planned before seminary.

The McCormick community is a friendly one to my message, but my “movement” that dealt particularly with Israel/Palestine (the 2nd) was heard by ears both friendly and unfriendly to the movement, so I kept that in mind as I wrote, and I tried to frame that Palestinian peace message within two movements contextual to the McCormick community.

I hope that this sermon was a reflection of “speaking sweetly” to a community—speaking their language and reflecting their faces, as I also seek to change their hearts and minds around justice issues for Israel/Palestine, Chicago, and the McCormick community in general. Thanks for reading/watching!

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Before reading from the Bible, we seek the illumination of the Holy Spirit and call upon God to make us receptive to the life-giving Word that comes to us through both the reading and proclamation of Scripture.

Lord, open our hearts and minds
by the power of your Holy Spirit,
that as the Scriptures are read
and your Word is proclaimed,
we may hear with joy
what you say to us today. Amen.

Book of Common Worship (WJKP, 1993) 60.

Notes adapted from *Supplemental Liturgical Resource 1* (WJKP, 1984).

THE SCRIPTURE LESSONS

Isaiah 62:1-5 Common English Bible (CEB)

62 For Zion's sake I won't keep silent,
and for Jerusalem's sake I won't sit still
until her righteousness shines out like a light,
and her salvation blazes like a torch.

² Nations will see your righteousness,
all kings your glory.

You will be called by a new name,

which the LORD's own mouth will determine.

³ You will be a splendid garland in the LORD's hand,
a royal turban in the palm of God's hand.

⁴ You will no longer be called Abandoned,
and your land will no longer be called **Deserted**.

Instead, you will be called My Delight Is in Her,
and your land, Married.

Because the LORD delights in you,
your land will be cared for once again.

⁵ As a young man marries a young woman,
so your sons will marry you.

With the joy of a bridegroom because of his bride,
so your God will rejoice because of you.

John 2:1-16 Common English Bible (CEB)

2 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee. Jesus' mother was there,
and ² Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the celebration. ³ When the wine ran
out, Jesus' mother said to him, "They don't have any wine."

⁴ Jesus replied, "Woman, what does that have to do with me? My time hasn't come yet."

⁵ His mother told the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." ⁶ Nearby were six stone water
jars used for the Jewish cleansing ritual, each able to hold about twenty or thirty gallons.

⁷ Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water," and they filled them to the
brim. ⁸ Then he told them, "Now draw some from them and take it to the

headwaiter,” and they did. ⁹ The headwaiter tasted the water that had become wine. He didn’t know where it came from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. The headwaiter called the groom ¹⁰ and said, “Everyone serves the good wine first. They bring out the second-rate wine only when the guests are drinking freely. You kept the good wine until now.” ¹¹ This was the first miraculous sign that Jesus did in Cana of Galilee. He revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

¹² After this, Jesus and his mother, his brothers, and his disciples went down to Capernaum and stayed there for a few days.

¹³ It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ He found in the temple those who were selling cattle, sheep, and doves, as well as those involved in exchanging currency sitting there. ¹⁵ He made a whip from ropes and chased them all out of the temple, including the cattle and the sheep. He scattered the coins and overturned the tables of those who exchanged currency. ¹⁶ He said to the dove sellers, “Get these things out of here! Don’t make my Father’s house a place of business.”

THE RESPONSE TO THE WORD

One: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

SERMON SCRIPT – “Eat, Drink, and Overturn the Tables” (Addie Domske)

Good morning. ☺

So, right off the bat, I want you to notice something about the John text that Abbi just read. The story of the wedding at Cana is directly followed by Jesus cleansing the temple. There are no verses cut out in between—they follow each other as narratives. Can you remember that? Ok, good, let’s get this thing started.

It’s an honor to be here today, just as its been an honor to be here at McCormick for these last four years. I spent some horrid time turning to the Dark Side for two years as I attended University of Chicago for a social work degree, so I’ve been here a little longer than the average full-time student, and there are students who have come and gone, including almost my entire incoming class; each year it feels like a different space with difference people and different faces.

So following in the footsteps of many faithful McCormick seniors before me, I believe that part of my task this afternoon is to tell you “what I learned at McCormick.” (In fact fact, I think if you pay attention, they’ll give you an M.Div at the end.) In line with the type of acronyms we have at McCormick—I’m thinking of IBS—we should all start calling our time before McCormick “B.M.” ☺

So here’s an example of “Addie Domske, B.M.”: I read the passage at the Cana wedding and I stopped. Great story. As I was growing up, my family didn’t drink, so I was pretty

sure Jesus was actually making grape juice, but great story about a nice party and Jesus' first magic trick.

On a different day, I read the cleansing of the temple passage and I'd stop again. Another great story—good to pull out whenever you were angry about something just have have Jesus back you up a bit. Great story. Unrelated to the first one—they're probably not even in the same book of the Bible.

But then we got to the whole, A.M. (After McCormick) period of my life, and so I read it differently – I look at the stories and first, I realize—they are right next to each other. I start to think, well, what if we saw these two narratives in conjunction with each other? As a dual narrative or even just one narrative?

I had a first year student ask me the other day, “So Addie, did it feel like your time at McCormick has flown by?” and my answer – “No. Way. This has been one of the longest, hardest experiences of my life being in this space.” This place hittts you. Hard. And I find more often than not, that the community like the one at the Cana wedding is missing for a lot of people.

I came to this seminary for the temple story. I wanted to resist and act and overturn tables, but the more I did that, the more burnt out I got. I think this is often the narrative of seminaries that claim the space of “social justice” or “progressive” or “radical” in too many instances. We are overturning tables in a vacuum, and this is failing each other if we think it is *just* to expect justice where there is a vacuum on joy.

JOY

Think about how our spaces would be different if we interrupted them with joy? If we started with a party, a union, a blessing overflowing with food and wine, and then as a community, having joined together in union, we went out to overturn the tables? What if we privileged joy in this space as much as we provide, encourage, and expect to turn over tables in this space? What if we saw these two stories, as one story?

When I was on the Colombia travel seminar, I went to a church service that was (obviously) in Spanish, and I sat for about 45 minutes until I finally realized they were speaking about the wedding of Cana. The pastor kept interrupting his sermon to break into song—he was referencing how God wants the world to rejoice in church—like the world rejoices today during Carnival—and I was struck by how much God must surely delight in interruptions of joy within our worship, our schools, our work, and our activism, even our sermons...

JOY *with help from Antonia Coleman (through song: “Everybody Clap Your Hands”)*

We praise you, O Lord
We magnify your name.
We worship you, O Lord.
We magnify your name.

Everybody clap your hands.

Comment [AD1]: At this point, Antonia interrupts the sermon to sing this song.

This is the way we praise God.
Clap your hands.
Lifting our voice, singing our song.
Praising the Lord all the day long.

This is the way we praise God!!!!

RESIST

So, we're on board with joy now, right? Let's talk about resisting. Just for argument's sake, I thought I'd pick a really neutral and non-threatening subject like the middle east. ☺

Since I'm a senior, I get to stand up here and tell you what I want to be when I grow up. As soon as Mr. Dan over there finishes his PhD, we hope to be invited as accompaniers to work in Israel/Palestine. I think Israel/Palestine is a perfect example of forgetting to find the balance between the table of joy and the table that needs overturned.

Gina read today from Isaiah – *“For Zion’s sake I won’t keep silent, and for Jerusalem’s sake I won’t sit still.”* Now, this text has the potential to be used for celebration—it’s easy to see the wedding at Cana here: The metaphor of marriage is even used in the text:

*“...you will be called “My Delight Is in Her,”
and your land, “Married.”*

*Because the LORD delights in you,
your land will be cared for once again.*

*5 As a young man marries a young woman,
so your sons will marry you.*

*With the joy of a bridegroom because of his bride,
so your God will rejoice because of you.*

Today, when we read this text from our own cultural spaces, we celebrate those who stand up for Zion, we let the wine flow for the narratives of liberation within Jerusalem, and we bless the union of the diaspora now reunited to a homeland—

But, assuming, for one wild second that Jesus’ actions are worth following as a social ethic - what happens when we mirror the Jesus of John’s narrative with *this* text from Isaiah and *how we read it as modern readers?*

What table needs overturned in a contemporary visit to this temple?

We should continually be challenged, friends, to understand and even contest ways of reading scripture and practicing faith which privilege one group, and set apart their relationship to God as superior. "Israel" here is both an Ancient Symbol and Contemporary Reality. It is a table to on which to hold celebrations and a table to be overturned.

Yesterday (I'm gonna live reTweet you ☺) Kenji tweeted that the Jewish liberation theologian, Marc Ellis said, "You should boycott any Jewish theology that only asks how to live 'after the Holocaust' and not 'after Israel'."

You should boycott any theology that only goes to the wedding, and never goes to the temple. Going to the wedding puts us in community. Going to the temple holds our community accountable.

This week in Palestine teachers are on strike because the Palestinian Authority has no resources to match their salaries to the rising cost of living. They are a joyful community, entering the temple and turning over the tables.

This week in Palestine, journalist Muhammad al-Qiq ended his 94-day hunger strike after a compromise was reached with the Israeli authorities to discontinue his administrative detention. Al-Qiq will remain in custody until May 21 to finish his "imprisonment," which kept him captive for 6 months without trial or charge, or legal aid. He, along with his joyful community of support across the world, overturned the table.

Last week in Palestine young people in Hebron held their 7th Annual Open Shuhada Street Campaign. The campaign included nonviolent demonstrations, art exhibitions, and cultural events to raise awareness of the 22 years of increasing restrictions on Palestinians living in Hebron and the human rights violations they suffer. Where the wine was flowing, unchecked, this community of young people overturned the tables.

Sometimes we can confuse when to be in celebration and when to resist. We can get so caught up in the exceptionalism of the wedding that we forget to show up to the temple.

RESIST |with Stephanie Quintana-Martinez (through poetry: "The Olive Tree")
THE OLIVE TREE Tawfiq Zayyad

Because I do not knit wool
Because I am always hunted
And my house is always raided.
Because I cannot own a piece of paper, I shall carve my memoirs
On the home yard olive tree.
I shall carve bitter reflections,
Scenes of love and yearnings,
For my stolen orange grove
And the lost tombs of my dead. I shall carve all my strivings
For the sake of remembrance
For the time when I'll drown them
In the avalanche of triumph I shall carve the serial number
Of every stolen piece of land
The place of my village on the map
And the blown up houses,
And the uprooted trees
And every bloom that was crushed And all the names of the experts in torture
The names of the prisons...
I shall carve dedications
To memories threading down to eternity

Comment [AD2]: At this point, Steph interrupts with this resistance poem.

To the blooded soil of Deir Yasin
And Kufur Qassem. I shall carve the sun's beckoning
And the moon's whisperings
And what a skylark recalls
At a love deserted well.
For the sake of remembrance, I shall continue to carve
All the chapters of my tragedy
And all the stages of Al- Nakbah
On the home yard olive tree!

So we're on board with joy, we're on board with resisting. We know that one positively effects and sustains the other when lived out at a place like McCormick and that harm can be done when one does not accompany the other. But what do these two things mean held in tension with one another theologically?

THE TWO TABLES – HOPE

After the sermon we're going to respond to God's Word. We'll respond with our voices by reaffirming our faith through reading a Latin American paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer. We'll respond with our hearts as we lift up and out the prayers of and for the people of God. And then we'll come to the table. We'll enact and embody our faith at the table—a table is implicated in both of these stories. First, Jesus is at a wedding table—he's sitting at the wedding reception, probably got a little tiny nametag with a table number on it—so there he sits at table 12 in the back, and he is called upon to keep the party going. And he does! Shortly after that, we find him at another table:

¹³ It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ He found in the temple those who were selling cattle, sheep, and doves, as well as those involved in exchanging currency sitting there. ¹⁵ He made a whip from ropes and chased them all out of the temple, including the cattle and the sheep. He scattered the coins and overturned the tables of those who exchanged currency.

Jesus calls us to tables where we may eat, drink, and be merry; but immediately after that, Jesus calls us to overturn the tables of injustice.

I think when you take the two stories authentically together – the joy and the resistance, and you put them in the ole theological math machine that's so totally scientific: joyful community + resistance = hope.

Not a naive hope too distracted by the wedding to realize action is needed. Not a burned out hope, an isolated action without access to authentic support and kinship with our comrades. This story of joy and resistance is the way our Messiah was introduced to us in John's good news and we know this story points towards hope. The same hope that we find in *this* table.

I couldn't find a better way to exhibit these interactions than through the embodiment of a praise dance by my dear friend, Fern – as she dances to "Still I Rise" consider the ways in which you can advocate for more joy, more sustenance for the guests, in this community. Consider the ways in which resistance work is *fueled* by that sustenance.

Comment [AD3]: (communion table)

As she dances consider the weddings that need to end at the temple. Has your curiosity been piqued when someone mentioned words like “white supremacy,” “cisgender” or, dare I say, “intersectionality?” Do you remain while the community has left for the temple? Consider trusting the community that speaks truth to power.

And as she dances, consider how these two tables of joy and resistance in John serve as the introduction to our Messiah.

May we too be known for our **joyful resistance**, culminating in the hope that is found in our Advocate, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

THE TWO TABLES *with Fern Brown (through dance: “Still I Rise”)*

Comment [AD4]: At this point, Fern will interrupt the sermon with a praise dance to Yolanda Adams “Still I Rise”

We Go Forth in God’s Name

*THE BENEDICTON

And now go... mirror Jesus – in joyful community at the wedding, in righteous anger at the temple, and with the hope of the Messiah, enmeshing the two tables of joy and resistance into the Table of Hope for the world.

Amen.