

A Little Trust

Simple Thoughts: Part 4 “A Little Trust”

Rev. Cameron D St.Michael – September 6th, 2020

14th Sunday After Pentecost

Readings: Isaiah 43:1-7; Hebrews 11:1-6; Matthew 14:22-33

Reflection: Psalm 56

Greeting: May the grace and peace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, be with you on this day! I pray that as we join together in worship, in whatever way we join together, that we be united by one Spirit, serving the Father, in the truth of the Son. Let us celebrate the love of Christ that brings us together in God’s care. Praise the Lord!

Prayer: Lord, hear our prayer. Help us to be one people, following you. Let our hearts be warmed by your love. Let our spirits be lifted by your presence. Let us always live a life dedicated to you. Help us this day to join together that we may worship in the grace and peace of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Reflection: Psalm 56

To the leader: according to The Dove on Far-off Terebinths. Of David. A Miktam, when the Philistines seized him in Gath. Be gracious to me, O God, for people trample on me; all day long foes oppress me; my enemies trample on me all day long, for many fight against me. O Most High, when I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I am not afraid; what can flesh do to me? All day long they seek to injure my cause; all their thoughts are against me for evil. They stir up strife, they lurk, they watch my steps. As they hoped to have my life, so repay them for their crime; in wrath cast down the peoples, O God! You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your record? Then my enemies will retreat in the day when I call. This I know, that God is for me. In God, whose word I praise, in the Lord, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I am not afraid. What can a mere mortal do to me? My vows to you I must perform, O God; I will render thank offerings to you. For you have delivered my soul from death, and my feet from falling, so that I may walk before God in the light of life.

(Psalm 56 NRSV)*

We read the words of Psalm 56 and we hear about trust. That when things get difficult, trust is to be placed in God. Because God knows our lives and our struggles. We hear how God is to be our sanctuary. That we will be delivered from difficulty by God's steady hand. Do you turn to God in the good times and the bad? Do you trust that God is with you in those times? How do you show God you are thankful for his presence in your life? How do you remind others that God is there for them?

Prayer: Oh Lord, we seek your help on this day. Help us to trust you when things get difficult. Help us to have faith that you are with us, guiding us and leading us. Strengthen that faith that we may trust in you in all things. Be the calm in every storm and the rest after every journey. Guide us so that we may follow you in all that we are and all that we do. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Now let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

Sermon:

Our scripture readings for today come from the Common English Bible. Our first reading is from Isaiah chapter 43, verses 1 through 7.

But now, says the Lord—the one who created you, Jacob, the one who formed you, Israel: Don't fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; when through the rivers, they won't sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you won't be scorched and flame won't burn you. I am the Lord your God, the holy one of Israel, your savior. I have given Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in your place. Because you are precious in my eyes, you are honored, and I love you. I give people in your place, and nations in exchange for your life. Don't fear, I am with you. From the east I'll bring your children; from the west I'll gather you. I'll say to the north, "Give them back!" and to the south, "Don't detain them." Bring my sons from far away, and my daughters from the end of the earth, everyone who is called by my name and whom I created for my glory, whom I have formed and made.
(Isaiah 43:1-7 CEB+)

Our next reading is from Hebrews chapter 11, verses 1 through 6.

Faith is the reality of what we hope for, the proof of what we don't see. The elders in the past were approved because they showed faith. By faith we understand that the universe has been created by a word from God so that the visible came into existence from the invisible. By faith Abel offered a better sacrifice to God than Cain, which showed that he was righteous, since God gave approval to him for his gift. Though he died, he's still speaking through faith. By faith Enoch was taken up so that he didn't see death, and he wasn't found because God took him up. He was given approval for having pleased God before he was taken up. It's impossible to please God without faith because the one who draws near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards people who try to find him.
(Hebrews 11:1-6 CEB+)

Our final reading is from Matthew, chapter 14, verses 22 through 23.

Right then, Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead to the other side of the lake while he dismissed the crowds. When he sent them away, he went up onto a mountain by himself to pray. Evening came and he was alone. Meanwhile, the boat, fighting a strong headwind, was being battered by the waves and was already far away from land. Very early in the morning he came to his disciples, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified and said, "It's a ghost!" They were so frightened they screamed. Just then Jesus spoke to them, "Be encouraged! It's me. Don't be afraid." Peter replied, "Lord, if it's you, order me to come to you on the water." And Jesus said, "Come." Then Peter got out of the boat and was walking on the water toward Jesus. But when Peter saw the strong wind, he became frightened. As he began to sink, he shouted, "Lord, rescue me!" Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him, saying, "You man of weak faith! Why did you begin to have doubts?" When they got into the boat, the wind settled down. Then those in the boat worshipped Jesus and said, "You must be God's Son!"
(Matthew 14:22-33 CEB+)

This is the word of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God.

In the last message of our "Simple Thoughts" series, we talk about faith. One of the big things about faith is that it goes hand in hand with trust. I think we forget that sometimes. Faith becomes a separate thing that sits there by itself. We say that everything is about having faith without actually thinking about what our faith is based in. The short of it is that our faith is based on trusting God. The issue we run into is that if we have troubles with trust, we are going to have troubles with faith. Our main reading is our Gospel account from Matthew. He get another boat story, this time we have the disciples out in the boat and Jesus walking on water to get to them. I like the words that they have here. That Jesus yells out to them "Be encouraged! It's me. Don't be afraid." Now, of course, he's asking for a lot here. They see him walking across the water and they think it is a ghost. They are terrified. But Peter decides to take a step of faith if not a leap of faith, out onto the water. He does it. Jesus tells him to come on out and he does. But it is when he sees the strong wind that he loses his nerve and he starts to sink. Jesus pulls him out and wants to know why he began to have doubts.

I started thinking about this, and it made me think about why we do doubt things. It seems to be wrapped up in all the things we've talked about in this series. When we get caught up in things that don't really matter, they can cause us to doubt the things that do. When we get so stressed out that we lose our focus, it is easy to be afraid and easy to lose faith. And when we are so anxious that we worry about everything, it becomes hard for us to trust. Thing is, life takes a little trust. Trust in each other and trust in God. And not just the idea that God is there. I think sometimes we get caught up in faith being "believe that God is there and that is all that matters." And yes, that is a big part of it. In our reading from Hebrews we get the statement that "It's impossible to please God without faith because the one who draws near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards people who try to find him." In Hebrews we also get some examples of faith from the Bible. We get Abel making an offering by faith and Enoch being taken up for his faith. There are other examples as we move on in the chapter. But in today's reading, we also get something else. In the opening, we get a description of faith.

That “Faith is the reality of what we hope for, the proof of what we don’t see.” It is a matter of trust, because we have to trust without sight that God is there, but also that God will always be there for us. That God will help us. We see this in Isaiah. That we aren’t to fear because God is there. That we must trust that God will always be there. That God will protect us from whatever come. The imagery we get is not being swept away by rivers, not being scorched by fire, and the strong imagery is used to remind us of God’s power and presence. I think it is important in these difficult times that we understand what our faith is supposed to be and what we are supposed to trust. Sometimes we get it into our heads that we are supposed to trust that God’s always going to give us a miracle, and if it doesn’t happen our trust is shaken and our faith waivers. And that is a problem.

The interesting thing is that when Peter steps out of that boat, he was trusting that he was going to be saved. He was going to get his miracle. The problem is that even in the midst of a miracle, the world around him scared him and his faith faltered. Mid miracle. What that says to me is that even when there is a miracle, we might be too scared to accept it. So, how can we ask for miracles when we may be too caught up to notice? The answer to me, is that we have faith that God will get us through each day and each obstacle somehow. The trust is that we trust it will happen and we don’t have to figure out how. We don’t have to design our rescue. And we don’t have to put God to the test because we can trust that God will help us to make good choices. It’s one thing to have Jesus standing on the water saying, “come to me” and it is another matter to walk out over a cliff thinking God won’t let you fall, and then jumping. The problem is that that doesn’t show trust. If you trust somebody, you don’t force them into extreme situations to prove that trust. It’s one thing if you’re pulled along and you end up in extreme situations. It’s another to force extreme situations just to stress test that trust. Too often we push ourselves into the extremes, not based on trust, but seemingly because we want to see how far we can go and still be alright. That’s not trust, that’s abuse.

If I said to you that I needed you to trust me, and you say “OK,” so I have you stand up on a platform 20 feet in the air. I need you to trust that I’ll get you down safely. Again, you agree. Now, we have a two-way trust going on. My trust in you is that you are going to give me the time I need to make this happen. If you have faith in me, and you trust what I told you, it means having patience. Because there’s nothing in trust or faith if you decide to jump, thinking that I’m going to catch you. I’m not going to catch you. Know why? Because while you’re up there, I’m off finding people to help me put up a ladder to get you down safely. That jump wasn’t a matter of faith and it wasn’t a matter of trust. It was a matter of impatience. The thing about trust is that it also means time. If we trust God, we trust that God will do everything we need, but that it will take time. We trust that God will get us through difficult situations, but that may take time. We trust that God will help us in our time of need, but it may take time. It is when our faith waivers that we start jumping to those extremes. Because we start making up excuses for why it takes time instead of trusting that in God’s time, God will get it done. That’s a problem. We have to trust God’s wisdom.

This came to me now, because there’s a whole lot of mistrust in society right now, and a lot of misplaced or misunderstood faith. We might say “if I get this, I get this, and if I don’t I

don't and that's God's will." What if that isn't God's will? What if God's will is that you work patiently together as a community while God forges a way out? It isn't faith to throw caution to the wind, that's weak faith and mistrust. Because it takes a little trust to allow things to take time. It takes faith to understand that God gives us caution for a reason. In all the examples from today's readings, they all take time and trust. We look at Enoch, and his reward wasn't right away, but after a long life. It doesn't happen just because we know what the result will be and when, but that we know who is going to take care of things in the end. In the example from before about being on a platform 20 feet in the air, it doesn't matter why you are up there. What matters is that you trust you are going to get down. That you don't start doubting that you'll never get down simply because it isn't happening exactly when you wanted it to. Faith in God and in each other is about trusting the unseen and knowing that sometimes the time is right and sometimes the time is wrong. Being able to wait is a matter of faith and trust. Not anxiously doubting it, but with hope, hope that God will give us the strength we need to wait. That God will give us the patience we need to endure. And that God will give us the guidance we need to do the things that we need to do to get there.

On the flip side, this doesn't mean we never try. It doesn't mean we always sit around waiting for something to happen to us, but we look to the Holy Spirit for guidance to make sure we are doing what we need to do, being active in our faith. Sometimes it isn't just a ladder to get down in one step. Sometimes when we are stranded on that platform, the first thing we find is a little ladder that gets us a little further down. Then we get a care packages sent up that helps us to wait. We know that the hour is coming when we can finally make it. It might be in small steps, and it might be that we have to see the thing that is waiting for us. But we do it with hop and we do it by faith, because we trust that however long it takes, and whatever strange path it takes, that God is still there to get us through.

That's the main thing I wanted to convey today about trust. It means being patient. It means being understanding. It means sometimes enduring for longer than we'd like in situations we don't like. Because we know that God hasn't abandoned us. On the flip side, it means we should not abandon God. It can be hard. But we have help, because we know God is there. That God wants us to trust each other and hope in each other because God instills in us a willingness to help each other as God helps us. God's trust in us is that we will be willing to trust each other to do his will. And with patience and hope and faith, no matter what comes our way, no matter how long it takes, and no matter what we must endure, with a little trust, we have faith that God will be there to see us through. Amen.

Prayer of Confession and Pardon: Lord, forgive us we pray. We come before you as those who have sinned against you in what we say and do. We come before you as those who have sinned against you in what we do not say and what we do not do. It is in our doings and our failings that we seek your grace and your mercy. We haven't loved you how we should. We haven't loved each other how we should. We are a people who are sorry, who humbly seek your forgiveness. Help us to live with one another in your mercy and your grace. Let us always remember the sacrifice made by our Risen Savior, Jesus Christ, that we may understand your deep love for us. May we honor that love by sharing it with one another, loving as you love and caring as you care. Help us to be of one body redeemed by one blood, serving one God. Amen.

Offering: If you are so moved to make an offering, you may send it to the church treasurer, or you may send it to the PO Box listed in the weekly update. If you are interested in online giving, please contact me. We are still the church, and the church still needs your support to keep doing all the important work that we do.

Lord's Prayer

Dismissal with Blessing: We go forth now that we may be ministers of the good news wherever we go. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Until we meet again. **Amen.**

Prayer List

Rev Charliam Renner	Bishop Frank Beard	Our Conference	Our Healthcare Workers
Angie Veach	Diane Washburn	Bill Calvert	Eric Veach
Cathy Devall	Brock McMorris	Ed & Verna Titus	Hayden Kanizer
Henry Catey	Jake Kiser	Laura Eubank Allison	Nancy Sowers
Cindy Cisney	Patti Corder & Crew	Nancy Hoke	Don Wells
Tricia Adkins	Ty Bradley	Ronnie & Elaine Carlen	Pat Nebel
Don Stewart	Earlene Shupe	Brenda Hurt	Anne Winkler Heinrichs
Robert Fryman	Ken Bushur	Brad Winnett	Randy Callahan
Tommy Jester			
Richard Durham	Kathy Hanks	Nora Werner & Family	Wayne & Charlotte Carrell
Gary & Mary Winterrowd	Lois Woolever	Mary White	Nick Nichols
Family of Novella Claiborn	Leo Smith		
Greg Williams	Eloise Buffenmeyer	Martha Roberts	Charlie & Charlotte Baxter
Paul Schulte	Lyle Whitley		

Offerings may be mailed to your local treasurer or addressed to:

Rev Camron D St. Michael

PO Box 54, Charleston IL, 61920

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Our Current Series – Simple Thoughts

I have had some time to reflect during the past few months and decided to put some of those thoughts down as a series. In it we will look at anxiety, stress,

August 9th – *The Better Part* – A look at how anxiety can cause us to miss out on life when we aren't paying attention to what is important.

August 16th – *The Back of the Boat* – It is important to take time to lessen the stresses in our lives.

August 30th – *What Matters* – When we begin to think about what really matters, we often have to look at the things that get in the way.

September 6th – *A Little Trust* – It is easy to have doubts. The important thing is that we learn how to trust.

9/6/2020 Update from Pastor Cameron

Greetings! Time for a weekly update!

We are continuing in both online and in person worship at this time. I am thankful for all of the work that everyone has done to make this possible. As we return to in person worship, please contact me for details or see prior weekly updates for all of the current safety precautions.

Numbers have been putting the area into a warning that we may see some restrictions rolled back. Please us caution in everything. I will continue to offer online and printed resources. If you would like to see something that has not yet been part of these services, let me know.

Charge conference is set to be a virtual meeting on October 8th at 7pm. I would like as much of the church council to meet as possible. I will have more details soon about that.

If you know someone who would like to receive printed information every week, please let me know. If you come to this online, feel free to share it.

The church is still active and working, and as such, still needs your financial support. Please contact me or the church treasurer for options. Thank you for your continued support.

Please see the CDC website for information on the Coronavirus.

Please stay safe. You are all in my prayers. I will keep you updated as best I can. If you have any questions, feel free to contact your Church Council Chair or myself.

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