

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost
20-06-2021
St Cuthbert's Anglican Church – Tweed Heads

1 Samuel 17: 32-49 David defeats Goliath

Psalms 9: 9-20 The Lord is a Refuge

2 Corinthians 6: 1-13 Paul's openness and hardships

Mark 4: 35-41 Jesus calms the Storm

Introduction

Today I would like to look at each of our readings from the bible and what they have to tell us about Trusting God.

1 Samuel – David and Goliath

Our first reading from the first book of Samuel is one that most of us will be very familiar with. I recall as a child reading our family's story bible, and the story of David and Goliath was my favourite. In this portion of scripture, we hear how David trusted God.

Now I don't want to suggest that physical violence is the best way to solve issues, or that war is good, but I do want to look behind this story and see what the underlying drivers were, for the actions of those involved.

The Philistines wanted to take some of the lands of Judah for themselves and Saul and his army were standing against them. David had three older brothers who were a part of Saul's army and David had been sent by his father to take them food.

Goliath was defying God's chosen people Israel and their army. The way David saw the situation was that Goliath wasn't just insulting the people of Israel, he was insulting God. David didn't want to fight Goliath for his own purposes, but rather in David's mind, the Philistines and Goliath were God's enemies.

In this story David didn't go into battle for what he could get out of it, or trusting in weapons. David did however trust the skills and abilities God had given him. David went into the battle trusting in God, and fighting to do God's will.

The way David saw it, it wasn't that he beat Goliath, rather it was God who had the victory over Goliath and the Philistines.

In spite of his clear disadvantages, of size, of weaponry, and of experience, David prevailed because he put his trust in God, and he was doing God's will.

Two good questions to ask our selves as we go about our daily lives are:-

Are we trusting God?, and

Are we doing God's will?

Psalm 9

Let us now look at Psalm 9.

The psalms are Poetry or Songs which were written by David, Solomon and others to speak of their relationship with God. Some involve crying out to God in anguish, others are about Confession and others of Praise for God. The psalms are often used to provide expression for our relationship with God.

Probably the most well known psalm, is Psalm 23, the Lord is my Shepherd, and it's message is about trusting in God's protection.

Verse 10 from Psalm 9 today tells us this:-

¹⁰ All who heed your name will trust in you:
for you have never forsaken those that seek you.

It is letting us know that if we believe in God, then we are called to trust God. And we hear that if we trust God, we can be assured that God will not forsake us. In other words, we are never left alone if we trust in God.

2 Corinthians - Paul

And lets now look at the reading from Paul's second letter to the Corinthians.

In it, we hear Paul encouraging the Corinthians to take a hold of their faith in God through Jesus. He is telling them not to accept the grace of God in vain, but rather open their hearts to God.

But Paul is not telling them though, that their lives will be exactly as they would like them to be if they trust God. In fact, Paul and his companions were trusting God explicitly and seeking to do God's will, and yet we hear of the challenges they faced.

In verses 4 and 5 we hear these words from Paul:-

⁴ but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵ beatings, imprisonments, riots, labours, sleepless nights, hunger;

Paul trusted God, and yet he and his companions still faced many challenges in their lives. In fact, it was more likely that they faced the challenges that they did, because they were doing God's will.

Christianity does not shield us from the challenges of the world we live in. To try to claim that would just not make sense of the world we see around us. But what we are promised if we trust God is the knowledge of God's peace and presence in our lives.

Elsewhere we hear it described as "the peace of God which passes all understanding".

In verse 10 of today's reading Paul describes himself as,

"having nothing, and yet possessing everything"

When we truly put all of our faith, and hope and trust in God, then we can know God's peace in our lives.

Mark

And now let us turn to today's Gospel reading. In it we hear how Jesus calmed the storm. As we have been going through Mark's gospel so far this year, we have heard about Jesus preaching and teaching, and we have heard about Jesus healing people, but today we have heard how Jesus has taken things to the next level. We hear how Jesus showed power over the natural world and the disciples were in shock.

After he calmed the storm Jesus' words to his disciples seem a little harsh to me. Jesus says to them :-

'Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?'

Jesus is really letting them know that they can trust him. No matter the challenges we also should put our trust in what Jesus has done for us, and when we do we should know that we can never be separated from God's love for us.

Today we heard about a physical storm, but we are bound to face all sorts of storms in our lives. We may face issues around our health, our relationships with others, all sorts of things that can leave us anxious, or frightened. As we

live out our lives we will see that this is normal rather than exceptional. We all face challenges at one time or another. Jesus never said he would stop the storms, but he does promise to always be with us through life's challenges.

The disciples underestimated the power Jesus had to help them. Let us not fall into the same mistake of underestimating the power Jesus can have in our lives. If we trust God, we can know that we will be able to find comfort in Jesus.

An example of Trusting God

Often we can learn about trusting God by the example we see in the lives of others. As I was going through today's readings and thinking about trusting God, I was drawn to a lady from my previous parish. She had told me of how she had trusted God throughout her life. She grew up in a Christian family and was in her early forties when her alcoholic husband died. With three teenage daughters she told me of how she had prayed to God to keep her alive until her daughters had grown and were able to look after themselves. At the time of her 90th birthday celebrations I had the privilege of baptizing two of her great grandchildren. This prayerful and generous lady was a great inspiration to me in the way she had trusted God throughout her life.

Conclusion

Today we have looked at what the readings might have to tell us about trusting God. We know that down the ages Christians have been enabled to trust God, through what Jesus has done for us.

If we put our faith and trust in Jesus, he will be there for us and with us, no matter what challenges we face in life.

This is not some abstract philosophy, but rather something I have witnessed in the lives of Christians, and something we can have the assurance of right now.

I pray as we go out from worship today, we will be encouraged to continue to put all of our faith, and all of our hope, and all of our trust in God. Amen.