

The Second Sunday in Lent
13-03-2022
St Cuthbert's Anglican Church – Tweed Heads

Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18 God's Covenant with Abram

Psalms 27 I trust God, God will protect me

Philippians 3:17-4:1 Stand firm in living lives as followers of Jesus,
And you will be transformed

Luke 13: 31-35 Jesus laments over Jerusalem

Introduction

Today is the Second Sunday in Lent. Lent is a season in our church calendar when we have set aside time to intentionally turn back to God, as we prepare for the celebration of Easter.

Our sentence of scripture for today, comes from our reading from Paul's letter to the Philippians:-

Our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. (Philippians 3.20)

Today's Bible readings are about trusting God, even in the face of great challenges. If we put our trust in God, we know that no matter what happens we are secure in God's love. So, let's look at each of the readings and see what they tell us about trusting God, and knowing where our citizenship is.

Genesis

Our first reading today is about the covenant that God made with Abram. The key verse is verse 6:-

⁶ And he believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness.

Back in chapter 12 of Genesis, we hear how God called Abram, to leave his country, and God promised to make from Abram a great nation through which all the world would be blessed. As you can see in our reading today, Abram was struggling with this because he was getting old, and he and his wife Sarai still did not have any children of their own. Despite the situation Abram found himself in, he continued to trust in the promises of God. The story of Abram and Sarai, who became Abraham and Sarah is a great witness and challenge for us to continue to trust God in our lives.

Philippians

In our reading from the letter to the Philippians today, we hear Paul encouraging them to continue to live their lives as followers of Jesus. Paul says he is in tears for those who have decided not to follow Jesus, and have their minds set on “earthly things”.

Paul goes on to say that for Christians:-

Our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. (Philippians 3.20)

As Christians, our lives have meaning and purpose which transcends this physical world. Yes, this physical world is important, it is the only place we can live here and now, but what we do here and now has eternal consequences.

To live our lives now, trusting God, and following Jesus, is to live not only as citizens of this current world, but it is also to be citizens of heaven.

Paul is encouraging the Philippians to stand firm as they no doubt faced many challenges. As Christians today we will also be bound to face many challenges, but if we put our trust in God, we can be assured of God’s transformative power in our lives.

Luke

In our gospel reading today we hear about the opposite of trusting God. In fact, we hear Jesus, lamenting over Jerusalem, because he knows there are people there who will not trust God. He laments over those who have not listened to the prophets of old, and those who will not listen to him now.

As human beings we can be rather obstinate, if we want to be. As I was reading this story, I recalled a story of human obstinance from my childhood. I would have been 6-7 years old, and my younger brother would have been 2-3 years old.

I can recall my younger brother had done something naughty. Dad was trying to get him to say sorry, and every time he refused to say sorry, he would get a smack. This went on for several requests. I couldn’t believe how stubborn he was. All he had to do was say sorry and the smacks would stop. But he wouldn’t say sorry. I recall feeling very sad for him and thinking, this kid must not have any intelligence at all. All he had to do was say sorry and all would be well again. He eventually relented, but it took a lot of smacks.

We can easily be like that ourselves. Once we have headed down a certain path it is sometimes very difficult to turn things around.

No matter how disobedient we are though, God still loves us. God wants us to repent of all that we have done to cut us off from God, and if we do, we can be assured of God's forgiveness.

Jesus uses wonderful imagery of a hen gathering her chicks under her wings, as to how God also wants to gather us, and care for us. I grew up in the city, but my mum was a country girl, so we grew up with chooks, and I can relate to this imagery. If you haven't grown up with chickens, then the imagery may not be as helpful for you, but you can still get the picture. Jesus uses the imagery to help us understand the truth, that God loves us, and God wants to care for us and shelter us.

But the choice is ours. We need to put all of our trust, and all of our faith, and all of our hope in God.

It is only when we really trust God that we can really know God's peace.

Conclusion

Today's bible readings have been about trusting God.

Sometimes this can be a hard thing to do. Sometimes we struggle to see and feel God's presence in our lives. Sometimes when we face life's challenges it may not seem like God is helping us.

But we need to first put our trust in God. God wants the best for us. From God's covenant with Abram in Genesis to the new covenant brought by Jesus, God cares for all humanity.

We put our trust in many things in life. We put our trust in other people, we put our trust in institutions, we put our trust in the Government. At one time or another they will all let us down.

If we decide to trust God, to accept and follow Jesus, then we have the assurance that God is with us. God never goes back on promises, and God will never let us down.

My prayer, as we continue our Lenten journey, is that we will be enabled to continue to put all of our faith, and all of our hope, and all of our trust in God. Amen.