

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost
21-08-2022
St Cuthbert's Anglican Church – Tweed Heads

Jeremiah 1:4-10	God appoints Jeremiah to be a Prophet, but Jeremiah wants to back down.
Psalms 71: 1-6	God is my Rock and Refuge, in God I trust.
Hebrews 12: 18-29	Accepting Jesus is not like coming to Mt Sinai, but Mt Zion. Coming to Jesus is the ultimate. Be thankful for God is a consuming fire.
Luke 13: 10-17	Jesus helps a woman on the Sabbath and puts his opponents to shame.

Introduction

Today I'd like us to look at how much God loves us, and because of this love how we were able, and called to put all our trust in God.

God Love for Us

In our gospel reading today we see how Jesus loved people. We have before us a story of a woman who had been crippled for 18 years. We don't have much other context, other than it was the sabbath, and she had come to the synagogue, something that would have been a normal thing for Jews to do. We don't have any information on what she expected to happen to her on that day. The story doesn't tell us if she specifically sought Jesus out or not. But the story does tell us how Jesus responded to her plight.

When Jesus saw the woman, he called her over, he laid his hands on her, and she was healed. I don't know that she was expecting it. But she certainly was overjoyed by it. When she was healed, we are told "immediately she stood up straight and began praising God."

What love Jesus showed for this woman, and in a much bigger and more wonderful way, God has sent Jesus so that we can be assured of God's love for each and every one of us.

I have heard people tell me that they don't think that God would love them because of the things that they have done in their lives. The Bible assures us that it doesn't work like that. In fact, we are all cut off from God, by doing things our own way and not God's way. Through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus we can be assured that God loves us, and if we accept Jesus, we can have the assurance we are secure in God's love.

Trust

And because God loves us, we can trust God. In fact, because of what Jesus has done for us, we are called to put all of our trust in God.

So, let us now look at what trust is. The dictionary definition, goes something like this:- To be able to rely on the integrity of something, to have confidence in something.

I would like to pose the question, Do we really trust God?, or Do we want to do our own thing?

Example of Trust

And I wanted to give you an example of trust.

I am scared of heights. And I think that is a reasonable fear that God has made me with. Once when Leeza and I were on holidays we visited the Grand Canyon in the US and I wouldn't go near the edge, in fact Leeza was willing to go much closer than I was. However, I have done bungy jumping, rock climbing and I've even jumped out of a perfectly good plane, of course with a parachute on my back.

You see, although I have, what I believe is a rational fear of heights, I also trusted that the bungy cord was adequate to take my weight, and the ropes and harness I had for climbing were made to standard, and the parachute was packed properly.

If we trust something, there is usually evidence to say that we do.

Trust in Today's Readings

And what do we see in our scripture readings today about trust.

Firstly, we see poor old Jeremiah, who was called and commissioned by God, but didn't want to trust God. Jeremiah says these words :-
'Ah, Lord GOD! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy.'

In the reading from Luke's Gospel, we see how the Pharisee's missed the point, by trusting the law implicitly, rather than trusting the God who gave them the law.

It is in Psalm 71 that we hear how the psalmist really trusts God. The psalmist acknowledges that God is a rock of refuge, and says,
"for you Lord are my hope."

Example of lived trust

I would like to share with you now an example of someone who I believe trusted God. Whilst I was a curate in the Parish of Sunnybank in Brisbane, there was a 95 year old parishioner named Grace Parkinson, who I knew for about one year. When I arrived, she lived with her daughter, and a little while after that she moved into a Nursing Home. I would visit to pray with her and share in Holy Communion, but she would be the one who was seeking to minister to me. She would ask what the Rector and myself we were up to, and how she could pray for us. She would always tell me how parts of the bible had impacted her life, and how she had experienced God's presence in her life. She was quite inspirational to me, even though I was supposed to be the one visiting and ministering to her.

I knew Grace had moved into the Nursing Home because of her mobility, and I knew she did have pain in her leg. She shared with me how one night, when her leg was in pain, and she was praying to God, she felt as if some arms scooped her up and she was being held securely. She felt as if she was floating above the bed. Although the pain hadn't gone completely, at that moment she felt held by the hands of God. She felt secure in God's love.

This was a lady who knew that God loved her, and in turn, she had put all of her faith, and all of her hope, and all of her trust in God.

Conclusion

Trusting God not only comes from believing in our minds that God exists, but from having a relationship with God in our hearts. It is only when we accept what Jesus has done for us, and when we put all of our trust in Jesus, that we are truly enabled to experience God's love for us.

If we trust God, we will be free. Free like the woman in the reading from Luke's Gospel today.

And free like Grace Parkinson, not necessarily free from pain. But free to live our lives in the knowledge that no matter what happens everything is in God's Hands, and that we are secure in God's love.