

A Call to Trust in God 2/17/2019

Jeremiah's mission was clear from the onset; he was to confront the falsehood of his day with the truth of God's word. Jeremiah was to tell the people that only the truth of God's word can build up the people into something grand and beautiful. There was no need to trust in empty promises that surrounded them, perpetrated by the political and religious elites of his day. The people are called to ***trust firmly on God's word***. The results for doing so or failing to do so are indicated clearly by the prophet. Those who put their trust in God and rely on him are like trees in the orchard, well cared for and bearing fruits. They fear not the heat when it comes and shows no distress in the droughts. Here, trust is compared to the roots of a tree by the river bank whose roots go deep to the stream. They will have constant nourishment, direction, and meaning.

Those who put their trust in man or material things are like the barren bush in the desert that enjoys no change of season but stands in a lava waste, a salt, and empty earth. They are cursed! We should understand that the source of curse lies in the fact that one turns his back on the source of life and strength. In our Second Reading, St. Paul refutes the falsehood of those who do not believe in the resurrection. Indeed, Christ has risen from the dead and our trust in him is solid: trust in his forgiveness and trust in the resurrection. It is the reason for our hope in the resurrection. Do you trust in God for your forgiveness and redemption?

The message of trust is carried over to the sermon on the plain (Luke 6:17-26). The sermon on the plain is slightly different from the sermon on the mount (Matthew 5:1ff). Jesus delivered the sermon on the plain from a stretch of the level ground as he called the people to walk on the path of blessings by putting their trust in the merciful God. He spoke the sermon on the mount from a mountain, like Moses. Jesus says, *blessed are you who are poor in spirit*. The poor in spirit describes the state of absolute trust in God. It's not about not having what one needs; it's about living one's grateful dependence on God. It's a spiritual condition which makes you kind and generous, prayerful and trusting.

Let's close with this story from Fr. Mark Ling, SJ (Sunday Homilies), where he tells the story of Lois Olson who contracted polio at the age of 10. Her entire lower part was in a cast. One night during a tornado a feeling of utter helplessness swept over her. All she could do was to lie there. Just then her father appeared at the door and came to grab her in his arms to the basement. Such is the kind of thing both the prophet Jeremiah and the apostle Paul are urging us to trust in. God is like the father who is always ready to help us when we are powerless and cannot help ourselves. Trust that he will help you and learn to depend on him.

Praised be Jesus Christ!