

Trust
February 13, 2022, Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Gospel of Luke 6:17, 20-26
Fr. Brad

Trust entails a letting go of control and of power and allowing it to be in the hands of another. In our first reading, Jeremiah says, *'Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord.'* That means letting go of power and handing it over to God.

Jeremiah says, *'Cursed is the one who trusts in mere mortals and makes mere flesh their strength.'* a pretty strong statement. Our trust in this world can certainly be misplaced. In our human weakness and limitations, sooner or later we will let ourselves down, let another down or be let down by another. This world is not what it touts itself to be and so mistrust, disappointment, and broken hearts abound when we discover this.

Amidst all this, Jesus teaches that we must love our neighbour....just don't trust him. Can that be right? Well the reality is that love accepts the reality of human limitations and loves anyway. Love acknowledges and forgives sin and bad behaviour but by no means endorses it or propagates it in the name of restoring justice.

In our second reading, St. Paul speaks of our faith in the resurrection. To be without faith in the resurrection is to be without hope. He says, *'If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.'*

Imagine living without faith for a moment. What are the options. All you see is all there is. Or, all you experience with your senses is all there is. One's attention might quickly turn to self-satisfaction and obtaining for yourself as much as you can before you die. Living without hope is a terrible way to have to live, especially as we approach the end of our lives.

Do NOT confuse this with living life to the fullest which Jesus does teach. The question is how do we define 'living life to the fullest'?

It is NOT about turning life into a race of who can get the most with the limited time they have - - that is, **a competition that gets ahead at the expense of others.** Love is about seeking mutual benefit.

Patience, joy, love, and peace are not possible without hope.

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.'

So how are these fruits manifested? The fruits of the resurrection take us beyond the pain and suffering of this world. They don't take away the pain and suffering from us in this world but rather, equip us with patience, with joy, with love and peace all of which are much more profound and life giving. **It is easier to wait in patience through the afflictions of this life if God is with us.**

The fruits of the resurrection go beyond a successful career, attaining many possessions, parenting large families, and being well loved by the community. As much as these things can be a blessing from God, none of them are an end in themselves. There are many holy people who have had none of these.

The bigger question is **'what is our disposition of heart'** over and above any worldly success of any kind? It all comes down to relationship with God through the Holy Spirit who helps us through the suffering and provides the fruits.

To make this point stand out more strongly, Jesus directs our attention to the need to focus on the bigger picture and not the trappings of the world as it is.

As much as we dread suffering and tears, being hated, ostracized, and insulted by others, Jesus deems such conditions blessed in our Gospel today. We can even take delight in being rejected by the powerful of this world.

Jesus, the incarnate God, **points us to a reality that can never be reduced to the human dimension and its impulses**. This world as it is succumbs to and catering to human impulse. So, Jeremiah is right, we cannot put our trust in humanity by itself.

It is better to be hated or reviled than to yourself hate. In our diverse world, it is nearly impossible to be loved by everybody. Even the Pope has enemies. If we are hated or disliked by someone, so be it. We have no control over whether or not another person chooses to hate us. If a person hates you, that's their problem not yours. None of us can please everybody. But **for one to hate is disruptive of one's peace and potential for joy**.

To hate others draws from a dark place within our hearts that we must not allow to gain the upper hand. The fruits of the resurrection take us beyond ourselves and beyond our circumstances and turn us outward and toward others.

Luke's account of the beatitudes has a set of **four blessings** (those who walk in the spirit) and the **four woes** (those who walk in the flesh).

Jesus consistently directs our attention to the poor and marginalized **that we may see our own poverty**. Jesus commends those who are hungry, poor, weeping and excluded and condemns those who are rich, self-satisfied, and well thought of. This teaching is a complete reversal of the ways of the world and goes against our natural instinct.

If we could accept ourselves as we are ...vulnerable, helpless and not ultimately self sufficient, that we need God to walk with us, **then** we need not fear or be ashamed of our ineptitude. By this we remain open and empty in order to let God and others come in. **We need to have space at the center of who we are if we are to truly love and be loved**. You are blessed if you don't cram yourself full (ie. food, drink, pride, fame, sex, obsession with physical appearance, reputation, status, etc.)

Blessed are you if you continually try to stay empty and create a spacious home for God.

Blessed are you who create space for others in your life, and for the long-suffering earth.

Blessed are you in your patience in feeling empty and remaining patient enough for God and not anything less. Amen