

Pastor Roy's Sermon from June 23, 2019

All of us sooner or later feel that few are listening or care about what is important to me. We feel alone—sometimes that leads to us feeling hopeless about the future. Isaiah 65 reveals such a moment. And Isaiah is speaking for God with a troubled prophesy. There is a hint of despair in it. But then the last few verses come around full circle to hope. He speaks for God, “I will not obliterate them.” They will live in the land and it will be ok, despite Isaiah’s frustration and grief.

The exiles return from exile, and practice their renewed faith in the land of God’s blessing. God hears Isaiah’s fearful despair, comforts him, and unfolds the work of peace and hope and mercy with a remnant of faith. Isaiah worries, but God does not worry. Faith is growing, being nurtured, it cannot be undone. The Spirit is moving.

What can we learn from Isaiah’s prophesy? Isaiah is honest. He trusts deeply in God far beyond our ability to know and understand. The invitation is to trust and give our worries over to God as we feel them. It’s a constant movement of offering our trouble, our struggles, our frustrations.

I’m going to reread Psalm 22 from Isaiah’s perspective of learning to trust.

The Psalmist is also inviting us to trust, to be grateful, to live in faith. The greatest example the psalmist gives is that of the poor. They can trust at a profound level because they cannot change their poverty. They are not lazy, they simply do not have the resources to trust in themselves. Their faith is in God. In the Psalmist’s day and to great extent, today, their hope is in the kindness of others in their shared community of need to provide what their birth could not provide. And so they have to look to God for everything and trust in their suffering. And they are blessed. We too are blessed if we learn to trust and wait to enjoy God’s blessing rather than concoct a cheap blessing. Listen for the deep trust of the psalmist...

Psalm 22:18-27

Paul speaks of this deep trust in terms of our unity in Jesus Christ. The vision of God's mercy and love is clear in the Spirit of Christ—in his life, ministry, willing death, and resurrection.

The man set free by Jesus teaches us about trusting deeply in God's mercy. The healed man goes in a new direction with a new story to tell. A story of freedom through trust. God will provide. God's presence brings healing. The townsfolk are afraid of this freedom. They reject Jesus and his invitation to welcome this one whom they would prefer to keep at a distance. And so the freedom of Jesus is put on hold, and the man set free now has a mission. He will work among them listening and trusting in the good news of God's mercy and peace. May we also trust, day by day.