

From the Rector's Study, the Rev. Bryce Sangster
Sunday, March 5th, 2023, Lent II
Genesis 12:1-4a Psalm 121 Romans 4:1-5, 13-17 John 3:1-17

Last week I talked about giving up control, to love God and others is to trust. This week there is an element of giving up control as well. When Jesus talks about the wind and where it comes from and where it goes no one knows. That feels like control issue as well. But Jesus also talks about being born again, born anew.

As well:

Jesus said, 'Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 18:3

There is an element of wonder in this, becoming like children, but that's a whole other sermon. To become like children is in essence to trust totally. A lot of the time we can hedge our bets. Trust in God, and others as instruments of God's will, but we do what we can to protect ourselves and not just passively go along with what is happening.

We do our part, but it's only a small part dealing with the whole situation we are facing. Sometimes we have no choice and sometimes we do.

Maybe it has to do with after we've done our part and waiting to see how things unfold. It calls for patience and trust. If you're like me, you can't help thinking there's more that I could have done, second guessing, and looking for some other way to do something to take part in the outcome.

And sometimes what happens challenges our trust, because the way things unfold are not always the way we'd expect. Although there's probably some predictability. As you look back over your life, your past, has it unfolded the way you predicted? Are you where you thought you'd be? Did you do the things you thought you'd be doing and the way you'd be doing them? I would guess not. There were unpredictable events and outcomes in all our lives. But the good news is you're here now. God has got us through with the help of others our past and got us to this point.

Earlier I mentioned being like a little child, but in the passage in Genesis, God calls Abram, later called Abraham, and tells him 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.'

Abram is 75 years old at the time. Is this scary or encouraging for us today? I would guess and hope it is encouraging. Do you realize you have been through and continue to deal with something others haven't had to deal with for 100 years?

And there are other parts of our lives which offer challenge and uncertainty as well. Maybe it is enough to get up in the morning..... to not just give up.

We are not all called like Abram to give up everything and start fresh. I am reminded of the comment by President Bartlett on the tv show West Wing. Decisions are made by those who show up. Yes, this is about decision-making and if you don't show up for the debate you don't have a say, but maybe all of life is that way....

Do we want to miss all the abundance of what is happening in our lives in relationship to God and others?

I have asked the question in the past about reading a murder mystery and whether we skip to the end to see who done it. We can for books but not in life, so let's not skip to the end in relationship with God and others.

Showing up for our own lives in all that means.
Amen.

May the path that you walk
be ever guided by justice and light
By the truth that you stand.
May it show, into the land.
May the words of Christ
disturb you all your life.
The road you've chosen is not easy
– yet here you stand!
(from the song, The Path, by Jason Mann, adapted)