

From the Rector's Study, the Rev. Bryce Sangster
Sunday, August 28th, 2022, Pentecost XII
Jeremiah 2:4-13, Psalm 81:1, 10-16, Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16, Luke 14:1, 7-14

A story told by Martin Buber in his book *Early Masters*.

A man who lived in the same town as Rabbi Zusya saw that he was very poor. So, each day he put 20 coins in the little bag in which Zusya kept his Hebrew texts, so that he and his family might buy the necessities of life. From that time on, the man grew richer and richer. The more he had, the more he gave Zusya, and the more he gave Zusya, the more he had.

But once he recalled that Zusya was the disciple of another Rabbi, and it occurred to him that if what he gave the disciple was so lavishly rewarded, he might become even more prosperous if he made presents to the master himself. So, he traveled to where the rabbi lived and induced Rabbi Baer to accept a substantial gift from him. From that time on, his means shrank until he had lost all the profits he had made during the more fortunate period.

He took his trouble to Rabbi Zusya, told him the whole story, and asked him what his present predicament was due to. For had not the rabbi himself told him that his master was immeasurably greater than he?

Zusya Replied, look! As long as you gave and did not bother to whom, whether to Zusya or another, God gave to you and did not bother to whom. But when you began to seek out especially noble and distinguished recipients, God did exactly the same.

This seems to mean not worrying about our own reputation. The reverend Richard Rohr talks about loving wastefully. That God loves wastefully, and we are to do the same. We have received grace and mercy and blessings from God we do not deserve or can repay so we are to treat others the same. In other words, non transactional relationship. God blesses us with grace and mercy not because we can repay God or because we deserve those blessings. And by extension, we are to pass that love onto others.

This brings up the disturbing question or comment, we tend to understand what is just and people getting what they deserve based on fairness and some understanding things being in balance. The problem is, when love is wasteful and the relationship is non transactional the temptation is then to feel like God does not care, that God has abandoned us.

The answer seems to be that God loves all of us, all of God's creation and we will have both good things and challenges in life.

In Matthew 5:44-45 Jesus says:

“But I say to you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,⁴⁵ so that you may be children of your Father in heaven, for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous.

For God to love us both unconditionally and wastefully is also to love in a way which does not seem fair. That there are things we get and happen to us which do not seem just, and not something or in a way we deserve.

We are given the love of God we do not necessarily deserve and are then to pass that love on.

Amen

The Lord bless *you* and watch over *you*,
the Lord make his face shine upon *you*
and be gracious to *you*,
the Lord look kindly on *you*
and give *you* peace;
and the blessing ...