

Twenty-Ninth Sunday of the Year – October 20, 2019

Exodus 17:8-13 2 Timothy 3:14 – 4:2 Luke 18:1-8

At the conclusion of the account the healing of the ten individuals who had been afflicted with leprosy, Jesus tells the only one who had returned to thank him that it was his faith that saved him. This suggests that there was much more to be understood about this incident than the restoration to heal of these persons. Today we have heard Jesus say, “When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth.”

In a way, it is a question that is as modern as today, give the skepticism, and even the ridicule, that is often directed at those who profess that they have faith. Yet there is a type of faith that is often expressed: faith that a computer will function, that a television will turn on, that a light switch will work. The faith about which Jesus speaks is much more. It is that faith that is a basic ability we possess as humans that affects us daily. It is a faith that leads to trust.  It is a faith that leads to hope. It is a faith that is open to all the possibilities in life. It is a faith that is the basis of love.

Often, however, we experience the opposite of faith in so many ways. A lack of faith leads to cynicism. Nothing is possible. Nothing or no one is good. There is no trust, no hope, no love.

This is difficult for me to understand. The quality of faith, the ability to believe, is essential for what we areas humans. We rely on faith to be present and active in our lives in so many ways. Yet to deny faith means the denial of faith in others, a denial of faith in ourselves, and ultimately denial of faith in God, the source of all goodness.

Faith that lead to trust and hope and love begins with ourselves. We must have faith in ourselves. It is faith in ourselves that opens up for us the possibilities in our lives. Faith in ourselves leads to faith in others, to relationships that are essential for life. Faith gives meaning to friendships. Faith gives strength to marriages. Faith is needed for peace in our neighborhoods and peace in our world. Faith gives hope for our children and for those who are important to us.

The faith that we have in ourselves and the faith that we place in others finds its roots and foundation in the faith that we have in God. It is the goodness of God, Creator of all that is, that is the source of the ability to hope, to trust, to love.

Today we heard of examples of faith. Moses had faith, as he prayed, in the presence and guidance of God with the Israelites as they struggled with an opponent. Paul encourage Timothy to be strong in faith, faithful what he heard and believed and to live this out in his life and leadership of early Christians. The widow of the Gospel had faith that her persistence would win over the decision of the judge she approached.

We have been challenged by Jesus to be persons of faith ourselves. We are to have faith in ourselves, yo have faith in one another, and to have faith in God. Faith is the means by which to be truly enlightened and truly free. Faith reveals the very best that we are for it is our lives of faith that reflect and reveal our trust in a good and gracious God.