

Twenty-Seventh Sunday of the Year – October 6, 2019

Habakkuk 1: 2-3; 2:2-4 2 Timothy 1: 6-8, 13-14 Luke 17: 5-10

If you are like me, we have to admit that there have been days or situations when we may have wondered whether there is a God, when it almost seems pointless to have faith in God. Perhaps this might be because of personal matters or perhaps it may arise from just reading or hearing the news. This, however, an age-old question a questions hat is raised today in the passages which we have heard from the Scriptures.



We heard first from Habakkuk, a prophet speaking 2700 years ago, yet sounding as if he might be speaking today. He is puzzled. Why is there violence? Why is there hatred? Why is there discord and strife? Why must others suffer? God, why do you not intervene, why do you not do something? Where are you God? His words could easily be our own.

Then, in his prayer and reflection Habakkuk understands a response. Do not give up believing just because now things are difficult. He is reminded that God is loving, God is faithful, God is eternal. It is the rash one, the one who wants an immediate answer who is short-sighted, who collapses, who falls apart. The one who has faith, however, lives on, persists, continues and perseveres whatever the situation.

Paul offered similar considerations to his friend and disciple, Timothy. He encourages him to be strong in his work and remember the commitment he had made. He is not to waiver or be weak in the calling he has heard. He is to continue to preach the word and proclaim it with the whole of his life. This is the experience of faith that he is to have. It ought to be remembered where Paul is at this point in his life as it gives particular insight into his words. Paul is old. He is confined and facing trial because of his faith and his work. He could easily be skeptical and doubt the value of all he has done in view of what is before him and before Timothy.

But he tells both himself and Timothy to listen to the words that have been proclaimed and have been experienced. Listen with faith and trust to the message of the love of God that is made clear in the teachings of Christ. What motivates Paul and what is to motivate us when doubting and questioning is a firm faith that there is, indeed, a God – a God who truly loves us. That is what the life and teaching of Jesus proclaimed. That is what his death on the cross proclaims to us: God so loved the world; God so loves us.

This same encouragement is found in the words of Jesus we have also heard today. True faith in God can remove any obstacle that might be before us. Nothing is so powerful that cannot be overcome by a genuine faith and trust in God. This is Christ speaking on his slow journey to death on a cross. This encouragement is offered to us who are to take up the cross with him.

Jesus also cautions us. This is not a matter of bargaining

with God. Love is not a bargain, it is not a deal that is made. Genuine love is unconditional. Such is God's love for us.

We live out this faithful response to God as we are, as who we are, as what we are. Like the servants in the Gospel waiting on their master, doing what we are to do as we are and how we are is the way in which we respond. It is an unconditional response to our good and gracious God.