

Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7

Psalm 32

Romans 5:12-19

Matthew 4:1-11

Sermon February 26th, 2023

God Is Trustworthy

This past week we received ashes on our foreheads in the sign of the cross as we heard the words, “remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” As we participated in this practice we were invited to reflect on our fragility as God’s creatures, as well as, how this fragility leads to our dependency on the One who created us.

In our gospel for this week, we reflect on Jesus’ struggle in the wilderness, especially as the devil challenges Jesus’ ability to trust in the Creator. Especially as the devil challenges Jesus’ ability to trust that God will feed him when he is hungry. Especially as the devil challenges Jesus’ ability to trust that God will care for him when he is hurting. Especially as the devil challenges Jesus’ ability to trust that God will provide for all his needs.

As we reflect on the ashes, as we reflect on Jesus’ wilderness struggle, we reflect on our own struggles with trust, and how this struggle magnifies for us both our fragility as God’s creatures, as well as, our dependency on the One who created us.

For example, someone you love says something really hurtful. Something that hits you at the core of your being. Something you never thought they would say. One of those things someone says that they wish they could take back. You struggle to trust them not to hurt you like that again. Even after they have apologized for what they had said. You distance yourself emotionally from the person. You avoid confrontation with them. You might even leave the relationship.

Our inability to trust the people we love when they hurt us reflects our fragility as God’s creatures. All it takes is a few words to have a devastating effect on our ability to trust someone. “Remember that we are dust, and to dust we shall return.”

Well, in our gospel, in the midst of the wilderness, Jesus affirms for us that God is trustworthy. God will feed us. God provides manna for the Israelites who are wandering in the wilderness. Christ provides bread and fish for thousands stranded on the beaches of Galilee. God gives us the Word of God to help us endure the wilderness. To help us keep trusting in our Creator. Even when the wilderness seems overwhelming. God provides for our wellbeing.

And yet, like our human relationships, our relationship with God can be a fragile one where we find ourselves struggling to trust in God for our wellbeing.

For example, we are invited to be generous with what God has given us, and yet, how often have we looked at our bank accounts, our budgets, afraid that we will not have enough to pay our bills? Afraid that we will not have enough to sustain our ministries? How often has this economic uncertainty that we are living in prevented us from giving more to support God's work in our community?

Or, we are invited to believe that God walks with us in the midst of our suffering, and yet, how often have we questioned God's presence when things get really difficult? How often have we distanced ourselves from God, feeling that God doesn't really care about us in the moment that the pain is too much for us to bear?

Or, how often does a broken relationship with a religious community impact how we feel about God? How often does this fragile relationship with the community challenge our ability to see the trustworthiness of God?

These are not easy questions to wrestle with. And yet, here we are. Worshipping our Creator God. Trying to support the ministries of our church. Trying to support the vulnerable people in our community, and around the world. Trying to depend on God for our wellbeing.

And though our ability to trust in one another, and in God is a fragile one, we do hear Jesus' affirmation that God is trustworthy. God does provide for our wellbeing even when we find ourselves in the midst of the wilderness facing the devils of our lives. God does provide. And it is okay for us to depend on God for our wellbeing. We don't have to try and do everything on our own.

In our baptism we see that God breathes on us the Holy Spirit, opening our eyes to see where God is at work in our lives. Providing for our wellbeing. Whether it is a story in the Bible that gives us hope to endure another day. Or a community who helps us when we are struggling to access our basic needs. Whether it is a good friend who cares for us when we are sick. Or a prayer where we feel listened to.

God is there. Feeding us. Caring for us. Providing for our wellbeing. Lifting us up to be all we are created to be.

As we begin our Lenten journey, we are invited to dive into the practices of our faith that help us trust in God more with our wellbeing. As well as transform us into trustworthy people who provide for others in need.

Let us pray, gracious God, thank you for being trustworthy, for providing for our wellbeing. When we lose sight of this, when we doubt, help us find belief in your trustworthiness again. Transforming us into trustworthy servants. **Amen.**