

Sermon 2008 Pentecost 9
Text: Isaiah 55: 10-11
Theme: "In God We Trust"

"In God We Trust" was a motto with which we all grew up. I don't know how much we really believed it, but it was all around us. People today are less enamored of the motto than we were or our parents before, largely because the people today know that it was mostly just a motto. People said, "In God We Trust!" but they really trusted in people and money and concrete things. We all know that. It is ridiculous to deny it. We frankly find it difficult to trust in anyone much less a God we cannot see.

Trust, as defined by the dictionary is an assured reliance on the character, ability, strength or truth of someone or something. Well right there rules out trusting people. No one is perfect in character, ability, strength or truth, so you can't trust anyone. Think of all the heartache you have had in your life because someone you trusted let you down. Or consider the heartache you have caused by failing to be trustworthy.

Everyone is tempted and sooner or later, everyone caves into temptation. Tempting us to sin – that is to be untrustworthy – is Satan's full time job and he loves his work. If we could be trusted to

follow the 10 Commandments – to live holy and righteous lives –
guess what? We wouldn't need Jesus! Jesus died for that very
reason. Jesus was damned because we couldn't be trusted!

Listen to the psalmist,

As for man, his days are like grass;
he flourishes like a flower of the field;
for the wind passes over it, and it is gone,
and its place knows it no more.

How can we trust anyone or anything that person creates when he
is as transient as grass? I can make all the promises in the world to
you and even if my intentions are pure and holy, so what? I am like
grass – here today – burned up and blown away tomorrow. You know
how quickly all the variables of life can change. Do we have good
intentions? Yes, for the most part I believe we do, but good intentions
plus a buck fifty might get you a cup of coffee up at the Hi View and if
Katie Magnusen is working, you might even get free refills, but that's
not going to cut it for life.

With human beings, all you get is good intentions but with God,
everything is different. God is not tempted. God is not controlled by
the variables of life. God is the rock-solid fixture in a revolving,
chaotic world. But sometimes we have to learn to trust God. This is

where the parents all get guilty, but sometimes truth hurts. The more trust worthy your parent was, the more you will trust God because it is through our parents that we first learn about God. So the more your parent abused you physically, mentally or verbally, neglected you, could not be trusted to be there when you need him, the less you will trust God and the reverse is true as well. The more your parents cared for you, nurtured you, disciplined you and could be trusted to be there when you needed them, the more you will trust God.

However, having said that, at some point we all have to grow up don't we. There comes a day in our lives when we have to stop whining about what mommy and daddy did and decide what kind of life we want for ourselves, right? It is then that we look to God.

"For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven
and do not return there but water the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout,
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,
and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

Whatever your experience was with your parents, here is what God says of himself. Just like God sends rain and snow without our doing and they water the earth without our instruction, so too does the Word of God come to us and accomplish that for which he sent it. The Word comes through hearing, through water and through the body and blood of Christ. When we make ourselves available to the Word it does its work.

It is the Word that grabs us and convinces us of what God has done for us. He has made us his children. Maybe our parents let us down. Maybe our siblings abandoned us when we needed them. Maybe our spouse betrayed us. Maybe our children ignore us. That, my friends, is par for the course because none of us are trustworthy. In fact, where those things have NOT happened, give thanks for the miraculous, because it is only by the work of God in our lives that we maintain any trustworthiness.

In God we trust is not just a motto. It is the source of our own character, ability, perfection and truth. The closer we are to God the more we can be trusted. Why? Because the Word of God takes root in our lives and convinces us of what has been done for us. It does

not convince us of what WE NEED TO DO! No. It convinces us of what has been done. The rain and the snow water the earth as the Word of God waters our souls. And as that Word takes root in our lives it gradually changes us.

It is not a steady upward progression. Sometimes we refuse to rise above our own ignorance and we become untrustworthy because we insist on having confidence in someone or something regardless of what God says. Sometimes we become more concerned about the things of this world, having a nicer car, a bigger house, fancier clothes. Sometimes the temptation to put our faith into investments, or other people or human organizations gets the best of us. But some of the time, especially when we are here regularly and receiving the Word every week, some of the time the Word takes root and when it does, it produces.

It is then, as our faith grows, that we begin to relax into the arms of Jesus. As his forgiveness washes over and over us, we begin to forgive others for the trust they have broken. And most importantly, we begin to be able to confess our own lack of trustworthiness and receive forgiveness for the MANY times that we have broken trust,

especially all the times we have broken trust in secret and never been caught. Once we have been empowered to dump all of that out on the table and we see how Jesus washes it away with Baptismal waters, we are finally able to forgive ourselves.

Then trust ceases to be such an issue with us. Trust in God and let it go at that. He is all that is truly trustworthy. We are only imperfect, sinful mirrors of his grace, but, we CAN get better, slowly, as his grace and forgiveness take root in our lives, watered by his WORD. AMEN.