

Being the Church at Brentwood

Trust in God

**Psalm Ps 25:1-10 and Mark 1:9-15
(Hymns – 358, 33, 462, 326)**

February 26, 2012

When people are acknowledged as trustworthy by God,
and accept the call to be a blessing explicit in that trust,
they get into trouble, they become disruptive.

That's what you can expect if you are serious about being the church,
if you find yourself compelled by the Holy Spirit
to move forward on the journey to the Kingdom of God
with Jesus Christ as your companion and guide.

You will be troubled and disruptive within yourself
until you find joy and peace by trusting God.

You will be trouble and disruptive for those who hurt and destroy others
by trying to be gods over them.

You will be trouble and disruptive to those who exploit natural resources
for their own profit and gratification.

Because God trusted him and he trusted God,
Jesus caused that kind of trouble and disruption in his lifetime.
It got him executed on a cross.
It got Paul beaten, imprisoned, and mobbed,
misinterpreted, disgraced, insulted, and punished,
as we saw in last week's reading.

Jesus was a trouble-maker in the Jewish prophetic tradition of social disruption.
He was baptized into the prophetic community
represented by John the Baptist,
himself an outspoken outsider
who preached the coming of the Messiah
promised in the prophetic traditions of the Jewish faith,
especially as handed down in the books of Isaiah and Malachi.

The promise in Isaiah is the comfort of forgiveness
leading to the glory/energy of the Lord being revealed
as his people flourish in their service to global well-being/shalom.

That is the promise fulfilled in Jesus Christ
as he is baptized, tempted, and supported
in this passage we read this morning from Mark's gospel.

So, what's the trouble with that, you may well ask.

It's precisely this.
Love, forgiveness, and trust
are not the normal way of being among humans.
Anger, resentment, and distrust
too often characterize relationships
among individuals, within families, across races and groups,
and between nations.

To preach and practice this kind of shalom/peace
causes trouble for those caught in and benefiting from
the various kinds of hatred, conflict, confusion, and despair
we see in our neighbourhood, our city, our province, our country,
and around the world.

The prophetic tradition with which Jesus identified in his baptism
is a clear and uncompromising call to return to God's way –
the way of purity, knowledge, patience, and kindness.

Though complex and multi-layered,
that prophetic tradition focused on God's restoration of his covenant
to be the God of a people who trusted in the power of his Love,
a people who used the gifts bestowed by that Love
to bless everything around them.

If the authorities who claimed to know and control that covenant
did not listen to God's Word and repent of their failures,
warned the prophets in a variety of ways,
then God would found a new community through which to work on earth.

That community was found by God in Jesus Christ
and eventually came to be called the Christian church.
In union with Jesus Christ, this community is the first fruits of a new humanity
with which God is well pleased.

The faith of this community is built on repentance
for ignoring or trying to control God.
Such repentance leads to a turning to God
in grateful surrender to the life that flows from God's trust in us.

In fact, it is out of God's trust in us that our trust in God flourishes.

Assured that, because of Jesus Christ, we are pleasing in God's sight,
we find the resilience and resources
to be pure, knowledgeable, patient, and kind.

That's the PK/PK or PK² we talked about last week –
pure in our loving relationships,
knowledgeable about the Love of God,
patient in working together with God for the kingdom,
and kind in everything we do.

What tempted Jesus in the wilderness
were all those impulses and forces
that might interfere with or pose a barrier to
this kind of discipleship called for by God's trust in us.

He was not alone in facing those temptations.
He was supported throughout
by the Love of his heavenly Father through the work of the Holy Spirit.

He emerged from the wilderness
tested and strengthened to begin his ministry of disruption.
It's perhaps a strange word to use of the work of Jesus Christ,
but I think it's appropriate.

To trust in God alone,
as we see modeled in Jesus Christ,
is to be disruptive of all other forms of trust –
trust in self alone, trust in riches, trust in power, trust in force,
trust in race, trust in military might and security,
trust in mental and moral certainty.

To trust in God alone
is to trust in the prophetic, disruptive promise of the Kingdom,
a promise to bring Shalom/Well Being to all the earth
through God's people, the church of Jesus Christ,
the continuing body doing Christ's mission in the world.

To trust in God alone
Is to resist the temptations to settle for anything less
than the Kingdom's vision of new heaven and a new earth,
filled and fueled by the loving energy of God.