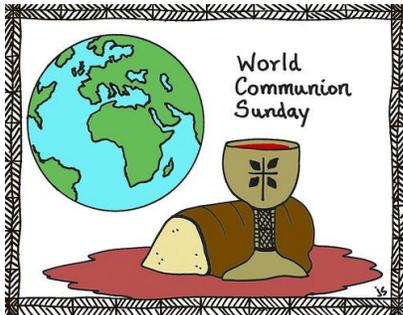


Sunday Morning Worship at Brentwood, Oct 2, 2016

Notes for the sermon on Increase Our Faith



Ps 37:1-9 and Luke 17:5-10 – Sermon Text = Luke 17:5

The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith.”

[Hymns = 534, 530, 556 in the *Book of Praise*]

Key Ideas

1. Our text is a plea to Jesus from his closest friends for help in following him – they are well into their journey together to Jerusalem – the apostles are becoming more and more aware of kinds of changes in their attitudes and behaviours that are being called for in the work and witness of this peasant preacher who they saw as the promised Messiah, the Christ in whom God was loving, judging, and saving the world into its full potential – as I pondered the text this week and explored it with friends through the internet and at Bible Study, I became increasingly convinced that it is best understood in the context of what comes before rather than what comes after – to be obedient to Jesus’ teaching on forgiveness, the apostles realized they needed more faith – how many times must I forgive? – seven times, at least, on the same day – Matthew remembers Jesus saying seventy times seven – bottom line is that vindictive vengeance has no place in the fellowship of the friends of Jesus – and that is hard – it seems to require more faith than the apostles felt they had – so they asked for more
2. Let’s take a minute to try and capture at least some of the richness of the idea of faith in words – in many ways, words are not enough – certainly the prose of preaching is not enough – poetry put to music would convey it better – but let me try – ***faith is trust that our flourishing comes from God as a gift – it takes the form of humble gratitude for and devoted service to God’s all-encompassing love***
3. We gather at this table this morning to be reminded of God’s way of dealing with the ingenious ways his human creatures keep devising to ignore and disobey his instructions to love and bless – with deep humility, he served us by taking on our sins and wiping them out – we are forgiven seventy times seventy times seventy – makes no human sense, but God’s ways are not our ways – thank God! – so come and feast yet again on God’s amazing grace – as we sing in coming to this table every month, “As Christ breaks bread and bids us share, each proud division ends. The love that made us, makes us one, and strangers now are friends, and strangers now are friends.” (vs 3 of ‘I come with joy’)

At this stage in our ponderings, then ...

Responding positively to opportunities to forgive, difficult as that is in our world of fear and division, is one of God’s most power means of increasing our faith – this discipline, this obedience, this trust in God draws us deeply into the soul of God where we are continually nourished to flourish in the grace of Jesus Christ

Sermon notes of Rev Dr Brian Fraser,
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