

SERMON: FAITH & DOUBT: *“It’s a Matter of Trust”*

Rev. Geoff Ross Sunday, February 28, 2021 St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church.

[Started new series: “Faith & Doubt”/we all struggle/wrestle with faith. Two things: 1-We all live/are saved – at the mercy of God. 2-We all live/will die – at the mercy of what we believe. Also said: All have doubts/questions-moments of crisis; TBH: I do – But we also have faith – I believe you can have both believe each informs the other/makes both healthier....]

But, as Regan said in the introduction to the readings, as we continue and our “FAITH & DOUBT” series we need to get right to the heart of issue by looking at the subject of trust. In the Jerimiah reading, speaks to what is at the centre of our ‘fall from grace:’ our choosing not to trust in God/God’s plan/purpose for us. It is also the origin of our ‘trust issues’ with one another/(Genesis: Adam blames Eve/blames serpent/no ‘leg to stand on.’). While ‘doubt’ is in our DNA/inescapable part of Human Nature, it all boils down to a matter of trust.

[Belief/faith isn’t something that you think about/choose; it’s something that you act/do/commit to. Saying isn’t believing/letting go is. Kierkegaard/“faith as a passion”/belief/trust are convictions:takes 100% commitment/no turning back – can’t hold back when you make a leap of faith! All in!]

I believe that there’s a basic/simple misconception about faith: most people think faith is ‘belief’/think: *“I believe that God exists”*; but – at its root, faith is about trust/in a person/God. Wedding Ceremony: Bride/Groom-up front/before family&God/exhilaration/terror when I turn to them and ask *“Will you have him to be your wedded husband/live together after God’s ordinance/Holy estate of marriage? Will you love him/comfort/honour/keep him, In sickness/health, forsaking all others, Faithfully keep to him so long as you both shall live?”* Notice something? This profound covenant talks about love/commitment/honour – even service/duty – and lastly faith, everything but the one thing that builds up/maintains/destroys all relationships – trust, and the lack of it.

[Trust:Defintion/ “Firm belief/faith/confidence in reliability/truth/ability/experience of someone/something. A ‘Trust’ is an “arrangement/agreement/covenant whereby a ‘trustee’/person holds/agrees/holds ‘in trust’ something for another person. It also means ‘confident hope’ that what was promised/happen. But Truth be told: You either have it or you don’t.... Trust me!]

So, what do you believe in – what/who do you trust/believe/faith/confidence in? John Ortberg – the author of the book Faith & Doubt, that this series is loosely based on – says that “the need to declare our deeply held beliefs is an irrepressible aspect of being human” – that “in the act of defining what we believe, we define ourselves”; and it’s true! To ‘be’ is to believe – not to be confused with *“I think, therefore I am”*, which might be true rationally, but doesn’t allow us to make the irrational leap needed to believe/hope/love – have faith – all the things that our heart says ‘yes!’ to. Interestingly, the definition of ‘belief’ is just like that of “trust”: an acceptance that something is true/trust/faith/confidence in someone/something: feeling of being sure. Both are a ‘heart’

response to the world – and that’s largely where we go wrong because we confuse it with another part of our anatomy.

[Going with my gut:idiom/follow intuition/instinct – feelings... Not belief/trust-indigestion! Belief/trust/faith-about conviction:formal declaration/firmly held belief/opinion lived out in thought/words/actions. Faith is believing with whole body/life! Guts/even, heads/minds change – this is where self-deception/doubts enter the picture/take root/grow. Point#2! But we’re called to believe – despite our un-belief.]

And, this is ok. We wrestle with skepticism/fence-sitting, choosing to suspend judgment/not commit/wait for more information – all to mask or fears of being wrong/hurt/disillusioned. We’ve all been let down/betrayed/lie to: it gets harder to trust again with each disappointment; trusting comes with risks. But as we know; faith – life for that matter – doesn’t come with guarantees; risk is part of the equation. If seeing is your basis for believing, then you have no faith; just experience. And, many of us live by it – but there’s more to life/world/faith than what we can see! Faith takes us beyond the horizon of our vision – a place unseen, but hoped/believed for/in. as John Ortberg writes; “*faith involves attitude of hope/confidence:faith about trusting...*”

[Henri Nouwen/Dutch Priest-before he died/fascinated by trapeze artists/flyers:circus daredevils-flying through the air... let go! No net/ropes – no fear? Point of no-return/catcher swings/reaches out/catches the flyer. Hope/yes – but trust/life depends on trust:letting go take trust-catcher will be there/right time/place/waiting – will catch/save from death. Taught/learned to let go/trust.]

In our second reading we heard Paul tell of his choice of in whom he places/placed his trust/life – despite to risk/cost. Friends, this is the hope of God’s promise/plan for us/me/you: like Paul, let us place our faith/trust/lives in this hope. Last week I saith that what we choose to believe/trust has consequences – it will determine our fate. In this life, we are all going to have to let go. Yes, there are no guarantees but believing/trusting matters. If we want to have faith/enrich our belief/even get out of y/our own way, we have to let go and let God/take the leap:It’s a matter of trust. Amen.