

CAN I TRUST GOD?

Exodus 3.1-15

We've asked many questions this past two months. Basic questions about our faith... Questions about **being found**, questions about **beginning again**, questions about **belonging**, questions about **being blessed**, and last week the soul searching question about **what happens in the beyond**, what happens when I die?

Today we ask the basic soul searching question, CAN I TRUST GOD?

We hear of two young girls killed in a car accident. Their mother, now out of work because she has been recently divorced from their father. She might just be asking, "Can I trust God? Will God get me through this?"

We know of many struggling with cancer, with the on-going, seemingly never ending struggle filled with the ups and downs of appointments and medications; procedures and new prescriptions; surgeries, travel and treatments, sleep-filled days and sleepless nights; the relief of recoveries and remissions, and the dread of reoccurrences. Somewhere in their exhaustion I would imagine they've asked about trusting God. Will God heal me? Will God help?

We see literally the winds and waves soaking and sweeping away the lives of people, both the materials and meaning of life...leaving in the wake, the nagging question of who will help? Who can I trust? Is God going to help? Is God even there?

And how about children hurt and harmed? vulnerable and victimized? by those they are suppose to be able to trust. Trust who? they ask, as they touch the ugly scares of beatings and betrayals, mementoes of past experiences of trust.

And for those whose lives seem somewhat "normal", who look at the world at war, with all the hostility and hate, all the graft and greed, all the unfairness and unjustness and anxiously ask, "What is going to happen ?" "What does the future hold?"

Our response as people of faith, a statement of trust, "we don't know what the future holds, but we know who holds the future."

The question of **TRUST** is basic. Can we trust God? Will God move into the suffering and sorrow, chaos and conflict of our lives for the better? Will God be there? Will God help? Will God do something? It is basic and essential question to ask.

It is a basic question to ask about trust in any relationship and certainly a basic or essential characteristic of our Christian faith is then to **TRUST**.

For insight and answers of our questions we've sought the insight of Bible writers and tried the testimony of Bible Characters such as the woman at the well, the adulteress woman, the prodigal family, Zaccheaus, and Lazarus.

Today we look at a clip in the life of Moses. The question of Can I Trust God is seen in a bit different light.

For Moses the issue isn't as much as can we trust God to be in our suffering and sorrow but the question of can I trust God when I am afraid to do what God asks me to do?

Brennan Manning says "**SELF-ACCEPTANCE** is a necessary quality of experiencing Biblical trust. We need to have a personal experience rooted in Christ. We need to accept we are poor in Spirit, and we need God. We need to accept that God loves us no matter what, warts, and all. We need to accept the roles and responsibilities God asks of us. That's acceptance.

If self-acceptance is a catalyst to trust, then it stands to reason that **SELF-REJECTION** is a barrier to trust. Self-rejection is not accepting God's grace and our God-given responsibility. This rejection is saying, I can't trust God.

Let me say it another way...this rejection of either who we are or what we are to do is simply a way to say, "I can't trust God."

Oswald Chambers thinks that if you haven't heard God ask you do something you are uncomfortable with doing, afraid of doing, or just plain don't want to do, then you haven't been listening. Moses heard alright...let's see if he is listening.

After God gets Moses' attention with a burning bush, God gets right to the point...in Exodus 3.7 it says, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of the slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and bring them out of the land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey..."

Moses hears that God does indeed care about the sorrow and suffering of the people, cares about the underdogs, champions their cause and is going to do something about it. God finishes this inspiring speech with oh by the way Moses, "So now go. I'm sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt."

God speaks, Moses will be selective in his hearing...

God cares, Moses will cower God picks, Moses will panic...

God wants to deliver, Moses wants to desert...

Moses will for a while answer NO, to the question of Can I Trust God?

It might be like the Pontius Puddle comic strip. He and his friend are lamenting all the hunger and homeless, sickness and suffering, crime and war in our world. They look up to God and ask, "Why don't you do something about it." The next frame from God, "I already have. I made you."

Even after his second 40 years Moses is still on the most wanted posters in the Egyptian post offices it would seem God picked the right guy. Moses championed justice. He was a crusader. He had a heart for the underdog.

Let's look at his record. After the first 40 years of "The Life of an Egyptian Riley" he takes a walk one day, sees an Egyptian foreman abusing a Hebrew brother, and in his righteous anger kills the foreman.

The next day he takes another little walk. This time he sees a couple of his Hebrew brothers fighting. This seems wrong and unjust. He breaks it up, tries to sort it out, and scolds the brothers. They ask him why he thinks he's such hot stuff, why he thinks he's holier than thou since he himself is a bit prone to violence. They remind him that there soon would be a warrant out for his arrest because he had killed an Egyptian.

He is filled with fright and flees to Midian. Interesting that there he seems to find trouble as well at a well . Reuel has seven daughters he sends to a well to draw water. They are terrorized by the local shepherd bullies.

Moses sees the injustice, steps up to right the wrong, and saves the desert daughters in the distress. Moses gets a free lunch, a wife and work.. He signs on for forty years.

Note this man is a crusader, he's mighty Mo. He's always trying to right the wrong, but now must lay low. For most of us it would be Dullsville. It would be borrrrrrrrrrrrrrring and maybe it was for Moses until that most pivotal and painful day when God moved in a startling and strange way.

Why couldn't Moses trust God?

Moses felt **INFERIOR**. God says, "**I'm sending you to Pharoah...**", Moses says, "**Who am I**". In the awesome presence of God, Moses felt pretty small, felt inferior...who wouldn't? and rightly so. God responds, "**I will be with you...**" Ok, should be enough, right? Yes, if you trust God.

Not for Moses, he is feeling **INSECURE** and stutters on, "**Who shall I say sent me?**" God responds with the what I call the Big Because, "**I Am, Who I Am?**" It means to exist, to be, that is all there is, there isn't anything else.

Wow, now think about how God comes to us in Jesus and the claims Jesus made to be God. Catch this, some have translated it, "I WILL APPEAR TO WHOM I WILL APPEAR"

He comes walking on water to the worried disciples and says, "**It is I, don't be afraid.**" John 6.21

He tells the hungry people, "**I AM the bread of life.**" John 6.35

To those in darkness, "**I AM the light of the world.**" John 8.12

To those angry and ready to stone him,

"**I tell you the truth, before Abraham, I AM.**" John 8.58

To those in just in need, "I AM the gate. John 10.9

To those need help, "I AM the Good Shepherd." John 10.11

To those who need a hope, "**I Am the resurrection and the life**" John 11.25

To those who are confused, “I AM the Way, the Truth, the Life.” John 14.6

To those alone, “I Am the Vine, you are the branches.” John 15.5

In the introduction to Revelation, Jesus says, I Am the Alpha and the Omega.

The One who was, who is, and who is to come, the Almighty.” Rev. 1.8

Again in Revelation speaking of last things, life, and eternity, “Do not be afraid. I Am the First and the Last. I Am the living one. I was dead and behold, I am alive for evermore. And I hold the keys to Hell and Death.”

Rev 1.17-18

Wow that is a lot of “I Am who I Am” Could you not trust that, when God says “I Am, that is all there is” and even throw in the recognized, “I AM the God of Abraham, Issac, and Jacob” for good measure. But with Moses the big because still doesn’t work..

Think about you and your children.

You and your kids are in the store. They want something, a toy.

You say no. They ask why.

You say you don’t need it. They ask why again.

You say we don’t have the money. They say but everyone else has one.

You say you’re not like everyone else,

would you jump off a cliff if everyone did? Then they ask, bbbbut why?

You finally say, BECAUSE...BECAUSE I SAID SO.

That should do it right? No more questions. No toy. If they were asked to do something it is now going to get done, right? Or if they’re told they can’t do something, they’re not going to do it, right? That’s the Big Because. As far as you are concerned, it is a done deal. As far as the kids are concerned it’s no deal.

Moses feels **INEFFECTIVE**. His track record with the people isn’t so good, so he says, “What if they will not believe me?” God confidently does a few miracles. The rod becomes as snake and turns back to a rod again. Hand in, hand out...clean hand to leprosy, leprous hand to clean. And if that not enough God says, if you need me too, I will turn some water into blood.” We can almost hear God say, “Ok, will that do.”

Now we get to hear, the I can't speak very well in front of people excuse. Moses is feeling **INARTICULATE**. "O Lord, I've never been eloquent, neither in the past, nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue." God is thinking who do you think gave you a mouth in the first place? But says, "I will help you to speak and teach you what to say."

When you think about it God doesn't care if you're capable as much as if you are available. I'll say it again, God doesn't care as much as if you're capable as if you available. Making your self available is an act of acceptance and trusting in God.

Moses by now is feeling totally **INADEQUATE** and tries one last time, for any and all reasons he says, "please send someone else to do it." Oh, oh, God gets angry and basically says, you're going to go do it. I'll give you Aaron, the words, a the staff to do miracles, now, go do it!

Did Moses do as he was told... Yep, and what happen-the people's lives were changed for the good, they were delivered. That deliverance is a paradim for our deliverance from sin and death Which by the way in a few minutes we will remember that today as we take communion.

I think Moses must have trusted God.

God calls you and I to do things we're afraid of, we're uncomfortable with, or plain just don't want to do. Can we trust God is the question. Can we trust God to overcome our feelings of inferiority, insecurity, ineffectiveness, and inadequacy? Maybe the question is will we trust God. Will you?

John Wesley says that the world is our parish...Jesus said go into the world. We have been given an awesome responsibility to act on God's behalf... will we do so that lives will be changed for the better in our church, our community, and our world?

Moses did...some of you sitting here today have , haven't you...I think Joel must have trusted God, too. He's my favorite stutterer, slow of speech and not eloquent but he trusted God. Here is his story.

Joel was a bright 10year old but slow of speech. He stuttered a bit. Not bad, but enough that the other boys made a lot of fun of him. That night their cabin was responsible for worship, they picked Joel to do the message. Why, so that could make fun of him. One of the counselor's heard about this and wanted to stop it. Another said, let's trust God in this and see what happens.

Night came and it was time for campfire. The boy's cabin began worship, the boys waiting for their moment of fun and games. It was message time and Joel was ready to speak. It was slow, certainly not eloquent, but...well here is what he said, "Jeeeeeeee-ssssssssus lllllllo-ovvvvves Mmmmmmmmmmm. llllllllllllllllllllo-ovvvvvvve Jeeeeeeee-ssssssssus Jeeeeeeee-ssssssssssssus llllllllllllo-ovvvvvvves youuuuuuuuu.

That night many campers were delivered, their eyes were filled with tears and their hearts were filled with Jesus.

Let us stand and sing about trusting and obeying.