

Matters of Trust ~ October 4, 2009
Job 1:1; 2:1-10; Mark 10:13-16; Psalm 8 10-04-09

Most of us travel through life believing that there will be a certain pattern and predictability in the lives we live. We know that the sun will come up day after day and that the moon will appear at a certain time each night. We don't have to see the sun or the moon to understand that they are in the sky.

When we allow other people into the intimate places in our lives, we hope for a measure of steadiness. We hope that we can depend on them to respond to us with support and love and that they will not throw us too many curves to make us lose our faith or trust in them.

A certain evenness in our days and nights, is a good thing. It helps us keep our balance and allows us the expansion of our faith and trust to others. Trust is a very important part of faith and love—it supports and sustains us and allows us to venture out beyond our safe places and take a chance on others and life.

Job had a steady trust in God. He had a great depth of integrity in his faith system. He was not always patient as he endured the punishment heaped on him by Satan in this little tale of challenge and redemption. But, he was probably more patient and resilient than many would be.

We might wonder why God would allow such torture of such a faithful person. If we keep in mind that this is a story meant to illustrate that all will turn around and be well once again, if we trust in God and have faith, we can see more clearly why it appears in our Bible. It is meant to strengthen us and increase our trust in God when our friends fail to support us.

As we recall, Job had everything, a wonderful life full of children and riches. During the good years, he, like all of us, found it easy to trust in the goodness of God. He had faith that his life would go on as it had. Then, disaster struck. All was taken away. He was left with nothing but a wife, disappointed in what was happening, who urged him to “curse God and die,” and three well-meaning friends who only made his misery worse. And, yet, he did not give up his faith in God.

In Job's faith we see a simple-ness and sweetness, like that of children who have such faith in their parents. Children believe that their parents will be there to support and uphold them in life. Parents, when they are at their best, are the visible, tangible expressions of God. They reveal God to their children much in the same way Jesus sought to reveal God to those who followed and follow him. Perhaps, that is why Jesus encouraged his disciples to let the little children come to him for they were the stuff of which the kingdom was composed.

Too often as we journey through life, we lose the reliance we had on a God who will sustain us. We, through observing human nature all around us, lose some of our faith and often much of our trust. From our days in Sunday school we know that we should be able to trust others to treat us with a measure of respect and understanding and tenderness. But, too often in the school of life, we discover that others do not abide by the early

lessons we learned. Their concern is not for anyone but themselves. We may have trustingly knelt before someone offering our heart to that person, hoping that they will offer theirs to us, only to have it rejected or handed right back to us. Ouch.

If we are wise and strong, we understand that circumstances in life affect us all in different ways. If we are hurt we have the ability to pick up the pieces, forgive the one who has injured us and move forward in life maintaining trust and love for others. If we have not learned the lessons of wisdom, we may decide, when we are hurt, to build a wall around our hearts, keep them within ourselves and never allow ourselves the joy of loving others. We simply cannot trust them enough to allow ourselves to love. We cut off a whole part of ourselves in the need to protect those places that have been wounded and never allowed to heal.

Now, consider Job—he bounced back and all was restored to him. He went back to a life full of love and joy, as our story tells us. Consider, too, the resilience of children. If they trust in their parents in the early years, they will learn to become loving, trusting adults. Life is difficult but if there is a base of security on which they may build, life can be handled and they will develop into well-rounded grown-ups.

If we discover, as we grow older, that we do not have the love and trust we would like to have, it is never too late to try to develop those qualities. It is never that we cannot, it is always that we will not. Fear is what always holds us back.

How scary was Job's life? How wise would it have been for him to simply give up and die when things seemed overwhelming? His trust and faith would not allow him to do so. Our trust and faith need to be just as strong as we continue on our journey through life seeking the good and God in all those we encounter.

-- Amen