

Ordinary 29C - 2019

God's Timetable Not Ours

I heard a story which illustrates how we often confuse God's timing with ours. A country newspaper had been running a series of articles on the value of church attendance. One day, a letter to the editor was received in the newspaper office. It read, "Print this if you dare. I have been trying an experiment. I have a field of corn which I plowed on Sunday. I planted it on Sunday. I did all the cultivating on Sunday. I gathered the harvest on Sunday and hauled it to my barn on Sunday. I find that my harvest this October is just as great as any of my neighbors' who went to church on Sunday. So where was God all this time?" The editor printed the letter, but added his reply at the bottom. "Your mistake was in thinking that God always settles his accounts in October." That's often our mistake as well, isn't it - thinking that God should act when and how we want him to act, according to our timetable rather than his. The fact that our vision is limited, finite, unable to see the end from the beginning, somehow escapes our mind. So we complain; we get frustrated; we accuse God of being indifferent to us; we do not live by faith. (by Larry R. Kalajainen from *Extraordinary Faith for Ordinary Time*, CSS Publishing Company, Inc, 1994.)

Faith is about relationship

The second chapter of Marcus Borg's latest book, *The Heart of Christianity*, is entitled, "Faith: The Way of the Heart." Marcus Borg does a brilliant job of talking about faith as much more than just believing the correct things in our head. As he says, "you can believe all the right things and still be in bondage. You can believe all the right things and still be miserable. You can believe all the right things and still be relatively unchanged. Believing a set of claims to be true has very little transforming power."

Instead, Borg speaks of faith as having to do with *relationship*. With giving your heart and your trust, your radical trust, to God. He draws on the work of Soren Kierkegaard, the great Danish philosopher, who says that "faith as trust is like floating on a deep ocean. Faith is like floating in seventy thousand fathoms of water. If you struggle, if you tense up and thrash about, you will eventually sink. But if you relax and trust, you will float." He even uses the example of teaching a child to swim and trying to get the child

to relax in the water. You keep saying, "It's okay, just relax. You'll float, it's okay," don't you? "Faith as trust," Borg says, "is trusting in the buoyancy of God. Faith is trusting in the sea of being in which we live and move and have our being." (by Kathryn Matthews Huey)

We Are God's Answer to Injustice

Listen to me. If you are being bullied in school, God knows about it and God hates it. If you are being harassed in the workplace, for any reason, God hates it. If you are being taken advantage of--or if you are taking unfair advantage of someone else--there will be a day of reckoning. If there is anyone anywhere praying for God to intervene and put an end to their oppression, eventually that prayer will be heard and that which is wrong will be set right. That's the promise of Scripture. Now, where does that leave us? Let me tell you a story. A young black man asked his minister why their people had to suffer so much poverty, hardship, and oppression. "Why doesn't God do something?" he wailed. "He has," said that wise pastor. "He has created you." And so Desmond Tutu, now the archbishop of South Africa, became the answer to his own question. That's a good lesson for you and me. While we are waiting for God to bring in a perfect and just society, you and I are God's answer to the injustice in our world. That's what it means to take up a cross and follow Jesus. It's not a comfortable position to be in. It's not popular. But it is Christ's way. (by King Duncan from *Collected Sermons*, www.Sermons.com.)