

Ordinary 29C - 2025

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.)

The most important thing about praying is to keep at it

Everybody prays whether they think of it as praying or not. The odd silence you fall into when something very beautiful is happening or something very good or very bad. The ah-h-h! that sometimes floats up out of you as out of a Fourth of July crowd when the sky-rockets burst over the water. The stammer of pain at somebody else's pain. The stammer of joy at somebody else's joy. Whatever words or sounds you use for sighing with over your own life. These are all prayers in their way. These are all spoken not just to yourself but to something even more familiar than yourself and even more strange than the world.

According to Jesus, by far the most important thing about praying is to keep at it. The images he uses to explain this are all rather comic, as though he thought it was rather comic to have to explain it at all. He says God is like a friend you go to to borrow bread from at midnight. The friend tells you in effect to drop dead, but you go on knocking anyway until finally he gives you what you want so he can go back to bed again (Luke 11:5-8). Or God is like a crooked judge who refuses to hear the case of a certain poor widow, presumably because he knows there's nothing much in it for

him. But she keeps on hounding him until finally he hears her case just to get her out of his hair (Luke 18:1-8). Even a stinker, Jesus says, won't give his own child a black eye when he asks for peanut butter and jelly, so how all the more will God when his children...(Matt. 7:9-11).

Be importunate, Jesus says—not, one assumes, because you have to beat a path to God's door before he'll open it, but because until you beat the path maybe there's no way of getting to your door. **"Ravish my heart"** John Donne wrote. But God will not usually ravish. **He will only court.**

(by Frederick Buechner from *Wishful Thinking*, pp. 70-71)

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.)

Hoping To Goodness

Lucy planned a picnic for the next day. She says to Charlie Brown, "I just hope to goodness that it doesn't rain ..." Walking away, Charlie answers, "Hoping to goodness is not theologically sound." Charlie's right. "Hoping to goodness" is not sound. Fixing our hope upon God is. (by Robert L. Short from *The Parables of Peanuts* (New York, Harper and Row, Publishers, 1968), pp. 273.)