

평화를 주시는 하나님 신뢰하기 Trust God to Give Us Peace!

마가복음 Mark 4:35-41

All I Ever Needed to Know I Learned in Sunday School

I am glad that we have a joint worship service and church cook out together today in order to help our Vacation Bible School. We have heard the proverb, “it takes a village to raise a child.” We are raising our next generation of Christians together. It’s our joy to see them grow in faith. VBS and Christian education are important because the faith of our children is formed and shaped during this early formative period. I believe that you have heard about the book, *All I Ever Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*? The author recalls what he learned in kindergarten. “Share everything; play fair; don’t hit people; clean up your own mess; don’t take things that aren’t yours; say you’re sorry when you hurt somebody; don’t lie; most importantly flush the toilet after you’re done.” These are simple kindergarten virtues we learned when we were kids. If we could just find grown-up ways to live out these elementary virtues of kindness, fairness, generosity, and responsibility, the world would be a better place. All we ever need to know, we learned in kindergarten, although people have forgotten most of these important virtues as they have grown up, except the last one, which is flushing the toilet after you’re done.

I think this is the same with our Christian faith. All we ever needed to know for our faith, we learned in Sunday school. God loves you; trust God; love your God and your neighbors; confess your sin; forgive others; serve one another; pray to God. If we can find grown-up ways to live out these basic beliefs, the church and the world would certainly be a better place. We need to become like children in trusting God, but at the same time, our faith should be mature, and our life should grow toward Christian perfection. Today, we will reflect on the biblical text that has been chosen for our VBS session. Think of how you still trust God like little children while have grown up in faith as you listen this sermon.

Trusting God as children and adults

Today’s reading is a well-known biblical story. While Jesus and his disciples were crossing the Sea of Galilee, they encountered a powerful storm. Many of his disciples were fishermen, so they were experts in handling wind and a boat. However, the storm was too powerful to deal with and it was beyond their control. Waves poured into the boat, threatening to sink it. Jesus was in the stern, head on a pillow, sleeping! Terrified, the disciples roused him, saying, “Teacher, is it nothing to you that we’re going down?” What happened next? Jesus told the wind to pipe down and said to the sea, “Quiet! Settle down!” The wind ran out of breath; the sea became smooth as glass. Everyone was amazed. This is the end of the story. What lesson can we learn from this story? Trust God who helps us! Or as the title of the sermon indicates, “Trust God to give us peace!” This is the lesson our Sunday school kids will learn today.

Certainly, we should trust God like little children trust God. Children trust God easily because their understanding is straightforward. Simplicity is their virtue. When their Sunday school teacher taught them to pray to God because God will take care of them, they literally believed it and prayed. However, as we get older and have experienced the complexity of the world and tasted the bitterness of life, we often find ourselves having difficulty in simply trusting God in all circumstances. We pray for healing of our friends and neighbors every week but not every prayer is answered in ways we want. We pray for peace in Gaza, Ukraine and the world but we don’t always believe what we pray for will really happen. During the New England

Annual Conference, one youth member presented a resolution to end apartheid in Israel and this sparked intense debate. One lay member spoke in favor of this resolution but he also said that he doesn't believe that this resolution will make any reasonable impact on the current political situation in Gaza and Israel. We are mature enough to know that things do not always go as we want. Simply praying to God does not seem to solve all problems in our lives and the world.

When we meet a powerful storm on our life journey, we struggle like the disciples in panic and question what God is doing in the midst of our suffering. If you ever had this kind of experience, that's o.k. This is a process of spiritual growth. Though it's painful, this moment is also a moment of growth, cracking the shell of our childish-faith and becoming more matured and faithful people of God. Children tend to think that their prayer was answered when things turned out in ways they wanted. So, when their prayers do not seem to be answered, they are discouraged and question the validity of their faith. However, more matured people of faith know that there is more than getting what they want in Christian faith.

Geoffrey Studdert-Kennedy was an army Chaplain and served in the trenches along the Western Front during World War I. His nick name was "Woodbine Willie" for giving Woodbine cigarettes to the soldiers he met, as well as spiritual aid to soldiers. He even ran out into no man's land, that area between the trenches of the British/French forces, and those of the Germans to tend to wounded and dying soldiers, even as bullets and bombs caused devastation and death all around him. His only weapons were a wooden cross and prayer. And he helped all in need of his care whether they were English or German. After the war, he served homeless people in a slum area. We can certainly say that he was a man of faith. Geoffrey said, "Faith is not believing in spite of evidence; it's obeying in spite of consequence." When we are like little children, we trust God to solve our problems. We want Jesus Christ to calm the storms in our lives. But as we get closer to Christ and know and love him, we simply put trust in him and that faith gives us peace regardless of circumstances. When we trust God, as children do, we can obey God's words in spite of consequence.

A Korean poet wrote the poem, "The morning doesn't come with the prayer I offered."

The morning doesn't come with the prayer I offered.
The sun doesn't rise with the prayer I offered.
Tomorrow doesn't come with the prayer I offered.

Flowers don't bloom with the prayer I offered.
The prayer I offer takes as long as labor.
The prayer I offer is silently entering into the shadows.

Tomorrow doesn't come with the prayer I offered.
My prayer waits for the morning like a sunset.
Waits for the morning.

When our faith is matured and we trust God like children do, we can trust God even if our pray does not seem to be answered. We can wait for the morning. We can wait for the storm to pass with trust in God. Also, it's our job to help and protect our children to grow in faith. They primarily learn their faith not through words but through people. Show your love and faith until they can trust God no matter what. Amen.