

January 21, 2018 Sermon – “A Trust Call” Psalm 62:5-8, Mark 1:14-20

Have you ever participated in a trust fall? You stand with your arms crossed over your chest. I suppose it is a safe guard to restrain yourself from flailing and hitting someone in the face as you fall backwards into the arms of one or two people. About a decade ago, I watched Presbyterian youth at a summer camp similar to Camp Whitman catch each other as a team building exercise. No one was dropped. Yet, when it was my turn, I reluctantly agreed as a good sport. I didn't like it then and don't like it now.

The trust fall seemed to take longer than the few seconds before two sturdy hands caught me. Thoughts sprinted through my mind, “What if I'm too heavy for the person catching me? What if he becomes distracted?” Time stands still when you are free falling. Trying not to scream, body plummeting to the ground. “AHHH! Who decided this stupid act would teach trust?” Experience has taught me to be independent, to drop and roll, and to trust only a favored few.

Time stands still when you are afraid. And then, suddenly, mercifully two hands clutch your shoulders. You've been saved and lifted back up on two feet...on solid ground. Surprised, relieved and thankful.

I believe faith is like a trust fall. There are times in my life when I felt like I was falling backwards and there was no one back there to catch me. I'm sure we all have those moments. A relationship ends in betrayal, a close friend has a diagnosis of cancer, or a family member dies. Your life is held suspended and the spiritual free fall seems to last forever. Have you ever felt this? So many examples come to mind. When I had my heart attack three-four years ago, the year when five members of my family died and my ex-husband fell from a tree resulting and when the candidate for this church decided the congregational vote was not high enough to accept the call.

In the midst of the chaos there was a moment of stillness, a prayer. It was a **Trust Call** similar to Psalm 62:5 “*My soul waits in silence*”. The prayerful calm is like a cushion or a hand that holds you. “*My hope is from God*”.

It took me a while to realize that I was standing up again, Standing on solid ground, Holy Ground. Praying as you say the trust psalm, “*God alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress*”. Slowly the strength of your spirit comes back. Hopefully, your resolve settles in. And, the Psalmist prayer is your rallying cry. “I SHALL not be shaken...I shall NOT be shaken. I shall not be SHAKEN!” (Psalm 62:6)

The chant is not just mine. It has been spoken by historic movements to bring awareness to injustice. A march of people who have been beaten, oppressed, betrayed, and saved by the kindness and mercy of strangers who lent a hand and lifted them up. Sung by Gospel Choirs around the world, “*We shall not be MOVED. We shall not be moved*”. The faith chant can be thunderous like it was at Martin Luther King, Jr. worship or Rosa Blue's funeral or the Women's March in Seneca Falls. They are just as powerful when they are your own sincere prayer in the darkness of night.

Psalm 62:5-6 "For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken."

This prayer of trust in God may start in a situation where you feel your life is out of control and you are falling. I believe and know it is true for me, that there was solid ground of faith under my feet. God caught me and set me on solid ground every time.

The hymn, "On Eagle's Wings" reminds me of a powerful illustration. The first time I used it in a sermon was more than 30 years ago before I was ordained. When an eagle teaches his/her babies to fly, she drops the fledging from the height of the nest. I imagine a cliff with a high tree. At first the baby opens his wings and flutters for a bit and until they collapse. Plummeting to the ground the eagle looks like a tiny stone. Suddenly the parent eagle swoops under her baby and catches her, and carries her up to the safety of the nest. And, the next fledging receives his flying lesson. Each time a little eagle spreads his wings to fly, they grow stronger and stronger until he can fly away on his own. Our faith is strengthened as we experience the many challenges of living and loving as we trust in God's provision. God in Christ, calls us again and again, teaching us to spiritually fly. It is a TRUST CALL more than a TRUST FALL, I believe.

Jesus called his new disciples, Simon and Andrew, James and John by asking them to trust in Him. "Turn around, believe in the good news, follow me". The Gospel According to Mark does give us many details. But, we know that those fishermen, left their jobs and followed Jesus trusting him and God. It was a trust call that changed their lives and as a result changed our lives.

Consider some of the leaders of the faith who have influenced your life, who taught you how to make a difference. I bet, every one of them took a chance, risked being ridiculed for their faith and trusted in God's better path. We have a legacy of brave and persistent leaders of all faiths who acted on their convictions, pressing forward, ever forward to a better society for everyone. Christ leading the charge, teaching about the realm of God, the Kingdom of Heaven.... We also have examples of quiet and persistent teachers of the Christ's Teachings. You are the faithful followers, the disciples and apostles today. For each of you have been called to trust in God, to follow Christ along the Way.

You have been called once again, to stand on solid ground of trust, to answer the call to follow Christ, to teach and reach for God's better way to be. The Call to trust in God is not ancient, it is now... As we move forward into this New Year, you may not feel you are talented or young enough or experienced to volunteer in church? However, saying "Hello" to a visitor or welcoming a friend is relatively easy. How about starting with our new picture directory and get to know each other by name? What about joining a class, an activity, an event, or join a mission effort...volunteer to help out at a meal, or fundraiser, or sign up to bring food? We always love to eat.

Take a risk- trust in God- Get involved-follow Christ's lead.

Expect to be lifted up by God's Spirit and set back on solid ground.

Pastor Deborah Lind



Psalm 62:5-8
Song of Trust in God Alone

*⁵ For God alone my soul waits in silence,
for my hope is from him.*

*⁶ He alone is my rock and my salvation,
my fortress; I shall not be shaken.*

*⁷ On God rests my deliverance and my honor;
my mighty rock, my refuge is in God.*

*⁸ Trust in him at all times, O people;
pour out your heart before him;
God is a refuge for us. Selah*