

Pastor Roy's Sermon from December 7, 2014 (2nd Sunday of Advent)

If God is as wind, and we are as grass and flowers which fade, how do we learn to trust this wind? Can we trust the rain, or lack thereof, and sunshine? Can we trust our fragileness, our “here today and gone tomorrow”ness? our creatureliness? Can we trust God as Sustainer? Can we trust God’s ability to hold all of creation together—especially the elements we really do not understand? --the parts of ourselves and others we do not understand?

The voice of God calls out through Isaiah, Comfort, O Comfort my people—Speak tenderly. Prepare the Way of the Lord. Can we trust this God that speaks at times with a hurricane force wind—raw power rearranging our world in ways we don’t appreciate or by allowing evil and injustice, greed and callousness. The same voice which calls as a shepherd, calling her sheep for dinner? Can we trust this voice throughout the ages even though often the evidence suggests things might not work out the way we want them to? At times the strength and gentleness of God seem to be random. As if God is for us and then against us and everybody else. If we’re honest, we’ll admit these things.

So how do we trust? Instinct tells us to trust only if we’re pretty sure it’s in our best interest to do so. Do we trust even when it involves sacrifice and there might not be a tangible reward? Trust and sacrifice is what we can do even though we can’t make sense of the voice of God in this moment or even in a lifetime.

In Advent we can wait, admit our needfulness and confusion, repent, and trust. Trust and repentance are linked because we cannot trust until we give up trying to figure it all out. Then we finally allow ourselves to fall into the grace of God because we’re exhausted with trying so hard to make it work and make sense of it all.

Could the Day of the Lord partly be this exhausted giving up and letting go? Might the Day of the Lord be when we along with all of creation finally give up our sense of control and open ourselves to the eternal reach of love, of God, of mercy and peace? Not something we control, but something which envelops us? Here is a new heavens and the new earth. The new place of peace and joy when we cling to a single thread of trust. . .and hope. A wisp which is actually a strong arm, and a holy will and provision for justice and peace, but not on our terms. This is the salvation of God. This is the baptism of repentance. A confession that we walk in faith, in prayer rather than by sight which waits for something always out of reach.

We face this fierce and gentle God who holds all together. The prophet’s speech of our “grassness,” our “floweriness,” is a call to deep humility. We are invited to await the Day of the Lord, a day of honesty, of truth, of judgment in love and mercy. Don’t look for these in the future. Look for them today, now, in this moment. When we relate to one another. When we make decisions. When we speak and when we listen. Let us wait in stillness, wisdom, and openness to the Way of the Lord—a path before us which we must choose. . .or allow ourselves to fall into. Thanks be to God.