

FINDING OUR RHYTHM:
LINING UP WITH THE HEARTBEAT OF GOD

Trust

Psalm 31:14-16; Luke 23:44-46

Dr. Doyle Sager, First Baptist Church, Jefferson City, Missouri

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Audio: www.fbcjc.org/sermon/finding-our-rhythm-trust/

The original bridge north of Jefferson City which spans the Missouri River was built in 1896. Can you imagine how life changed once that bridge was built? But the bridge was of no use if people did not actively drive onto it and trust it to hold them up over the water. We've been on a journey this Lenten season, a journey of discernment, learning to listen to God. We've considered repentance, rest and quietness. But none of these practices do any good if we don't step out and trust God.

Trust. "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." Jesus died quoting scripture (Psalm 31). Jesus died with a prayer on his lips. Isn't this what we pray at conversion? We stop trusting our own power and allow God to work in us, allow Jesus to save us, to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. Isn't this what we do when we're in a personal crisis? Turn over to God that thing that is bigger than us? Isn't that what we do when the future is uncertain? Trust. Isn't this what we do as we face our own mortality and approaching death? "Into your hands..." Jesus, fully human, had to trust that God would care for him and vindicate him.

But Jesus wasn't just trusting God at the last moment, a kind of foxhole religion. Jesus had trusted God all through his life, when he was misunderstood. When he was alone. When his disciples had failed him. When he was being flogged and mocked. At every stage, he trusted and listened to the One Voice.

An interesting way to get at the importance of trust is to ask what would be different if Jesus had not trusted God and had not obeyed. And don't take the easy way out by saying, "He was God's Son. He knew it was going to be OK." No. He was also fully human. He had to trust God that this path was going to lead to something worthwhile. He had to trust God even when God was silent. On the Cross, the drama of human history hung in the balance. One of our devotionals during our "40 Days of Prayer" during Lent asked the question, "How does our lack of faith limit God?" The challenge was to name something which you believe God cannot do in our church...or in your life. Are you willing to surrender that unbelief to God? In other words, are you willing to trust God to do something out of the ordinary?

But it's not easy to trust God when we can't see around the corners, when we don't know what's coming next. To trust God is easy to talk about but hard to do. Our oldest grandson is now 15 years old and has his driver's permit. I encouraged our daughter Tamara to let him get some experience behind the wheel. After all, I learned to drive on the farm when I was about 10. I told her to trust him. He'll do fine. A short time after that, we were in the city visiting them

and my grandson and I had stopped at the grocery store to get some ice cream. He asked, "Grandpa, how about I drive your van back to the house?" I immediately got cold sweats. My mind raced. "My van? The one that isn't paid for yet? It's night time. There's lots of traffic." Isn't it amazing how easy it is for us to have faith about how someone else should trust the Lord? Or some other church should launch out?

The problem with trusting the unseen is that we all like to control outcomes, and to be guaranteed outcomes. That's why the prayer of indifference is so important. Trusting God and obeying God are ends in themselves. I don't have to control outcomes.

Sometimes we forget that discerning God's will comes after we are willing to do it. Commitment and trust come first. God doesn't submit His will to us for us to inspect and then reject. It is our commitment to God's way, then a discerning of God's way, not vice versa. It is trust first, then discerning, not vice versa. It is obedience first, then discernment, not vice versa. As we trust, God opens the way.

It all comes down to this. Do you trust that God is as good as He says He is? Do you trust the Lord? Can you trust Christ with your very life, your future, your soul? If so, will you commit to Him? Surrender to Him? I entered these words in my journal many, many years ago. Life is as simple as our commitment to Christ and as complicated as the things we let get in the way. Do you agree?