

Sunday, October 2, 2022 – Seventeen Sunday after Pentecost

First Reading: Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4

At first Habakkuk was unhappy because God was taking so long to take action. Then he was unhappy because of the kind of action God was taking. He was using the Babylonians, who were worse than the Israelites, to be His means of judgment against Israel. Do you ever feel the same?

1: 2 – Habakkuk: O LORD, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not listen?
Or cry to you “Violence!” and you will not save?

3 - Why do you make me see wrongdoing and look at trouble?

4 - The law becomes slack and justice never prevails.

The wicked surround the righteous — judgment comes forth perverted.

6 – God: I am rousing the Chaldeans, that fierce and impetuous nation,
Who march through the breadth of the earth to seize dwellings not their own.

8 – They fly like an eagle swift to devour.

9 – They come for violence; they gather captives like sand.

13 – Habakkuk: Why do you look on the treacherous and are silent when the wicked swallow those more righteous than they?

Paul’s quoting Habakkuk 2: 4 in Romans 1: 17 is a great rallying cry of the Reformation – “The righteous live by their faith.”

Another possible translation, with a significantly different meaning, is “Those who are righteous by faith will live.”

Is the issue how the righteous live or on what basis is a person declared righteous?

Second Reading: 2 Timothy 1:1-14

1 – Paul to Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

3-4 - I am grateful to God when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day.
Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy.

5 - I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you.

6 - Rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands.

7 - God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline (self-control).

8-10 – God saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace. This grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

12 - I know the one in whom I have put my trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that day what I have entrusted to him.

13-14 - Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.

Gospel: Luke 17:5-10

5-6 - The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" The Lord replied, "If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you."

The issue is not the size and strength of our faith but the size and strength of our God in whom we place our faith.

*Sean Spengler and plastic roofing material.
Rainy Lake at Voyageurs National Park.*

One thing that would increase our faith would be for us to learn how to pray even when life is tough.

Here are twelve things that can help us pray when prayer is tough because life is tough and our physical, emotional, and spiritual strength are limited.

Find a solitary place

Jesus often went to a solitary place to pray. We would do well to do the same.

Use the words of others

When you just cannot seem to find or come up with the right words, use someone else's words.

Meditate on Jesus' life

What can you find in Jesus' life that mirrors your own current situation?

Repeat a phrase

A constant reminder of the truth to which you are clinging. A focus for your scattered thoughts.

Remember the Holy Spirit's intercession

When we do not know how to pray or what to pray for, the Holy Spirit prays for us.

Assume a posture of prayer

Fold your hands, close your eyes, lift up your hands, kneel, even lie flat on the floor.

Write out your prayer

Your heart and mind will focus on the words you have already written.

Show it, don't just tell it, to the Lord

As when Hezekiah received the threatening letter from Sennacherib.

Pray with your tears

Open your heart to God. Deepen your relationship with Him through crying in His presence.

Express your anger and other emotions

You do not need to hold back from God. He can take it.

Sit in silence

"Be still and know that I am God." Allow yourself to sit quietly in His presence.

Ask others to pray

Aaron and Hur held up the hands of Moses during the battle against the Amalekites.