

Relationships for Everyday Life: Trust

Introduction

Our reading this morning comes from Proverbs. Most of us are familiar with proverbs – maybe not the Book of Proverbs from the Bible - but those wise sayings that come to us in many forms.

“A penny saved is a penny earned.” Right?

“A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.” What does that really mean?

“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

“Many hands make light work.” A friend from Miles use to say that one.

Proverbs are wise sayings and the Book of Proverbs are full of these wise sayings – practical advice for everyday living – common sense – or as my Old Testament Professor use to say – advice about how to ‘hack it in the real world.’

The Proverbs are practical advice for everyday life – which is good for us because this is exactly where we live isn’t it? It is good too because we are talking about relationship! In fact as we came into the sanctuary today we saw that sign above the door that said ‘Relationships for Everyday Life.’ That’s what we are about here at Echo Hill.

As we listen this morning it might be helpful to note that the speaker here is Wisdom – not just human wisdom – but the Wisdom born of God through the power of the Holy Spirit.

It might be helpful if we listen this morning in a very relational way. We are being spoken to directly. “My child,” the proverb begins. In this proverb we are not being scolded for being ‘bad children’ but we are being encouraged to live well in our relationship with God and others – so that we might benefit from the well being that healthy relationships bring.

What can we learn from this proverb that will help us in the midst of our relationship with God and others?

Prayer

Scripture Reading

Last week we began this series on relationships by being reminded that we – you and me – we were ‘created’ to be in relationship – in relationship with our God – and with others.

This is not surprising to you is it?

While we recognize that we were created to be in relationship with God and others – we also discovered – I think – that we are created to be in *significant* relationship with God and others – in a relationship that goes beyond just showing up on a Sunday morning for church – or just talking about the weather – or how the baseball Cardinals took 2-3 games from the Cubs this week.

We were created to be in significant relationships – with God and other – and at the center of any relationship is ‘trust’.

The teenager comes to mom and dad – she wants to borrow the car – he wants to go out with his friends – be home by midnight the parents say. The teenager asks why they can't stay out later like the rest of their friends. "You don't trust me!" They yell.

Trust is at the core – at the center of our relationships. We will invest ourselves in a relationship only to the level that we trust the other in that relationship.

Trust is an interesting thing. It is belief put into action. I can tell you all day long that I trust this chair to hold me up if I sit in it. But until I sit in it – all I have is belief – not trust.

Trust is belief put into action. Trust is not what we say – but it is what we do.

I want you to be honest to yourself right now. I want you to be honest about to what point you trust those people who you are closest to.

Children/Youth do you trust your parents to make rules that are in your best interest?

Parents, do you trust your child (if they are of the age) to borrow your car – your good car?

Who would we trust to look after our children?

Who do we trust with our money – to look after us – and make sure all the bills are paid?

Who do we trust to make decisions about our life – about what kind of medical care we would or would not receive?

Trust is about belief put to action.

How about God? To what point are you willing to trust God?

On Wednesday morning at Bible Study they said they were willing to trust God to do what they could not do.

Do we trust God with all that we have and all that we are – or do we just entrust to God what we have left – when everything else is taken care of? Are we willing to honor God with the first fruits of our lives – the best of what we are and what we have – or only after everything else is taken care of.

At the funeral for Dick Lasell on Tuesday in our profession of faith we said that we belong to God in both life and death.

Is that just something we say or is that something we trust?

Abraham and Sarah – trust God enough to leave their home and their family behind and go to the place that God will show them.

Job – trusts God enough that after he loses everything – his wealth and his children and his health – he is willing to stand toe to toe with God to try to understand what God is doing.

Peter and Andrew – James and John – they trust God enough that they are willing to leave their livelihoods to go and follow Jesus.

The woman at the well in John chapter 4 trusts God enough that she is willing to expose her disgrace to Jesus – ‘I have no husband.’ (4:17)

This doesn’t sound much like wisdom to me – this doesn’t sound much like common sense – it sounds a little more like – foolishness.

I mean, to be quite honest with you – I am a little more like Jonah. God tells Jonah to go to Nineveh – to tell the Ninevites that they are going to ‘hell in a hand basket’ and if they don’t change their ways – well you remember Sodom and Gomorrah – don’t you? – it’s going to be all fire and brimstone. To Jonah this sounds like foolishness and so he heads for Tarshish.

In our reading this morning from the Proverbs – Wisdom tells us of the importance of ‘trust’.

“*Do not let loyalty and faithfulness forsake you.*” Our reading says. Loyalty and faithfulness are expressions of deep seeded trust. We are to bind them around our necks – we are to write them

on the tablets of our hearts. In other words – they are so important – that we are to embody these characteristics in core of who we are – in the very center of our being.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart...” Our reading says.

It doesn't get much clearer than that. Trust is at the center of our relationships. The level of trust that we have between ourselves and God – between ourselves and others – will determine how significant our relationship is – and it is through significant relationships that we find – health and wholeness – healing for our body and soul.

Trust is not what we say,

“You know I trust you.”

It is what we do. Trust is belief put into action.

We live in a world whose ‘wisdom’ about relationships is that we start with skepticism.

‘Don't trust anyone over 30.’ Was the rallying cry of the children of the 60s.

‘You have to earn my trust.’ We frequently are told.

We start from a place of mistrust instead of a place of trust – but we are called in Christian community – we have been called as this Christian community – to build significant

relationships with our God and one another. To start from a place of trust instead of mistrust – and this leaves us vulnerable and uneasy.

Most of us here have had at one time or another had our trust betrayed.

We share our toy with the other child – only that other child won't give it back.

We share our love with that first someone – only to have it betrayed.

We trust a sales person only to find out it's not really all they said it would be.

We trust God – with our well being and the well being of our family and friends – we trust God with our today's and our tomorrow's – only to feel betrayed when our health fails – our child gets cancer – our spouse leaves us – we lose our job.

'Do not let loyalty and faithfulness forsake you.' The Proverb says

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart." Wisdom cries out.

That doesn't sound very wise – because when you trust others – well they might take advantage of you. And nobody – not me or you – nobody wants to play the fool.

Is it foolishness or wisdom?

I don't know and I'll bet you don't either. Because what I know and what you know is that we are made to be in relationship – with our God and with others. What we know is that we are

tired of relationships that are shallow and superficial. What we know is that we long to be in relationships that matter – that are worth taking the risk to be vulnerable for.

So, me – I think I will take the risk – to bind loyalty and faithfulness around my neck and to place those characteristics in the middle of my heart. Me, I am willing to ‘trust in the Lord with all my heart and lean not on my own understanding.’

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.