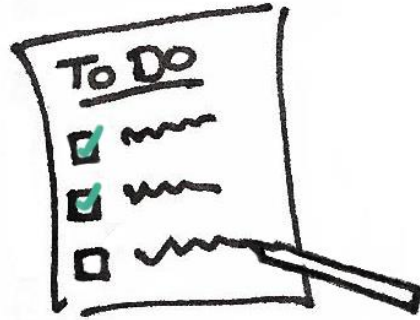




ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

THIS SUNDAY October 6 & BEYOND”

Duty: Believe, and just “do” what you are supposed to!



On Sunday, October 6, 2019, you are invited to come to All Saints' and hear the Good News (the Gospel) of Jesus Christ. And as you are listening to the Gospel itself being read aloud, you will hear a rather awkward beginning. The minister reading the Gospel will start by saying,

“And the apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!” (Luke 17:5)

Was that an impromptu request for more teaching, or for more show-and-tell about how healings or exorcisms were to be accomplished? Or was it about something that had just been said, or happened, but was for some reason not included in the Sunday Gospel reading? Well, I've looked, and I can tell you it was the latter. So, then, what in the world did Jesus say to them just before that which would elicit such a disbelieving outburst?!

I'll include for your benefit the preceding 4 verses prior to the Apostle's outburst:

And Jesus said to his disciples, ³ Take heed to yourselves; if your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him; ⁴ and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, and says, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive him.”

Ah. Jesus made a command statement about forgiving over and over. No wonder they said, “Increase our faith!” How so very hard and difficult it is to keep forgiving someone, especially for the same repeated offense. This is actually MORE difficult of a command in other bible contexts. Here in Luke 17 Jesus provides the caveat “If...he turns to you seven times and says “I repent”.....” In other places, the clear

implication is that we are to forgive even BEFORE repentance takes place. As the Apostles might have said, “Even MORE faith, Lord!”

Now, it is tempting to continue this reflection by talking about the very profound benefits for the person who forgives, including the release of bitterness toward that offending person, and thus the release for you as forgiver from being shackled to that bitterness.

But what I sense the Lord wants us to reflect upon this week is Jesus’ desire here to teach the disciples the difference between the dynamic and powerful faith that comes through the Holy Spirit as a follower of Christ, and daily duty to which we are called as his disciples, whether we feel empowered or not. Faith to accomplish; or accomplishment by duty.

So the first thing Jesus says after the Apostles’ outburst, “Increase our faith!”, is this:

“If you had faith as a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this sycamine tree, ‘Be rooted up, and be planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.”

Jesus’ point here is to say simply, “You are using the wrong word and concept. An increase of faith certainly will assist you as you face the salvation work of commanding healing for a malady that seems impossible to envision as being healed; or commanding a dead body to come to life; or to command in my Name that a demon – a demon! – should come out of a person. But you don’t need more faith to do what you have been told to do as my disciples for such a regular daily part of what the Kingdom of God is all about; what the essence of my ministry to the Jews and to all the World is all about.”

And then in order to illustrate THAT difference, he adds the following:

“Will any one of you, who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep, say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come at once and sit down at table’? Will he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare supper for me, and put on your apron and serve me, till I eat and drink; and afterward you shall eat and drink’? Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? So you also, when you have done all that is commanded you, say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.’”

It is not a matter of justifying, or reasoning, or of your emotions getting to the point of being “strong enough” or feeling good enough in order to forgive someone. It is a matter of the will that has given allegiance to Jesus, the Son of God, who says to us, “Go forgive.” That, my friends is simply our DUTY as followers of Christ. So also,

- Be Kind. That is not a matter of faith. It is a duty.

- **Be Patient.** That is not a matter of faith; it is duty.
- **Love one another.** I know that may FEEL like you need more faith to do, but it is duty. It is a command to do.
- **Again, Be a forgiver.** That is not a matter of faith, says Jesus. Oh, yes, it is a matter of THE FAITH we hold as believers in Jesus. But not as the verb form.
- **Be Generous with what you have been given, and in word.** That is not a matter of faith, it is a duty.

Look around at your life. As someone who wants to be a follower of Christ, don't procrastinate by asking for "more faith" for these basic signs of your faith in Him, just do them. Don't worry; God will save you.

Fr. Robert Eaton, Interim Rector

Readings for this Sunday – The Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

Habakkuk 1:1-6, 12-13; 2:1-4 Psalm 37:3-10 2 Timothy 1:1-14 Luke 17:5-10

CALENDAR

SUNDAY: Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

8:30am Low Mass (Church)

10:30am Solemn Mass (Church)

4:00pm Chamber Music Concert by the Greater San Diego Music Coterie
(Parish Hall)

AA Meeting

7:00pm Little Apple Group (Parish Hall)

—The entrance to the church is on 6th Avenue—

Note: Coffee Hour & Fellowship follow the Mass in the Parish Hall.

TUESDAY: Noon Mass (St. Mary's Chapel)

FRIDAY AA Meetings

8:00p Ladies' Group (Fireside Room)

8:15p Men's Group (Parish Hall)

SUNDAY The Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

8:00am Low Mass (Church)

10:30am Solemn Mass (Church)

AA Meeting

7:00p Little Apple Group (Parish Hall)

An Anglo-Catholic Parish in the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego
www.allsaintschurch.org