

When It's All About Trusting Someone

Genesis 12:1-4; Romans 4:16-18

Sunday, October 2, 2021 at The First Congregational Church of Marshalltown, Iowa

- Introduction: the boys in the flooded cave

I remember, a few years ago, of a group of boys in Asia who explored a cave only to have the cave flood, trapping them deep inside. Professional divers rescued them. They would outfit the boys with diving gear, sedate them. and pull them through the underwater tunnels by rope. The boys had to trust the divers with their lives. It was dangerous, so much so that one of the professional divers lost his life, but every one of the boys survived. But they had to completely trust the divers. We serve a God who has the very power of life over death and has no limits. Can we trust that God with our lives, both in the moments of crisis and in the everyday decisions that fill our days? I think yes.

- Can you trust someone with your life if they have power over life and death? Yes. The Bible often asserts that God is not bound by any of the limitations that bind us.

Here are a few examples:

Deuteronomy 32:39 (NKJV)

³⁹ 'Now see that I, *even I, am He*, And *there is no God besides Me*; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; Nor *is there any* who can deliver from My hand.

1 Samuel 2:6 (NKJV)

⁶ "The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to the grave and brings up. Life does not limit the Lord. Death does not limit the Lord. Time, space, nothing limits the Lord.

- As such even what He can do with our lives is beyond our limits
...of our understanding

In Genesis 22 God told Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, something that went against everything that Abraham understood about the Lord and most likely broke his heart into a thousand pieces, but Hebrews gives this commentary on Abraham's mindset during this trial:

Hebrews 11:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ concluding that God *was* able to raise *him* up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

...of our very lives

Elisha healed someone after he was dead

There is an interesting story about the ministry of the Holy Spirit through the great prophet Elisha. Some time after he died, another man was buried in the same tomb and when his body touched the bones of the prophet, the dead man returned to life. Even Elisha's own death did not limit the Holy Spirit from working through him. We trust the Lord, in part, because He has no limits. He can do what we cannot imagine, He can see what we cannot see. His plan is beyond the limits of death, language, culture, and time. He can do so much more with our lives than we can imagine, even if it seem that nothing out the ordinary is happening.

- Application

The application is that there is no one more worthy of trust for the days we are on earth than the God who loves us and who has no limitations. It is reasonable then, that that value of what we do and the priorities of our approach to life must reflect what our Lord says is important. In other words you're not the hero of your own story. You're just one part of a very large plan. I tend to envision our lives as somewhat autonomous and that we are each in charge of our own lives, as if we are the queen or king of our castle. We do have some responsibility and freedom of choice regarding our decision, that's true, but our lives are far more interconnected than that, and as Christian we must acknowledge that we are not in charge of our own lives, and that each of our lives is connected to an influences other lives far beyond what we can imagine. There are bigger forces at play in our lives that our own strength and intellect allow.

Cf. Bilbo at the end of the Hobbit.

"You don't really suppose, do you, that all your adventures and escapes were managed by mere luck, just for your sole benefit? You are a very fine person, Mr. Baggins, and I am very fond of you; but you are only quite a little fellow in a wide world after all." "Thank goodness!" said Bilbo laughing, and handed him the tobacco jar."

Conclusion: Abraham was told that he was the "father of many nations", a notion that echoes throughout the rest of Scripture. That means that we are not a series of free-standing stories, all about us as individuals, but rather that our lives are a small part of a very large plan, and the hero of that plan is the Lord, who has no limits and can do with our lives for more than we could even imagine. Reach out to each other, and reach out to the community. We are limited, but the Lord has no limits. It's all about trusting someone.