

## Epiphany 3B – Trust In God Alone

1. In what do you place your trust...what is your unshakable source of peace?
  - a. Over this past year if you had placed your trust in human institutions, wisdom, or our prosperity you have been sorely disappointed
    - i. While we have come up with a vaccine for coronavirus in record time, despite the world's best efforts there has been broad devastation and loss – not just in human lives but entire sectors of our society and economy have been lost or changed
    - ii. Our political system has come under attack, the institutions that seemed unassailable have proven vulnerable
    - iii. The fabric that binds us together as a people in this country, based on the principles of self-determination, individual freedom and equality, has been frayed.
    - iv. If these are the things on which your peace and security rested you've had a most difficult year indeed, the foundations of your worldview have been shaken.
  - b. This past year has been a reminder that nothing in this world is secure, nothing in this world is permanent, nothing in this world is reliable and that transience has an effect on people.
    - i. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, a nonprofit organization focusing on health issues, 53% of adults in the United States reported that their mental health has been negatively impacted due to worry and stress over the coronavirus.
    - ii. In August a CDC survey revealed that anxiety disorder symptoms were about three times those reported in 2019 (25.5% versus 8.1%), and depressive disorder symptoms were about four times those reported in 2019 (24.3% versus 6.5%). CDC also said 13.3% of respondents reported starting or increasing substance abuse (including drugs and alcohol).
    - iii. In addition, more than twice as many U.S. respondents reported serious consideration of suicide than in 2018, (10.7% versus 4.3%).
    - iv. As Thomas Paine wrote in December of 1776 about the war with Britain, "These are the times that try men's souls."
2. Looking at our Psalm for today we are reminded that King David knew something of trial and tribulation, both before and after he ascended to the throne
  - a. He, too, was familiar with the unpredictability of humans, that we could not be trusted, and our institutions fail
    - i. When David was still a shepherd, he entered into King Saul's service as his armor bearer and musician to calm him when he was in bad spirits

- ii. David rose in rank after killing Goliath and should have been Saul's champion, but Saul was jealous of David and while keeping him in his service still tried to kill him on several occasions.
    - iii. When David became king after Saul, his own son Absalom led a rebellion against him in which others who had been loyal to David also turned against him.
    - iv. And what we see through these episodes is David taking refuge in God, not striking out in revenge, cognizant of who he was in the Lord, that God had delivered him before and would deliver him again.
  - b. We don't know when David wrote Psalm 62, in what circumstances he found himself (sometimes he does record the occasion for which a Psalm was written)
    - i. But it could have been as he reflected back on the lessons learned through the many conflicts and trials that he endured.
    - ii. He had learned that hope isn't found in this world as he writes in vss. 9-10, **"Those of low estate are but a breath; those of high estate are a delusion; in the balances they go up; they are together lighter than a breath. Put no trust in extortion; set no vain hopes on robbery; if riches increase, set not your heart on them."** (Psa 62:9-10)
    - iii. He had learned the folly of placing trust in people or in things because they are all fleeting and can change in a moment and if your hope is tied only to them you are lost.
  - c. Thus, he wrote in Psalm 62, **"For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken."** (Ps 62:1-2)
    - i. In this twelve verse Psalm he writes these words twice in vss 1-2 and again in 5-6.
    - ii. God had delivered David time and again throughout his life: from the spear of Goliath, the wrath of Saul, the treachery of family, and even after his sin of adultery with Bathsheba
    - iii. God was there to save him from others and to save him from himself
    - iv. He had learned that in the midst of the storm rather than rely on someone else or even on himself, he could trust in God alone.
- 3. Can David's confidence describe yours?
  - a. When the going gets tough, when the foundations of your life are shaken, do you wait for the Lord? Do you trust in God alone?
    - i. All of Scripture was written for our learning, nothing has befallen us that has not befallen the saints in the Old or New Testament

- ii. The Scriptures are written as a mirror of our existence, God's power is displayed in the lives of His people so that those who follow can trust His Word.
  - iii. David learned through the school of hard knocks to wait patiently for the Lord that He alone was his salvation.
- b. Of course, what we see falteringly displayed in the lives of God's saints we see perfectly lived in the life of Christ, who never failed to trust His Father.
  - i. In the Garden of Gethsemane before He was crucified, even as He prayed that the suffering He was about to endure could be avoided, He said, "**My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.**" (Mat 26:39)
  - ii. As He hung on the cross the following day suffering not only the pain of crucifixion but the torment of those who put Him there, He again cried out to God, "**Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.**" (Luk 23:34)
  - iii. And even as He died He says, "**Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!**" (Luk 23:46)
  - iv. Through His entire life and death, He commended Himself to the Father's will and timing, trusting in no one and nothing else.
- c. And through His merits alone the Lord has provided a salvation for us that Old Testament saints like David could only pray for from afar.
  - i. That the Father would go so far for us and our salvation, that He would sacrifice His Son on the cross for our sins reassures us that He will deliver us from any need!
  - ii. There is no merit of ours or anyone else that could have delivered us from judgment for our sins only the forgiveness won by Christ
  - iii. That regardless of what happens in this world, whether our friends, families, institutions, or wisdom fail we have an inheritance in heaven that doesn't perish, spoil or fade (I Pet 1:4)
  - iv. In light of that salvation guaranteed by Christ alone, Luther could write our hymn of the day based on Psalm 46, a Psalm that echoes what our Psalm says, "**And take they our life, goods, fame, child and wife, though these all be gone our victory has been won; the Kingdom ours remaineth!**"
- d. Let the words of David be yours this day and always, "**On God alone my soul waits; from him comes my salvation. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress I shall not be shaken!**" – trust in God alone!