

With what in your life do you need to trust God?

I had lunch with Professor Edwin Chr. van Driel on Wednesday who will be preaching here on 2/28. He is a Professor at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and has made a profound impact on my friendship with Jesus Christ through the publishing of two books *Incarnation Anyway* & *The Incarnation as God's First Intention*. The impact is the answer to the question to the meaning of life: What is the meaning of life? Friendship. Why do we exist? Friendship. If you were to ask this lowly pastor, "What is Heaven?" Friendship. The reason we exist is friendship with God as Jesus Christ!

Today I invite you to trust that God works in every story. As we can see in Colossians, Christ's Holy Spirit is shaping each of us into Christ's image using our unique stories/experiences. Even when bad things happen. Especially when the bad things happen, with what do you need to trust God? Let go and let God!

With what in your life do you need to trust God? Let me frame it a different way, "With what do you need to trust a friend?" Remember last week when the Bible taught us that we are Christ's real presence on Earth! Yes, Jesus was resurrected 2000 years ago and rules Heaven, but at the same time by the power of Christ's Holy Spirit, Jesus empowers you and me to be His real presence for each other here and now. This is the power of worship and being Christ's real body on earth: friendship. How did the Colossians learn about friendship with Jesus Christ?

Look back to Colossians 1:5-8 "You have heard of this hope before in the word of the truth, the gospel ^athat has come to you. Just as it is bearing fruit and growing in the whole world, so it has been bearing fruit among yourselves from the day you heard it and truly comprehended the grace of God. ^bThis you learned from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, ^cand he has made known to us your love in the Spirit." Jesus commissions Christians to invite people into friendship with Jesus by introducing Him!

Let's now read Romans 8:28-29, which reminds us people often assume everyone should see the world the same way they do. Yet God works differently in different lives. Romans 8 reminds us that God is forming all believers into the likeness of Christ, even when our journeys look very different.

We celebrated the life of Dr. Keith Paulson on Friday. One of the most brilliant men I have met who had a Ph.D. in nuclear engineering and a good friend. Keith wanted more than anything else for people to know friendship with Jesus Christ. When his beloved best friend, Marcia, married to her for over 50 years, died unexpectedly in 2021, Christ's Holy Spirit led me to ask him to help youth ministry. He did because he wanted our Jr. High students to know friendship with Jesus. Keith trusts God's work in every story! You have heard me preach this often because I believe Jesus gives us meaning, purpose, and most vitally friendship. We all have problems. Problems are better together. Colossians and Romans point to the benefits of the church. Church is better together for we are connected as Christ's body.

Here it is again, Jesus is the head of the body (Col 1:18). We are the body! By the power of Christ's Spirit, we are Jesus' real presence on earth. We have the responsibility to be Christ's presence!

Trust that the Holy Spirit is working through your experiences, stories and expertise to invite others into friendship with Jesus. You can offer life changing impact by deepening your friendship with Christ and each other.

God is using your experiences, stories and expertise to shape each of us into the image of Christ. And yes, we have our short comings. We still have sin that negatively affects us. Jesus will make us aware of sin. What do I mean by this? If you want to know God, look to Jesus. If you want to know what sin is, look to Jesus. Not that Jesus is sin, but Jesus is showing us the way to God. Jesus is showing us the Way to not allow sin to dominate us. Thus, we must practice Jesus' faith to identify sin and to overcome sin.

"We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to God's purpose. ²⁹For those whom God foreknew God also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that Jesus might be the firstborn within a large family."-Rom. 8:28-29 But what about when the really bad stuff happens to us? Trust that Christ's Holy Spirit is at work in your life.

What about when sin in another person's life causes you harm? Trust that Christ's Holy Spirit is working in others too.

Finally, have patience as the Lord Jesus is patient with you!

With what in your life do you need to trust God/a friend in Christ?

Love,
Pastor Curtis

Theme: Christ's Holy Spirit is shaping each of us into Christ's image using our unique stories/experiences.

1st Scripture: Colossians 1:1-19

2nd Scripture: Romans 8:28-29

Sermon Notes:

1. What do you need to trust God with?
2. People often assume everyone should see the world the same way they do. Yet God works differently in different lives. Romans 8 reminds us that God is forming all believers into the likeness of Christ, even when our journeys look very different.
3. Trust the Holy Spirit's work in your life.
4. Trust that Christ's Holy Spirit is working in others, too.
5. Show patience toward those who are growing differently than you.