

“Just do it!”

Children’s Sunday

Theme: Building up trust in relationships

May 17, 2009,

Text: Genesis 12:1-9, Mark 9:14-24

I.

In our faith tradition, when we think about trust in life—trust in God, trust in relationships—one of the first stories that comes to mind is the story of **Abraham**. No matter how many times we hear it, it remains a compelling story.

Imagine if God came to one of us ... as God came to Abraham:

Go from your country ... and your kindred and your father’s house ... to the land that I will show you. Right away, that’s shocking language with its vagueness and uncertainty. Of course, there are some reassurances:

And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great ... and you will be a blessing.

Imagine if that were to happen to one of us! *Just pick up and go! Leave ...all that is familiar ...and to where? To the land that I will show you.*

Reacquainting ourselves with this story, we can see why Abraham is renowned as such a pillar of faith in our tradition. He believed ... and he believed because he trusted God. Reflecting on this, we can’t help but wonder: did he believe right away, or did his belief build up over time? My guess is, over time.

Which prompts the question: *At what point do we trust in life?* In anything that we do ... at what point do we trust?

For sure, there are a lot of variables, but doesn’t there come a point when we have to do as the NIKE commercial says and ***Just do it?*** Believe, trust, love ... just do it!

II.

There’s this wonderful scene near the end of the movie, *My Fair Lady*, where *Eliza Doolittle* sings words that God must also sing. Singing to Freddie, who’s romantically pursuing her, she sings,

Word, words, words; I’m so sick of words. I get words all day through ... first from him (referring to Mr. Higgins, played by Rex Harrison), now from you.

It's like, she's had it. Enough talk. *If you're in love, show me!* she says. No more lofty talk of love lasting through time ... enough! *Show me now!*

What's this all about? Both with Abraham and God and with *Eliza's* love, Freddie, in *My Fair Lady*? It's about trust. Trust in God, trust in love, trust in our relationships.

Our lives are so much more rich and meaningful and joyful when we're able to trust. When we let go of the impulse to calculate and measure in hope of controlling the result.

Imagine Abraham and Sarah's situation! Sarah had never had children; and now she was well beyond her child-bearing years. And yet, God had promised them:

Look towards heaven, (this is God talking to Abraham and Sarah) *and count the stars, if you are able to count them. So shall your descendants be!* Wow! Powerful words of promise.

The word for us this morning is that there comes a point in all of our lives when we have to buy in. Believe, trust, love. *Just do it!* Building up trust in every realm of our lives—particularly in our relationships—is so much of what our lives are about.

III.

There's a story about how, one night a house caught fire and a young boy was forced to flee to the roof. The father stood on the ground below with outstretched arms, calling to his son: *Jump, son, jump! I'll catch you.*

He knew the boy had to jump to not be consumed by the flames. All the boy could see, however, were flames, smoke, and blackness. As we might imagine, the boy was afraid to jump from the roof. Increasingly more frantic, the father kept yelling, *Jump, son, jump! I'll catch you.*

But the boy protested, *But daddy, I can't see you.* And the father responded, *But I can see you, son, and that's all that matters.* And of course the boy jumped, his father caught him, and he was unharmed by the raging flames.

Believe, trust and love Build up the trust, day after day, week after week. *Just do it!* Trust takes us beyond our fears.

IV.

But think about it! With our loved ones—our key relationships—what are we afraid of? Isn't it that we want our children, our spouses, our loved ones ... to be okay? To be healthy, self-reliant, confident persons who can rejoice in the glow of God's blessings? But we can't get there by giving in to our fears. Fear is the opposite of trust.

Writer **Henry Bester** wrote an essay some time back about living in the outermost house at Cape Cod (in New England) for a full year. When commenting on what he learned most from this experience—again, of living way out, at the end of the Cape, he said:

What I learned is that we should *put away the vulgar fear of the night*.

And what is it that we fear in the night? Isn't it the unknown? And therefore, the future which, because of the darkness, can seem less certain at night?

As human beings, we tend to fear what we can't control; and there's so much we can't control out there. Again, at some point we have to trust. Trust in God ... trust in love ... trust in the process.

Put away the vulgar fear of the night.

Clearly, we're all different and we have to sort this out for ourselves ... with our different needs, different strengths and weaknesses.

Living lives rooted in trust can make all the difference in our lives. Believe ... trust ... love. *Just do it!*

V.

In Jesus' healing of the boy with an evil spirit, in **Mark 9**, the father of the boy was desperate that his son would be made well. He'd asked the disciples to heal him, but they had not been successful.

Anyway, after some initial conversation, they brought the boy to Jesus and the evil spirit threw the poor boy into convulsions ... and when asked how long this had been going on with the boy, the father said,

Since childhood ... the evil spirit seeks to destroy him ... but if you are able to do anything, have pity on us and help us.

And Jesus said, *If you are able? What do you mean? All things can be done for the one who believes.*

To which the father cried out: *I believe; help my unbelief!*

Again, at some point, it's a matter of trust. Believe ... trust ... and love ... again and again, day after day.

I believe! Help my unbelief! Just do it!

VI.

The KEY to relationships—with our families for sure, but also with others ... at work, in community, wherever it is—the KEY is to treat people right, do the right thing and then *trust the relationship*. That's the key: trust the relationship.

The novel, *The Shack*, by William Paul Young, is a gripping attempt of a father to cope with an awful tragedy in his life, the death of his young daughter. Much of the book, it turns out, is a creative, theological presentation of the trinity—God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Together, they're trying to bring healing to this grieving father.

At one point, the Holy Spirit, named *Sarayu* in the novel, is talking to the young father about trust.

Trust isn't something you just produce ...you either have it or you don't. Trust is the fruit of a relationship in which you know you are loved.

As parents, when we put our best into our kids, building up their trust in us over the years with our love, I guarantee you, they don't want to disappoint us. And when they do, they self-correct, because they know they've fallen short and it doesn't feel good. Again, the KEY: trust the relationship.

I'm not suggesting that certain rules and guidelines are not important in raising our children. What I'm saying is that they're secondary. What's important is the relationship. That's the primary way we orchestrate the child-rearing process ... not through rewards and punishments etc. etc.

Our lives, friends, are about trusting the love. At the end of the day, that's all there is—love, and the fruits of its music. But it's sufficient. So, ***Just do it! Believe ... trust ... love.***

All praise be unto God! Amen!

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