

28th September, 2014.

Reading: Psalm 78: 1 - 7

Sermon: In you, Lord my God, I put my trust.

In you, Lord my God, I put my trust. Those are words from Psalm 25 which got me thinking this week. They are words which trip of the tongue in prayers, in hymns and in readings but how easy are they to practise? **In you, Lord my God, I put my trust.**

Having seen the words of Psalm 25, I then came across a chapter in one of Eddie Askew's books which is a bit dated now, but in the book he speaks about how an East German Christian leader and his fellow Christians had felt when they were living behind the Iron Curtain.

The East German leader said that for some considerable time they spent their days wishing they were elsewhere and wishing that the conditions under which they lived were different. Then he says, they gradually came to understand and accept, that they were where God had put them and that they were where God wanted them. They then realised that despite their hardships, their

job was to live and witness to God's love and God's salvation in the situation in which they found themselves. Those were courageous words which were spoken from the then Communist world.

I think it would be fair to say that when the going gets tough, we can all feel like the East Germans did. In 2 Corinthians, Paul feels the same way. He says about the thorn in his flesh, **Three times I begged the Lord to rid me of it** but His answer was **My grace is sufficient for you. In you, Lord my God, I put my trust.**

When the going gets tough, we can all spend a lot of time wishing that our situation was different from the way it is and certainly better than it is. It's a natural human reaction and one which Jesus experienced as well.

If it is your will, take this cup of suffering from me. Those were Jesus' words in the Garden of Gethsemane but in His words, there was an acceptance that although He wanted things to be different, that although He wanted His suffering to end, there was an acceptance that this may well be where God wanted Him to be. There was an

acceptance which led to Him knowing that His job, if you like, was to witness to God's love and salvation in the situation in which He found Himself. He was where God could use Him to the full. **In you, Lord my God, I put my trust.**

The trouble is that when we find ourselves in difficult situations, we don't always recognise that we are where God wants us to be. Instead, we fight against our circumstances. We fight to change things and at times there are things we can change. We can change our job, our home. We can even change our friends but there are many things which happen to us which we can't change and with which we have to live.

The East Germans recognised and accepted that they were where God wanted them to be to share His love and salvation and Jesus, too, recognised and accepted that He was where God needed Him to be.

Eddie Askew says that where we're concerned, we face the dilemma that we don't always have the comfort of

knowing that we are in a situation in which God can use us, not at the time that we are suffering.

In Graham Greene's novel, *Monsignor Quixote*, a companion of his says, 'Time will show' but Quixote answers, 'Time can never show. Our lives are too short.' We do sometimes have the conviction that we're doing the right thing but not always and as Quixote says, we may never know. However, when life is hard, all we can do is hang on by faith and strive to show God's love and salvation where we are and in the circumstances in which we find ourselves. **In you, Lord my God, I put my trust.**

But where does that trust come from? Where does any trust come from? If you have a secret you need to share with someone, you will only share it with someone you trust and the only way you know who you can trust, is by getting to know people. We don't always get that right but knowledge of someone is the only way we have a chance of getting it right.

In Psalm 78, the Psalmist was trying to encourage generations to come to put their trust in God. How did he

go about that? Simply by pleading with the people to listen to what he was saying, to grasp what he was saying so that they could then pass it on to their children and their children's children.

The only way people could learn to trust God was to get to know Him and that has not changed and will never change. The only way we will be able to say **In you, Lord my God, I put my trust**, is if we take the trouble to get to know God. The Psalmist writes:

**I will open my mouth with a parable;
I will utter hidden things, things from of old—
things we have heard and known,
things our ancestors have told us.
We will not hide them from their descendants;
we will tell the next generation
the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord,
his power, and the wonders he has done.**

And the Psalmist concludes by saying that only when one generation tells the next generation about God and all that He has done, only then will they put their trust in God.

He says God decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel. He then commanded our ancestors to teach their children, so that the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds and would keep his commands.

Only when we are faithful in this generation, only when we put our trust in God in this generation and share that with future generations, only then will they come to know God and to say with conviction: **In you, Lord my God, I put my trust.** Is it easy? No, it's not but then God never said it would be.

At the end of the section I was reading in Eddie Askew's book, he shares a prayer. He says:
Lord, it's good being part of your kingdom.
Belonging. In the community.
I can relate who I am and what I do, to you.
Sometimes, though, it wears thin.
The ceaseless sandpaper friction of life

rubs through the thin veneer I thought so solid.

The scratches score deep and hard.

I don't like it that way.

When I said I'd follow you, I meant it, Lord,

But I didn't know it would be like this.

There are times when I want out.

I thought the cross was His, not mine.

And when its shadow falls across my shoulders

I feel the weight.

Just the shadow, Lord!

I want to twist and turn and slide it to the ground.

And yet, when I look a little further, deeper,

I see your hands, not white and manicured

but scarred and scratched and competent, reach out

not always to remove the weight I carry

but to shift its balance, ease it, make it bearable.

Lord, if this is where you want me, I'm content.

No, not quite true. I wish it were.

All I can say, in honesty, is this.

If this is where I'm meant to be I'll stay. And try.

Just let me feel your hands.

And Lord, for all who hurt today,

hurt more than me,

I ask for strength, and that flicker of light,

the warmth, that says you're there.

Can we accept that we are where God needs us to be whatever our circumstances? Can we accept that God can use us where we are no matter how bad life is? Can we accept that we have a calling not just as ministers but as Christians to share God's love and His salvation in the situations in which we find ourselves, witnessing to the fact that His strength is sufficient for us?

Can we stand with the Psalmist in whatever circumstances we find ourselves and say with him, **In you, Lord my God, I put my trust?**