
Sunday March 20, 2022, 'Third Sunday In Lent' ~

Faith Testimony of Douglas Semple

The Apostle's Creed

*I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again
to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. **Amen.***



***Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.***

(Psalm 19:14)

This is the prayer, and that of the **Lord's Prayer**, that my mother used to teach us about God, to teach us about His Mercy and His Grace. It is something that would carry us into the years ahead of us, she said. It didn't matter how difficult and unfair life got, it would help us, she told us.

I am at the age now where there are not many more tomorrows in front of me on this earth, and I am now fully convinced of the truth of my mom's teachings. I am now convinced that when I spoke the words of this **Apostle's Creed** back so long ago in that day of my Confirmation into the Anglican Church in the far north that God, in His immense grace and mercy, heard me and gave me salvation.

In the youth of my years, I may not have fully realized the impact of those words I spoke, but God is not like us. He is faithful to His word. He does not lie, as His Bible says. He always remained with me throughout the years. When life became difficult at times, as it often does, I would remember that Confirmation day and the words I spoke that day and God would hear me and come to lift me up where I fell, and we would continue the earthly journey.

Jesus has been sufficient in this earthly journey that I have been on and in the work I've chosen to do, or rather, that He has chosen for me to do ~ that of Indigenous community development and empowerment. He has given me the courage to call out injustice in how we Indigenous people have been treated. Most importantly, He has given me the courage and the fortitude to work in influencing change in public policy towards us for the better.

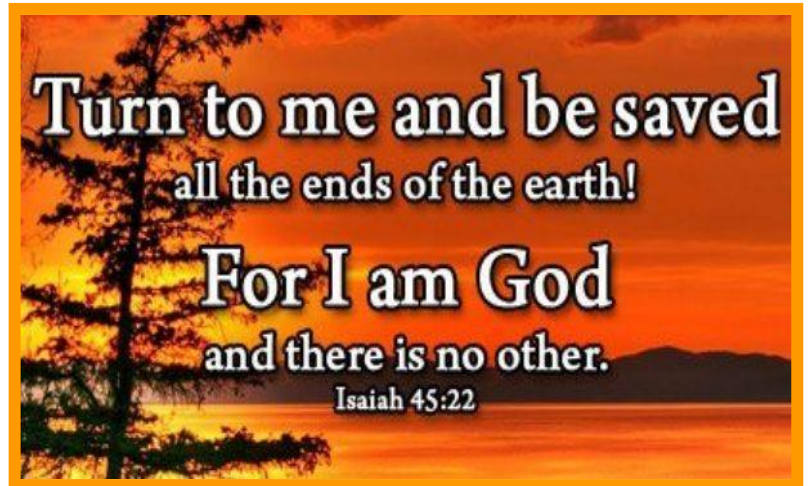
I call on all of you to remember this prayer I recited and realize you are a saved people; you are

to be different in this world, as Jesus is different. You are to be a positive influence in a world that is increasingly becoming so negative as each day passes. Don't just recite the prayer, but examine the scriptures that are behind it. Let it come alive in your spirit. Your Minister and Pastor will help you to find some of these Bible scriptures. Most notable of these is John 3:16, and there are many others.

One of my favourites is Isaiah 45:22 ~

***“Look to Me, and be saved,
All you ends of the earth!
For I am God,
and there is no other.”***

That is all you must do. Just look to God and take up His plan of salvation that He provided on the cross 2,000 plus years ago.



***‘May the LORD bless you and keep you;
may the LORD cause His face to shine upon you
and be gracious to you;
may the LORD lift up His countenance toward you
and give you peace.’***

Amen.

~ *Douglas Semple, Gathering Table parishioner*

My Sermon from last Sunday March 20, 2022, 'Third Sunday In Lent' ~

“Why Do Bad Things Happen To Good People?”

This is a short sermon as we were blessed this morning with hearing the faith testimony of Douglas Semple. You can listen to his testimony on *YouTube/St. Paul's Media* in the *March 20th Service* post.

Here is the scripture that the sermon is based upon ~

Luke 13:1-5

At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. ²He asked them, “Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? ³No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. ⁴Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them — do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? ⁵No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.”

Jesus is the speaker and he is talking about bad things, tragic things, happening to good people. He uses two examples. The first is how Pilate killed some people from Galilee and mixed their blood with the blood of the Passover lambs used for temple sacrifices. The second example is about a construction accident, when the tower of Siloam killed 18 people when it collapsed.

This is the only place in the gospels where Jesus speaks about a question that was probably asked of him many times: *Why do bad things happen to good people?* We continue today to cry out to Jesus with the same question.

Jesus answers the question in a very unexpected way. He does not answer the “WHY” question . . . He doesn’t say: *‘God has a plan.’* OR *‘The suffering will make you stronger.’* He gives no reasons as to **WHY**.

The truth is that we live in a world where accidents happen, where tragedies happen, where evil people do bad things. Suffering happens during our time on earth. Jesus never promised to take away our suffering, but to walk with us in it.

What, then, is Jesus’ response? Jesus does tell us what to do. He tells us to look into our own hearts and spend the time focusing on our own faith journeys, our journeys of discipleship, our salvation, our relationship with God. We let go of the WHY question and turn to **WHERE: Where is God in our heart and in our lives?**

We are called to “**repent,**” which means to turn towards God. We let go of all the distractions that take us away from deepening our relationship with God.

We are already at Week 3 in our Lenten disciplines and as we strengthen our souls we are repenting and turning towards the God of our salvation.

Our memory verse for this week is from Psalm 63:1 ~

My soul thirsts for God.

We will never know WHY bad things happen to good people but as our souls thirsts for the living God, we draw closer to him and we know exactly where he is.

My soul thirsts for God.

Amen.

Archdeacon Deborah+

