

Oct 2

Grace and peace be yours from God our sovereign, and from our Lord and savior, Jesus the Christ, and from the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Habakkuk cries out to God.

“O Lord, how long shall I cry for help
And you will not listen?
Or cry to you “violence!”
And you will not save?
And then he asks:
“Why do you make me see wrongdoing
And look at trouble?”

So many folks have this vision of God as a master puppeteer, pulling strings, manipulating the earth, and all that we have to do is sit back and wait for God to act. To clean up the mess of this world.

We ask the question so often, If God is so all powerful why doesn't God do something? Or agnostically we proclaim if there is a God why is this world so full of violence and injustice. Why does God not act?

What we so often fail to see is that God has acted. God has acted through Moses and the prophets. Then in the fullness of time God acted through Jesus of Nazareth. Through the teachings of the Torah, through the memory of the prophets, and through the life and death of Jesus God has given to us all that we need.

In today's Gospel lesson Jesus reminds us that:

“If we had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, “Be uprooted and planted in the sea,” and it would obey you.”

Now some trees have roots so deep that even hurricanes and tornadoes cannot uproot them. The same can be said for long-standing institutions that seem completely resistant to the forces of change. But through this parabolic metaphor Jesus is reminding us that faith can move mountains, or in this case mulberry trees. This is the key, True faith results in work, not complacency. Faith without works is dead...so faith is getting involved, in doing and not in idle wishing that God would come and do things for us.

God has acted in the past, and God continues to act today. God gives us all that we need. God has already equipped us through Word and sacrament, and has gathered us into community. God has poured out God's Spirit upon us and has written the message deep within our hearts. God has called us into the community of the faithful.

The author of 2 Timothy speaks of that faithful community, of faith being passed down from generation to generation. From his Grandmother Lois, to his mother Eunice and finally to him. He was the recipient of the promise of faith. We also are the recipients of the faithfulness of others who have this gift to us.

Today's service falls between the burial of two of the saints of this community, Marilynn DeGrood and Marie Martin. Saints who have kept alive for us this promise of God.

The gift they passed on was the gift of faith. Faith with a hunger and thirst for God's righteousness. And faith with a confidence that God's will, God's dream.... God's desires will be accomplished.

This is why God opens the eyes of the blind...so that they can see the world as it is...full of violence and injustice, and speak of God's dream.

This is why God unstops the ears of the deaf...so that they can hear the cry of the poor, and speak of God's compassion.

This is why God gives us a heart of flesh instead of a heart of stone.

God opens our eyes, God unstops our ears, God transforms our hearts so that we will hunger and thirst for righteousness. So that you and I when we experience the world as it truly is will be moved with compassion to seek justice and righteousness.

This world, even though it may be filled with a forest of mulberry trees cannot overcome the hunger and thirst for righteousness. It will find a way.

As Martin Luther King Jr proclaimed: *"The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice."*

And God declares through Habakkuk:

"...there is still a vision for the appointed time;
It speaks of the end, and it does not lie.

If it seems to tarry, wait for it;
It will surely come, it will not delay.

It is through faith and confidence in God that you and I are called act. I think of Micah's proclamation.

*⁸He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?*

Notice that Micah did not say this is why you should sit and wait for God to act...but rather this is why we should act. We should do justice, we should love kindness, and we should walk humbly with God.

Amen.