

Second Hand Preacher

Trinity Sunday

May 22, 2016

Romans 5:1-5

Most people don't like to hear others boast. When we place our strength before others, we jump at the chance to show our superiority. It quickly makes other people feel small and no one likes that. On the contrary, boasting of our weakness humanizes us. When we are willing to admit our weakness, we show others we are willing to grow. Leading with our weakness can often bring us closer to people who share similar weaknesses. Many support groups are founded on this principle of boasting of your weakness. Often recovery eludes us if we are not honest about our shortcomings.

St. Paul is writing his universal community in Rome. Like just about everywhere, Christians are the minority. Living a Christian lifestyle is not easy; in fact, the outlook can be downright dismal. One would face challenges from the complex reality of the empire. Christianity is a small voice among the louder voices of secularism. There was probably fighting from within. Christians living out their faith differently is a cause of great division. Communities were desperately seeking Paul's council in order keep from despairing. Paul offers the hope of Jesus. The equation begins with weakness and ends with hope.

Two thousand years later life is not that much different. We face a culture of death that is often disposable and lets us believe that we are the center of the universe; that helping others should be secondary, if it should be done at all; where notions like "everybody wins" and "pain is always bad" influence how we operate. Instead, we should view suffering as an opportunity for growth. We also face pressures from within with battles between liberals and conservatives. There, at times, can be so much backbiting that neither side continues to look Christian. These may be trends, but they don't have to be realities. Hope can reign supreme. It doesn't have to be a dreamy alternative, but a well grounded principle built from endurance and proven character. If we can cling to the theological virtue of hope, we can do amazing things. Unity can become a reality and trust in the relationship of the Trinity can be the source of our joy.