

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

October 6, 2013

Sermon: Fr. Bob Blessing

From our life and looking at our future Lord may you be honored and blessed by our family time together Jesus name we thank you. Amen.

Please be seated. I am going to preach a bit so I'm going to stand during the preaching but then I'm going to sit as we share the story about what's going on. I wanted to share with you the difference that I've learned in life in the last two weeks. As I have found out something that have changed, the different important factors of leadership. Who do you trust and who do you obey? Military teaches you that no matter what your commander above you or your senior NCO says, for you to do or something she says for you to do something, you salute *yes sir yes ma'am* and you go on and do it. But that doesn't necessarily mean that you trust that commander sad to say. Now there have been some commanders I've known that I would do anything for them. There was one guy I loved and would follow many places in the world because I trusted his care for the troops, I trusted his care for me, I trusted his ability to do what he was thinking of doing. That is somebody you trust. You obey, you salute, you just do it because you're part of that institution that organization.

You trust the one that you value and cherish. Now as a Christian leader my job has been to encourage each of us to pursue holiness. In other words to obey God has shown us in his word its very clear, he tells us what we are to do and to be and how we are to live out our life with him. And so obedience is part of the Christian walk and journey; *trust and obey*. I got to tell you once you get that obedience part down, there is a very important part we have to be aware of. As Christians we have these defined boundaries as when we are told to obey God. Very clear boundaries, like an officer in the military or a soldier in the military, so to in our Christian life we have these boundaries set for us. They are very clear you go through scripture it comes out pretty clear but trusting God is not worked out in the arena of rules, regulations, guidance. It doesn't work that way. It's an arena that has no boundaries. We do not know the extent, the duration, or the frequency of the challenging or adverse circumstances in which our life is going to go through. But we are called to trust the shepherd who will see us through.

I hope you got the allegory, the metaphor, in the children's sermon because the

shepherd you can trust to lead you through those challenging difficult times. We have a shepherd, Jesus, who is going to lead us through every challenging and difficult time that we have. We are left with trusting. Now it is just as important to trust God as it is to obey him. When we disobey God what do we do? We defy his authority and we despise his holiness. That is the challenging thing, when we don't obey what God shows us but when we fail to trust God. We begin to doubt his sovereignty and we question his goodness and a relationship with him is pulled. When we get to that place where we are distrusting God. We put ourselves in the place of hopelessness, despair, and God never intends for us to be in that place. In both denials we cast dispersions upon his Majesty and character but there are two types of trust that I want to talk with us about. Is he dependable in times of adversity? We know we obey him but can we depend upon Jesus in those times that are difficult? Where we know he's going to lead us through? We are called to that. Now the way you do that in my book is you look back to the past and you see how he's brought you through all those different challenges in your life. This is what Anne and I are looking at as we go to this challenging time with us. But as St. Andrews you have seen God's faithfulness time and time again. You too can trust him in the time of adversity. But here's the real question, and this is what blesses me about this church. Can you trust him? Can you trust him? Do you have such relationship with God and such confidence in him that you believe he is with you in adversity even if you do not see any evidence of his presence or power?

In other words, you have such confidence in him that no matter what is going on around you you have this assurance that you are walking with him. He's walking with you. You don't have to worry about whether he's absent or Is God Here? Where is God? No because you know him and this is what we are called to be in our walk with Christ. To go to that place where we have confidence that he will be there for us. By this relationship we have with him. That you believe he is with you no matter what. That is the blessing, no pun intended, of being a Christian in this crazy world. In the midst of death and dying, in the midst of economic turmoil, in the midst of broken relationships, in the midst of all the things each of us have to deal with... do we have that confidence that he is here with us and walking with us? And I have to tell you as a church, one of the things I am most proud of you guys about is you are on this journey to seek a deeper closer walk with him and you have this confidence that he is with you and walks with you. That's why as sad as I am about having to leave, I'm also confident that God's going to take care of Anne and I and I am confident that he's gonna take care of you all in the journey that you are going. For whatever reason whatever this journey is that caused us to have to separate as a congregation and as a priest, I know he's gonna care for you guys just as I know he is going to care for Anne and I.

Now when I say I know, I want you to know I'm qualifying at about 95% factor. I always have my 5% struggle and Lord where are you don't get me that I'm living in this world

of blind delusions. I know it's tough but I know he sees us through I know he walks with us. Anne and I have confidence that he will see us through this that he will take you through this and he has a purpose in this. He has a purpose that you grow and mature in your walk with him – it's what it is about. There are two things that I love about this church one is you seek to serve and make Christ known to people around you but you also seek to know and know him deeper. That is why I love worship here on Sunday mornings

You are here to seek him just like I am. It's not like I have to pull you and drag you, I just get the privilege of leading a group of people that love The Lord and are seeking to know him more. That is why you are here on Sunday mornings and not at the beach or up in the mountains or doing something else. You are here to grow in your walk. And my hope is that I've been able to be faithful in helping you move in that direction. This is been a blessed time of brothers and sisters. Here the word of the Lord, obey him, and, trust him and with confidence walk on and see what he has in store for you. Remember in Ephesians 3:20, one of my favorite passages, *he is able to do immensely more than we can ask dream or imagine.* We just need to be walking with him and watch what he does