



## **"I'm Gonna Let It Shine! Trust"**

### **Second Sunday After Epiphany**

Saturday & Sunday, January 18 & 19, 2020

The Reverend John H. Brock  
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Camp Hill, Pennsylvania

Psalms 40:1-11; John 1:29-42

Grace to you and peace, from God who is, who was, and who is to come. Amen.

We have a trust issue, here at Trinity. Actually, we've had trust issues for some time. Most recently, with the laptop we use to run the slides for the Contemporary worship. We turn the machine on, and we get the message: "*The trust relationship between this workstation and the primary failed*" So, in order to be able to log onto that computer, we have to turn something off, log in again, then switch it back on again, and, suddenly! we're being trusted.

Wouldn't it be great if life were that simple? "You don't trust me. Let me flip this switch over here, and...Ta Da! Now you do!"

Instead, we live in an era where, if one person doesn't like what another is saying, they simply call out "Fake News!" regardless of the truthfulness of the topic in question.

There are these things called Deep Fake videos, in which a not all that talented person can use software to make it appear that an individual is doing or saying something that they did not do or say, and yet the videos are nearly impossible to be determine false.

How many conspiracy theories are out there that say extraterrestrials crash landed in Roswell New Mexico in the 1950's; or that there was a shooter on the grassy knoll in Dallas, Texas; or a pedophile ring is operating out of a Washington DC pizza joint; or the government was behind the September 11 bombings, all because some individuals refuse to believe, they deny the truth, they reject the trust in those who work to bring the actual reasons or persons or facts to the public.

Trusting others, I think, is a fundamental aspect of humanity. There was a lot of trust going on in our gospel reading. Here's this guy, whose name is John, and he baptizes people, so we call him this really original name of "John the Baptizer". He's out in the wilderness, and he kind of looks homeless. He's dressed in a shirt made out of camel hair, he's got a big leather belt around him, his hair is long, and he's eating whatever he can scrounge up (locust and wild honey).

He's giving this *weird* message, apparently about God (but I wouldn't be so certain about that)

*"Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"*

John's making reference to Jesus being a sacrificial lamb. They were used at the Passover meal, as well as in the temple. A person would place all their wrong doings (that is, all their sins) on the lamb, and then the lamb would be killed (sacrificed). That could be done for just an individual, or it could be for a family. It was done annually for the entire people of Israel. But this wilderness man makes the radical statement that Jesus will take away the sins, not of an individual, not of a family, not even of an entire people, but of the **Whole World**.

*<sup>30</sup> This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'*

Excuse me, What? Does that even make sense? Are we certain there weren't any mushrooms mixed in with those bugs?

*<sup>31</sup> I myself did not know him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel."*

Why on earth would any sane person want to find out what more this obviously troubled person had to say? But then he goes on, and gives us reason to begin to trust him:

*<sup>32</sup> And John testified, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him."*

Aha! Now we're starting to make a little sense. John **Saw** something. He saw something *different*. He saw something that set Jesus apart from all the other folks he was baptizing.

*<sup>33</sup> I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' <sup>34</sup>And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God."*

Okay. Now these ramblings of a wild-eyed fanatic are beginning to make sense. Which can then go on to aid in making sense of what happens next.

John is standing with a couple of guys, people who wanted to learn more from him, when Jesus walks past. John exclaims: *Behold! The Lamb of God!* What is a little weird is that these two disciples of John now drop everything and follow Jesus. They get into conversation with Jesus and talk with him the entire afternoon.

One of those two men is a fellow named Andrew, who is Simon Peter's brother. Andrew goes to his brother and says, *"We have found the Messiah" We have found the one we've been looking for, the one who is going to lead all of Israel!*

And Jesus, as soon as Simon arrives on the scene, Jesus sees Simon coming up towards him, and before Simon gets there, before they are even introduced, Jesus says *"You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas"* (which is translated Peter).

I don't know if you caught it, but there **is** a lot of *trust* going on here. Andrew and whoever he was with trusted John enough to come and be his disciples. That means they left whatever they had, and they were wanting to learn from him. John, meanwhile, was trusting in whatever had been told him or giving to him by the Lord

God. Which is why he not only recognized Jesus for who he was (Jesus), but knew him for what he is, that is, the Lamb of God. Then, Andrew and his buddy trust John in what he said about Jesus. They drop John off of their "Follow" list, and immediately "Friend" Jesus. Simon trusts his brother at least enough to come and check out this new guy that he's following (we never get the scoop on what Simon thought about Andrew following John in the first place. We learn elsewhere they had a fishing business, so I'm guessing Simon was none too pleased when Andrew took off to follow John).

So, did you catch those verses in the Psalm as well?

*<sup>3</sup> He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their **trust** in the LORD.*

*<sup>4</sup> Happy are those who make the LORD their **trust**, who do not turn to the proud, to those who go astray after false gods.*

Trust often needs to be earned, doesn't it? Trust is often based on relationships, and relationships takes time.

I came across a survey from a few years ago, done by the Lutheran Church. Lutherans were asked how it was they happened to come to church in the first place. The survey discovered that about 3 percent joined because of denominational identity (they moved to a new place, they were Lutherans, so they looked for a Lutheran church to join in the new place); about 6 percent joined because of a particular program or church event (for the music program, or the youth program); around 4 percent joined because of the preaching and worship life; and a full **80 percent** said they joined the church because a friend or family member invited them. They already had a relationship. There already was trust. That's why they came.

Relationships are all about trust. Christ...is about trust. Don't be like our Fellowship Hall computer with its broken trust relationship. Let us be witnesses to Christ's grace, love, and forgiveness. Let your trust shine!

Amen.

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