

On Christ the Solid Rock I stand all other ground is sinking sand,
all other ground is sinking sand.

This is one of my favorite hymns of all time, and the truth that it conveys, makes this preacher's job this morning easy. I have but a simple message to share with you today, simple, yet important.

And it's this, where you stand in this life matters!

Yesterday we took the new class of confirmands out to Urban Air, it's big warehouse made entirely out of trampolines and obstacle courses. The kids bounced and ran around for hours, I tried to bounce and fell and hurt my shoulder... so to my original point, where you stand matters,

I really enjoyed it, it was a really good opportunity for the kids to begin to get to know each other and for all of the leaders to get to know the kids, just a time to build comradery as we look ahead to this year. I always look forward to working with the confirmation class, because confirmation is a time where we work on foundations. The foundations that these young people will stand upon for many years to come. Where you stand is important.

I have a question for all of you, where do you stand? What are you standing on?

This question for me is one that I constantly have to come back to, especially considering the last couple of years that we have all been going through...Hear me!

Couple of years, who would have thought that we would be beginning another year with covid, who would have thought that we would have been experiencing many of the things that we've seen.

I think quite a few of you heard that I was hit pretty hard by the recent hurricane Ida, my neighborhood was completely under water, I'm ok, everything is ok, but there were a couple of weeks that I had to put on my tall boots and trudge through the mud and water. I wonder how many of us here today are having to do the same in our own lives, trudge through mud...

What are you standing on?

The words of this hymn make more sense to me now, more than ever. On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand...

How easy is it to slip and fall and really spiral out of control, and loose hope, when we aren't standing on solid ground?

Standing on Christ. Standing on Christ's strong foundation, there's no sinking when that's where you're standing.

But how do you get there? How do you stay there?

There is some real wisdom that comes to us this morning out of our epistle reading from James. It says Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful?

They should sing songs of praise. Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up.

The prayer of faith will save us! It will! Here we are searching for meaning and purpose and rejuvenation, faith. How will I find joy, faith! How will I find healing, faith! How will I reconcile this relationship, faith! How will I find stability, faith. Faith, faith, faith.

I don't say this because I think it's easy, your faith only gets challenged in the most dire of circumstance.

And for some of us, it may take a dramatic reorientation in our lives to learn to lean and depend on our faith. Jesus in our gospel talks about living an uncomfortable life, if it will help us to stay focused and faithful.

Jesus says, if your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to the unquenchable fire.

And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell...

You can keep your hands and keep your eyes, but the heart of what Jesus is talking about is that it may take getting rid of something that we cherish as much as our hand if that hand is going to take us out of a faithful place.

Both of these passages are talking about the way we live. The things we do, how when our priorities are God centered, are faith centered...well as James said it can save us all. Our faith has the power to save.

Our faith has the power to change the world, certainly to change this community. How deep does your faith run? Do you believe that your faith in Christ can bring you to solid ground?

Let me tell you about my faith, I like you have been watching the news and have been following this massive humanitarian crisis. The resettlement of so many people out of Afghanistan, and they're coming here to the U.S. to our city.

I have faith that this community can band together to extend Christ's love that we know so well, to welcome our neighbor. I have faith that this love will extend beyond the collection we are taking over to fort dix in 3 weeks, months and years, if need be, into the future.

It matters where you stand, your faith matters, because your faith has the power to save, not just your life, not just my life, but your faith literally has the power to change the world...

My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and
righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly
lean on Jesus' name. On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other
ground is sinking sand, all other ground is sinking sand.

Amen