

“The Good Work”

Scriptures for today: [Psalm 31:9-16](#); [1 Samuel 16:11-13](#); [Philippians 1:1-11](#)

“...being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”

I was melted by that verse one day. I came to the Bible feeling out of sorts, out of touch, and in need of a good jacking up. Instead of a scolding, I received comfort and reassurance. We might ask: What is the good work God is carrying on to complete in ourselves as individuals, as a congregation, and as a nation? Now, when a proud nation with mighty nuclear aircraft carriers and smart weapons is brought to a standstill by a microorganism? Now, when the defense against our enemy is hand-washing and social distancing? Dare we believe that God has a work, a plan for each of us or for our congregation? Such a thought is staggering. And then we remember that Jesus said that even a sparrow's fall doesn't go unnoticed. And that the very hairs on our heads are numbered.

The Apostle Paul saw this. He said that the things that happened to him furthered the proclamation of the gospel. We can find bonding in shared adversity, thoughtfulness in purposeful distancing. Perhaps finding our work is simply doing what we say sometimes, “Put one foot in front of the other and go.” It may be doing what we know to do with the light we have now. This does not preclude vision and dreaming. Those may be part of the plan.

In today's reading from 1 Samuel I picture young David rushing in from the sheep pasture, aglow with fresh air and wonderment at the sudden summons. His work, his plan was profoundly and irrevocably changed by Samuel's anointing oil.

In Psalm 31, a psalm attributed to David, the writer is now old, sick, feeling unloved, and beset by enemies. Yet he says, “But I trust in you, O Lord.” He adds words we can affirm to ourselves and the Lord every time we accelerate onto the highway, “My times are in your hands.”