

# Rev'd Dr. Leander Harding

 Feb  
19  
2008

## Meditation for Evensong at Mere Anglicanism

Sermons

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Mere Anglicanism/ Evensong/ January 31, 2008 The Rev. Dr. Leander Harding

Psalm 84:12 O Lord of hosts, happy are they who put their trust in You.

John 5:40 You will not come to me that you might have life.

Faith has two elements — it has the element of belief and it has the element of trust. They are dynamically related. Belief leads to trust, and trust confirms and deepens belief. Some years ago, when my three sons were small, we built a plywood skiff — a little rowing and sailing boat. We built it very simply in our garage out of lumberyard materials with a view to getting out on Long Island Sound which was nearby. We put a lot of study into our project and we believed, we had faith that we could accomplish it. Our neighbors had grave doubts and were sure our little boat would not float. We persisted. We believed. There came a day of truth and we launched our boat, piled in and had a lovely time rowing around the yacht basin. Some of our neighbors were on hand and they had now come to grudging belief. We four had gone from belief to trust. We trusted our little boat because we knew that it would hold us up. We had put our belief to the test and we had found the boat trustworthy.

For faith to grow, it must be put into action. Belief must issue in an act of trust — which makes possible a growing conviction of the trustworthiness of Him in whom we have believed.

In the Bible, the crisis of faith and trust revolves around God's providence — God has rescued, redeemed and upheld them in the past. But what about today, and what about tomorrow? This is the moment when again and again they lose confidence, falter, and put their trust elsewhere, in chariots and horses, in over-clever alliances, in the false gods of the land — in things that are inherently untrustworthy, which can never hold them up. Especially, it seems to me, the faith and trust of Israel falter when the act of trust which is required is faithful waiting — when God has not acted in the way they want, on the schedule they want, they become anxious, lose faith, and put their trust elsewhere. All our liturgy is an act of remembrance that we might renew our trust in the Lord.

I am finding it difficult in this moment, and I suspect many of you find it difficult, to trust in God's providence for our churches — the Anglican world is in a mess; the situation in North America is very chaotic — it is very hard to see how it might all work out — and easy to believe that the whole ship might sink. There are moments when here and there is some decisive action which seems meet and right to take — but for most faithful clergy and most of the laity, it is as they say in the Army, "Hurry up and wait." We get anxious and impatient.

Here is my prayer for those of us who are waiting and find the waiting hard and a trial and temptation to our faith. It is possible to err by doing the right thing at the wrong time. It is possible to err by doing the right thing at the right time but in the wrong way, and that is impatiently. Good judgment requires patience, and patience is a fruit of the Spirit — a fruit of trust in the Lord. Patience is not passivity; it is waiting on the Lord — acting on His timing and as He leads. Here is my prayer: I pray that God will give us a renewed sense of His trustworthiness and that the Christian virtue of patience which is the fruit of trust in the Lord for His providence will grow in us. That all our actions and decisions individually or corporately will be sober, reverent and deliberate, and will be animated not by impatience, distrust and fear but by confidence in the Lord who will surely hold us up if we put our trust in Him.

Mere Anglicanism, 1-31-08 Evensong Chaplain: The Rev. Dr. Leander Harding

Posted by leander at 9:39 pm

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1. **Dale says:**  
 January 11, 2009 at 12:19 am 

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Dr. Harding,

I really enjoyed this piece. I used it to create another post on the faith, belief, trust and patience relationship. Thank you for posting this.

2. **What is Faith and How Does Patience Fit In? « Dale's Thoughts says:**  
 January 10, 2009 at 11:49 pm

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[...] is not entirely my original work. I've read several Internet sources on this subject, found one that was particularly good and used it for ideas on writing my [...]

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