

SERMON THE 1ST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER - 19 APRIL 2009
St. John's Anglican Church, Greensboro, North Carolina

1 John 5:4 (KJV)

For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

The author of the Letter to the Hebrews tells us that, *Hebrews 11:1 (KJV) Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

We hope for a better life. We have faith that God in his infinite mercy will grant us eternal life and we have faith that *1 John 5:5 (KJV) Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?*

We believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior by faith, and as Jesus told Thomas, *John 20:29 (KJV) because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.*

As I get older, I find that I rely more on faith, that I rely more on faith than understanding. I have found that there is much in this business of Christianity that I cannot, cannot ever understand. But, I have faith, faith that God will provide, God will lead me.

I have found that it is alright to question, to question God. I feel that God already knows my questions and that He doesn't mind me asking those questions, especially the one, Why?

Why is there pain? Why is there suffering? Why is there disease? Why is there death?

Oh! There are many pat answers to those questions. The really easy one is that old standby, that it is God's will.

There used to be a radio personality in Atlanta named Ludlow Porch who would use the

expression, “Bull feathers” as an euphemism.

My reaction to the answer that all that plagues us is due to God’s will is “bull feathers.”

If God loves us so much that he would sacrifice Jesus for our sins, I cannot believe for one minute that the suffering in this world is due to His, God’s, will. I cannot believe that all the disease, all the pain that goes around is “God’s will.”

Maybe if you are a Muslim you could buy into that line.

But as a Christian I can’t. I can’t and I don’t think you should either.

There are times when “stuff” happens. There are time when “stuff” will happen to any or all of us at any given time. But, I cannot believe that it is due to “God’s will.”

We, as Christians, have the Supreme Deity that is pure love. It was that love that held Jesus to the Cross, not the nails. It is that love that when we reach a point in our lives that we look up to heaven and cry, as Jesus himself cried from the cross, “My God! My God! Why have you forsaken me!” that reaches down , down from the Cross and takes us in his arms.

It is that love as we go through the crucifixion of living our lives here on earth that takes and connects us to His suffering and pain, to bear our suffering and pain for us.

“Come to me all that labor and are heavy laden.”

Easter tells the story. Easter tells the story that our life does not end at the cross, the cross of our mortal life.

Easter tells us the story that as God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten son to die for our failures, for our sins, for our disappointment to God himself for not loving

Him with all our being.

Yes, even that. God still loved us that He died on the Cross for us even when we have disappointed him.

It is faith, the faith that God will lead us and love us no matter what, that will have us pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, tell God that we love him and ask for him to forgive us and crawl back on the road to our journey with him, our journey with him to our own Easter Sunday, our own Resurrection Day.

It is faith that will overcome, overcome everything, even ourselves.

Amen.