

**September 1, 2013**

**Jeremiah 2: 6a**

They did not say, "Where is the LORD  
who brought us up from the land of Egypt,  
who led us in the wilderness,  
in a land of deserts and pits,  
in a land of drought and deep darkness,  
in a land that no one passes through,  
where no one lives?"

**Hebrews 13: 1-8, 15-16**

<sup>1</sup>Let mutual love continue. <sup>2</sup>Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. <sup>3</sup>Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured. <sup>4</sup>Let marriage be held in honor by all, and let the marriage bed be kept undefiled; for God will judge fornicators and adulterers. <sup>5</sup>Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, "I will never leave you or forsake you." <sup>6</sup>So we can say with confidence,

"The Lord is my helper;  
I will not be afraid.  
What can anyone do to me?"

<sup>7</sup>Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. <sup>8</sup>Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

<sup>15</sup>Through him, then, let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name. <sup>16</sup>Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

**Sermon – "Why we are good"**

1<sup>st</sup> question any child asks... WHY?

As parents we have to fight the temptation to reply: "Because I say so!"

Opened worship with a series of quotes about the value of asking "why?"

Wisdom evolves

Wisdom is cumulative

Wisdom is like a growing thing

Jeremiah poses a simple but profoundly important question: "Where' God? The God who got us out of Egypt."

It is a blunt challenge to those who thought they were self-sufficient – who had nothing to learn from the past – who had no obligations to the future.

In essence God says: "If you want to know who I am and how I operate, look what I did in the Exodus.

When we collect lost and found clothing, clean it and distribute it, we're not simply being nice people.

- Why? Do we do nice things?
- What's behind it?
- Where's the history?
- What motivates us?

Jeremiah reminds the Israelites that their destiny, their identity is hinged to God and this is not a hardship because God is made known to us over history in acts of love.

During the time when Christianity is just emerging – when people were trying to figure out how being a Christian might be different from being Jewish – the writer of Hebrews reminds us that our God is a God of love – a God who cares deeply for us.

As we take our lead from Jesus and see the ways we can put that love in action.

So, in Hebrews, there is a long discussion about hospitality, prisoners, marriage... because doing good is part of our Christian identity.

We discover the "why?" of doing good from this passage.

- This is more than secular concept of common good => we are motivated by belief in the grace of Christ.
- We are motivated to live/act on the basis of our faith.
- We know that we can't only be Christians 'in' church – we are called to serve 'outside' the church.

Our holy living – our acts of service and compassion are grounded, rooted in the reminder "to remember."

Acts of goodness = living worship

Not forgetting

Always knowing "why?"