

Trust that Enables Hope

ST. CROIX CHURCH
JUNE 21, 2026
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Romans 5.1-6 (Personal Paraphrase)

- **Pieces begin to fall into place for us as we're able to trust deeply. Then we get to know peace with God. This is all thanks to Jesus Christ, who made that kind of trust possible for us. Indeed, we received, as a gift, this trust that becomes the solid foundation for our lives. Now, we delight in hope as our trust leads us into the beautiful imagination of God.**

Romans 5.1-6 (Personal Paraphrase)

- Our trust means we can even hold onto this delight in the middle of pain and struggle, because we know that this suffering deepens our ability to endure what is difficult. And that endurance forms our character, a character that is oriented toward hope. Even in hard times, this hope will not disappoint us because regardless of our circumstances, regardless of what happens, God's love for us, and the love God gives us for others, fills our hearts through his gift of the Holy Spirit, and that's what matters more than anything else. What Jesus showed us is that God's love for us is limitless, even when we were at our weakest and most messed up, even when we weren't looking in the direction of God at all.

Etty Hillesum

- But I can't help feeling that every hotly championed philosophy hides a little lie. That it must fall short of 'the truth'. And yet I myself will have to find a philosophy to live by, a fenced-in space of my own, violently seized and passionately defended. But then wouldn't that be giving life short change? The alternative may well be floundering in uncertainty and chaos.

Etty Hillesum

- "The few great things that matter in life can be said in a few words ... All that words should do is lend the silence form and contours."

Etty Hillesum

- I opened the Bible at random, but it gave me no answers this morning. Just as well, because there were no questions, just enormous faith and gratitude that life should be so beautiful, and that makes this a historic moment, that and not the fact that S. and I are on our way to the Gestapo this morning.

Etty Hillesum

- “How odd: not a single one of the day's worries and alarms has followed me here; I sit at my desk "untouched," immersed in my studies as if nothing were happening in the world outside. Everything has simply fallen away from me, leaving no trace, and I feel more "receptive" than ever before. Next week no doubt it will be the turn of the Dutch Jews. With each minute that passes I shed more wishes and desires and attachments. There are moments when I can see right through life and the human heart, when I understand more and more and become calmer and calmer and am filled with a trust in God that has grown so quickly inside me that it frightened me at first but has now become inseparable from me. And now to work.

Etty Hillesum

- I don't feel in anybody's clutches; I feel safe in God's arms, to put it rhetorically, and no matter whether I am sitting at this beloved old desk now, or in a bare room in the Jewish district, or perhaps in a labor camp under SS guards in a month's time-I shall always feel safe in God's arms. They may well succeed in breaking me physically, but no more than that. I may face cruelty and deprivation the likes of which I cannot imagine in even my wildest fantasies. Yet all this is as nothing to the immeasurable expanse of my trust in God and my inner receptiveness. I shall always be able to stand on my own two feet even when they are planted on the hardest soil of the harshest reality. And my acceptance is not indifference or helplessness. I feel deep moral indignation at a regime that treats human beings in such a way. But events have become too overwhelming and too demonic to be stemmed with personal resentment and bitterness.

Etty Hillesum

- I know two sorts of loneliness. One makes me feel dreadfully unhappy, lost and forlorn, the other makes me feel strong and happy. The first always appears when I feel out of touch with my fellow human beings, with everything, when I am completely cut off from others and from myself and can see no purpose in life or any connection between things, nor have the slightest idea where I fit in. With the other kind of loneliness, by contrast, I feel very strong and certain and connected with everyone and everything and with God, and realise that I can manage on my own and that I am not dependent upon others. Then I know that I am part of a meaningful whole and that I can impart a great deal of strength to others.

Alexandra Pleshoyano (Conclusion to her essay on Hillesum)

- Why talk of God nowadays? Etty suggests that God helps us transcend fear by faith (trust), listening to the inner life within ourselves and within others. God gives us a reason for living and encourages us to preserve harmony in our inner households, filled as they are with so many conflicting, disparate elements. God helps us to keep believing in humanity, to find the strength to live in the present moment and the courage to trust in it, to live in a spirit of praise and gratitude for the life which is beautiful despite everything. But perhaps the most important reason for speaking of God is a fundamental desire: in the end, we wish to walk for God and with God, simply out of God's love.