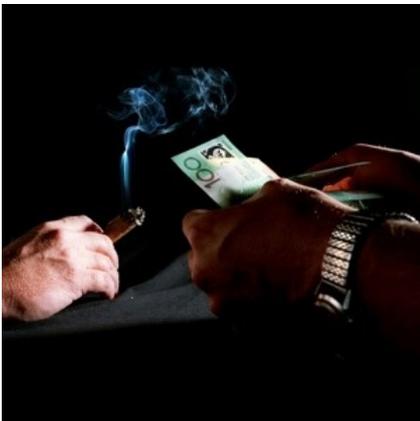
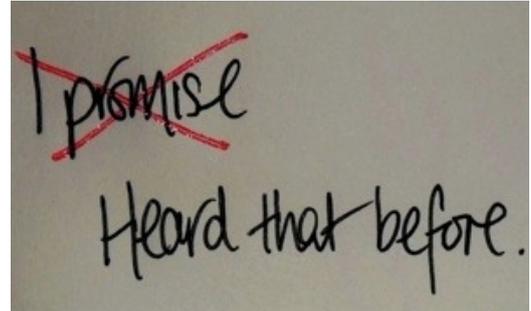


Cantata BWV 93: If We Will Trust in God to Guide Us

Trust is a currency that is in increasingly short supply today. At the political level, trust has been eroded by a long line of broken promises: we will keep funding for schools and hospitals; we will cut taxes; we are standing right behind the leader; there will be no challenge to the Prime Minister.



Business leaders, union officials and workers are not off the hook either. Are we surprised at the fact that some Australian businesses paid bribes to secure work in countries where bribery is endemic? Are we shocked at the standover tactics of some bent union officials to secure personal kickbacks or funding for their political campaigns?



And this week we witnessed the release of the so-called

Panama papers, some 2.6 terabytes of data about how the rich, the famous, and the infamous shift money around the world so as to avoid paying tax. The King of Saudi Arabia, the presidents of Argentina, Ukraine, Pakistan, Iceland, Chinese state officials, Russian oligarchs, FIFA officials, countless thousands upon thousands of high-value individuals, including 800 individual Australian taxpayers, although I use the term taxpayer advisedly.



It seems that these untrustworthy individuals have put their trust in their wealth by seeking to maximise it. Others put their trust in the power they wield over others, and seek to hold on to it at all costs. But what about us. We're not like these people. We don't have the wealth or the clout. True maybe, but we all face trust issues. We know what's it's like to have trust broken, to be let down by people we once counted on. And we certainly haven't always kept our word. We have made promises we had no hope or intention of keeping.

So how do we live in a world of trust deficit? We can adopt an automatic posture of suspicion of others. That seems to be the default position of many today. But the

end point of this attitude is a hard heart, a corrosive attitude and a diminished life.

Today's Cantata is based on my favourite hymn. "If we will trust in God to guide us." It's written in a minor key, but to me it speaks of a simple trust in God, and a spirituality that is fit for the purpose of contemporary life.

Trust means placing ourselves in the hands of another. The English translation of the first verse of both cantata and hymn doesn't quite capture the intent of the German: If only we would let the God who loves us have full rein/do as he pleases. This is easy to say, but much harder to put into practice. The Cantata speaks of many difficulties that come our way, "heavy worries that press on our heart with a hundred pains, with a thousand fears and sorrow," without exaggeration.



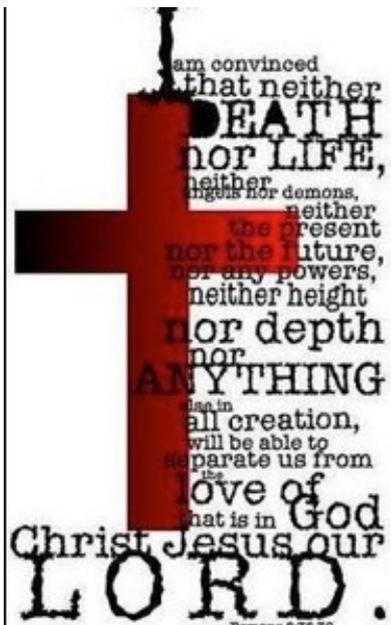
To be human is to worry. But you may remember Jesus' words: "Do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' ... Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today." Too true, but on what basis does Jesus call us not to worry?

"Indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things," Jesus says. But "The Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom," and that



gift trumps all trouble because it contains the promise of God's saving, guiding presence for all time. And this gift comes through Jesus, who lived a life of perfect obedience and through his sacrificial death, showed us beyond any shadow of

doubt that God can be trusted with our lives. As Bach directs us: "Therefore only trust, during poverty, suffering and pain in your Jesus' goodness with a faithful conscience; after rain he will bring sunshine."



Trust in God, that God is for us, always and in every situation, is grounded in the life, the death, the resurrection of Jesus. As Paul writes in Romans 8: "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

I love the simple prescription given in the Chorale which closes the Cantata.

“Sing, pray and be prepared to follow with faithfulness along God’s way, and trust the heavenly Father’s blessings: then you will find them new each day. For those who trust in God to lead, he never will forsake in need.”

This is a sustainable spirituality, a faith for the long haul, that enables us to weather the storms of life and to come out the other side, trusting the one whose love for us is rock solid, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

