

6/1/08

THE PSALM AND THE INVOCATION

Psalm 119:9-16

Lay Minister: 9 How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word.

People: 10 I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands.

Lay Minister: 11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

People: 12 Praise be to you, O LORD; teach me your decrees.

Lay Minister: 13 With my lips I recount all the laws that come from your mouth.

People: 14 I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches.

Lay Minister: 15 I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways.

People: 16 I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.

Lay Minister: We begin our worship, seeking the Lord with all our hearts.

People: We begin, in the name of the All Powerful and All Loving God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY Almighty God, You caused Your holy Word to be written for our instruction so that our lives may be lived in accordance with Your will. Grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may carefully hear Your Word and build our lives on the solid foundation of Jesus Christ, that Your love may flow through us to all whom You love; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and rules with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Deuteronomy 11:18-21, 26-28

(God encourages His chosen people to pay attention to His Word.)

18 Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. 19 Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 20 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates, 21 so that your days and the days of your children may be many in the land that the LORD swore to give your forefathers, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth. . .

26 See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse-- 27 the blessing if you obey the commands of the LORD your God that I am giving you today; 28 the curse if you disobey the commands of the LORD your God and turn from the way that I command you today by following other gods, which you have not known.

THE EPISTLE LESSON Romans 3:21-28

(A Christian is made right before God by faith, not by obedience to the law.)

21 But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. 22 This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. 25 God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in

his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished-- 26 he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

27 Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. 28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.

THE GOSPEL LESSON Matthew 7:21-29

(Jesus instructs His followers not only to listen to His Word, but to put it into practice in their lives.)

21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

28 When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, 29 because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.

INTRO - When worship is over today I will hop into my car and drive to the airport. Next week my god daughter is getting married. And, my parents are getting older, and my mom has not been well. Last summer we gathered together at our church to celebrate their 80th birthdays and the man who has really been our pastor for the last 43 years sat with us and said mainly to my brothers and sisters again, “You know, your mom and dad have sought to live godly lives. And you are blessed by their faith, and their faithfulness. You can see that today.”

He was right, the lives of my parents have been a blessing to themselves and others, as they have sought to follow the Lord. I am not saying they are perfect. Kids know better about their parents. But, for those who know and follow the Lord, there are benefits, blessings for life.

I. That is basically what Jesus is saying in our lesson for today.

A. Many misunderstand Jesus’ words here. They think that Jesus is calling us simply hearing Jesus’ words and learning what he says.

1. But notice, it wasn’t only the wise man who heard Jesus’ words. We are also told the foolish man heard his words.

2. The difference is, the wise man heard Jesus words and did them. The foolish man heard Jesus words and did not do what Jesus taught.

B. There is wisdom, and there are blessings, when someone follows and obeys the Lord.

1. It is not that storms don’t come.

2. But when storms come, the person who hears God’s word and does it, will be able to stand with the help, in the grace and strength of God.

II. You know that recently I finished the paper for my doctorate and sent it in. When I sent it in on April 24th to the reader, the Director of the program, he sent it back with corrections. Do you know how many there were? 400+!! I thought it was a good document. Most of the corrections were formatting and punctuation, but there were still over 400 changes to make.

A. How do you do when you stand up to the standards set by someone else, to the standards set by God? After all, Jesus talks about the man who hears and DOES what His teachings and word say.

1, Well, this parable comes at the end of Jesus’ sermon on the mount. Let’s consider some of his teachings.

A. In Matthew 5, Jesus calls for our lives to be lives that bring God glory and lead others to praise him. Do all your deeds praise God?

B. Jesus talks about the fact that the Jews taught that murder was sinful.

Jesus says hateful words deserve eternal punishment. Have you ever spoken mean or hateful words to someone. Do you hear and KEEP, Jesus’ word?

C. Jesus says that while adultery is a sin, anyone who lusts has broken this commandment. Do you keep your mind free from lust, and your life sexually pure?

D. Jesus says that a person’s words should always be true and trustworthy. Has a lie ever gotten you into difficulty?

E. Jesus calls us to love our enemies. How do you treat those who hurt you?

F. Jesus calls us to pray, not to worry, but to trust our heavenly Father.

2. So, when it comes to hearing Jesus Word, AND KEEPING it, how are you

doing?

3. It sounds like people in Jesus time had issues similar to ours, violence, sexual immorality, lying, worry and doubt.

A. But, did you know that people who study our culture say that more and more, people may hear something and say they believe it, but then not follow through with their actions.

B. Sounds like the man who heard God's word, and didn't do it.

C. Have you had any problems in life? Has your house ever fallen? Can any of them be traced to your sinful behavior? We shouldn't be surprised, should we?

III. Last week I took my car in for a rattle I had, and a service engine light that was on. The verdict was the catalytic converter needs replacing. I asked the man, what will it cost. He told me, "Well, a little over \$400.00 if we do it, but, it's only about \$250 for the part. Of course, it's against the fire wall, and takes some welding. But if you want to do it yourself, we can order the part." Any one who knows my mechanic record knows that's a joke. Me do it myself! Not that I wouldn't like to save the money, but, especially the first time I would cause more problems than I would fix. I'm sure the \$150.00 I'd save would be eaten up in repairs for my repairs. But... I don't have to do it, do I? The shop is going to replace it.

A. Jesus has called us to hear his words, and do them. We really can't do that, can we?

1. I want you to know, that Jesus not only calls us to obedience, he has obeyed God's law for us!

2. Jesus kept the whole law, so Jesus death doesn't have to pay for His sin, it can pay for ours. His resurrection offers eternal life all who believe in him.

B. We still struggle in this world, but we don't have to give up hope.

1. There may be crashes, We face death. But the one who has kept God's law, is with us in love.

2. He keeps us from the big crash. He has eternal life waiting.

C. He also changes our hearts with his love so we can not only hear his words, but we can actually work to follow him with our hearts. And those who hear and do the words of God, build their lives on solid ground.

CONCLUSION - Friday I was in court, testifying. Interestingly the prosecuting attorney asked me a theological question. "Do Christians do better at rehabilitation?" I told her that just because a person claims to be a Christian doesn't mean they change. But, if a person is sincere in their faith, if they know their unworthiness, and know God's undeserved love in Jesus, that love of God can change a heart. It can change a person.

None of us have perfectly heard and done Jesus' Words. But, Jesus still came to earth for us. He still died for us. He still rose for us. Today he calls us in the Lord's Supper to forgiveness, and love, and life.

I pray that the undeserved love of Jesus may change your heart, and that as God blesses you, you may hear and keep the teaching of Jesus, and find blessings in this life, and eternal life through God's grace in heaven.