

9/14/2008

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

Lay Minister: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Lay Minister: Let us pray.

(Silence for reflection)

Lay Minister: Loving Father, as we gather again around the Word and Sacraments,

People: we give You thanks for those who labor in the ministry of nurture,

Lay Minister: so that through the Word and Sacraments,

People: our faith may be strengthened, and our lives enriched.

Lay Minister: Help us to grow in knowledge and faith as we study your Word.

People: Help us to live what we believe,

Lay Minister: through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord,

People: who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

Deuteronomy 6:4-12

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(God tells His people to teach His teachings to their

children.)

⁴ Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵ Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. ⁷ Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸ Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹ Write them on the door frames of your houses and on your gates.

¹⁰ When the LORD your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you -- a land with large, flourishing cities you did not build, ¹¹ houses filled with all kinds of good things you did not provide, wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant -- then when you eat and are satisfied, ¹² be careful that you do not forget the LORD, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. (NIV)

THE EPISTLE LESSON

2 Peter 3:17-18

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¹⁷ **Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position.**

¹⁸ **But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.**

THE GOSPEL LESSON

Mark 10:13-15

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¹³ People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴ When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. ¹⁵ I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a

little child will never enter it." ¹⁶ And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.

INTRO - Much of the news this week has reminded us of the attack on our country by terrorists 7 years ago this past September 11. I heard one leader of our country when talking about our security since the attack say, "It is amazing we have not had another such attack. Part of that," he said, "is probably luck. But, part of the reason there has not been an attack shows the effectiveness of the policies of protection that were put into place." This leader was saying that the efforts of our country to stay safe had, to a certain extent worked.

I. In our epistle lesson for today, Peter warns of a danger faced by Christians,

A. ¹⁷ **Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position.**

1. Peter indicates that the church to which He is writing is in a secure position.
2. But, there is a real danger of falling from that position, and they need to protect against the danger of falling, of being carried away with error, of losing faith.
3. They have the security of the love of God, His forgiveness, the assurance of eternal life. But they could lose it.

B. As children of God we have blessings that we often forget, overlook, or take for granted.

1. We have been called in the love of God to faith in Jesus as our Savior.
2. We have the assurance of God's undying love and forgiveness through the sacrificial dying of Jesus.
3. We have the assurance of eternal life in paradise, where there is no more crying, or pain, or death, because Jesus rose.
4. This is not something we earn, but a gift given as we believe in Jesus as our Savior. Therefore, we have a joy and peace that others do not know.
5. But, in taking it for granted we can risk losing the security and blessings we have.

II. Another news story this week has been Hurricane Ike and it's landfall in Texas. This huge storm hit Texas and brought winds and flood and destruction. There was nothing to do to stop the storm, or the floods. But, people could save their lives and they were called to flee the area.

A. Storms come in life, we all know that.

1. This week we have had members in the hospital unexpectedly.
2. We have been in a new kind of war now for 7 years, and even if our country leaves the country of Iraq, the threat of terrorism continues.
3. Each of us face personal difficulties that cause distress and worry.

B. Those are temporal storms. But storms are also attacking the faith of God's people.

1. In our country, the faith of the church is becoming less and less accepted. In the 2000 census there was no county or Borough in North America where there

was a higher percentage of Christians than in the 1990 census. It is worse in 2008.

2. People are being led astray by the deceit of this world.
3. Where do you feel pulled from the Lord?

III. A. Many of you know the parable Jesus told about the house built on the rock and the house built on the sand.

A. Like the approach of hurricane Ike, this parable does not say that storms can be kept away.

1. Jesus says, that when the storms of life come that building your life or house on the rock will help you weather those storms.
2. People build on that rock through hearing and following the Word of God.

B. That is what God calls for in today's lesson.

1. In the dangerous world where God warns us through Peter that the deceit of this world can cause one to fall, We are called to protection from losing the blessings of God.

2. ¹⁷ **Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position.** ¹⁸ ***But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.***

3. Growth in God's grace, growth in knowledge of God and his love protect God's people from falling from His grace and blessings.

C. Today we begin again an opportunity to grow in God's grace and knowledge through our Sunday School and Bible Classes.

1. There are classes for children beginning at age 3, classes for youth, classes for adults. Soon there will be a class from God's Word for those 1 ½ and older.

2. Do you want to stay firm in God's grace in the midst of this life's storms? **Grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord.**

3. Do you want your children, not just to begin as God's children, but to stay children of God? Help them to grow in God's grace and knowledge. Help them to regularly hear and learn the Word of God.

4. I do believe God's promise of Isaiah 55:11 **so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.**

5. I also believe God's promise of Proverbs 22:6 **Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.**

CONCLUSION - We live in a world of change and excitement. Things are changing around us with technology, with culture, with exciting new opportunities. If there is anything that seems old and uninteresting it can be, Sunday School.

Peter also tells us in 1 Peter 1, **23 For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of**

God. 24 For, "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, 25 but the word of the Lord stands forever." And this is the word that was preached to you.

The new life that endures forever is born in us through the Word of God. I encourage you to find time to attend, and to bring your children and grand children.