

11/1/2009

THE PSALM AND THE CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalm 34

Lay Minister: Let us encourage each other for the struggles of faith and life by speaking to one another the Word of God.

People: As we gather to worship, Lord open our ears and lips.

Lay Minister: 1 I will extol the LORD at all times;

People: his praise will always be on my lips.

Lay Minister: 2 My soul will boast in the LORD;

People: let the afflicted hear and rejoice.

Lay Minister: 3 Glorify the LORD with me; let us exalt his name together.

People: 4 I sought the LORD, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.

Lay Minister: 5 Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame.

People: 6 This poor man called, and the LORD heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles.

Lay Minister: 7 The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him,

People: and he delivers them.

Lay Minister: 8 Taste and see that the LORD is good;

People: blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.

Lay Minister: 9 Fear the LORD, you his saints, for those who fear him lack nothing.

People: 10 The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.

Lay Minister: 11 Come, my children, listen to me;

People: I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

Lay Minister: O Saints of the Lord, fear and praise Him (v. 9), for He saves us out of all our troubles (v. 6)

People: Amen. We begin our worship in praise of the Lord, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY Almighty Lord, everlasting God, You knit together Your faithful people of all times and places into one holy Christian Church, the body of Your Son, Jesus Christ, who is the head. Grant that we may follow those who have gone before us in faith in all faithful and godly living. Grant also that by your grace we may together come to the unspeakable joys of the New Jerusalem which You have prepared for those who love You; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

THE FIRST LESSON

Revelation 21:1-7, 22:1-5

(God gives us a picture of the new Jerusalem, where His people will live with Him eternally.)

1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the

dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

5 He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." 6 He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. 7 He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. . .

Revelation 22:1 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. 3 No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. 4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

THE EPISTLE LESSON Hebrews 12:1–3

(As we persevere in this life God reminds us of the example of other believers and the suffering of His Son, Jesus.)

1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. 2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, **so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.**

THE GOSPEL LESSON Matthew 5:1-12

(Jesus speaks the Beatitudes, telling us how God blesses His people in times of trial.)

1 Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, 2 and he began to teach them, saying:

3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

5 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before

you.

THE SERMON “Who Will be Helped by YOUR Example of Faith?” Hebrew 12

INTRO - Years ago there used to be a drug rehabilitation center out Fishhook Road called, Teen Challenge. It was run by Eric Tomassino. Eric told his story in public a number of times. He was a man from Philadelphia who had been addicted to drugs himself. With the help of others he had come to know Jesus; and the forgiveness and love of Jesus helped him to find a new life which he was now sharing with others. These young men came to Teen Challenge because they were at the end of their ropes and could no longer face what they had done to their lives. Eric, a man who had found help for the same problem in Jesus was giving them encouragement so they did not become weary and give up, but looked for the help of Jesus themselves to keep going.

I. That is the intent of today’s epistle lesson on this All Saints day.

A. It helps to read this section of Scripture from back to front to understand it. to

1. We are warned in verse 3 so **that you will not grow weary and lose heart.** When God’s people grow weary from the need for perseverance, for dealing with trial and temptation, we need help so **that you will not grow weary and lose heart.**

2. But, we don’t keep going on our own strength. Verses 2 and 3 say, **2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.** Our real strength comes from fixing our eyes on Jesus and knowing that God himself sacrificed and suffered contempt from sinners to love and forgive me. Imagine that the one who sits at the right hand of the throne of God took the cross for me, endured the opposition of sinful men for me. He did this in spite of my sin. This forgiveness and this love changes lives!

3. So verse 1 tells us **since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.** We are to find encouragement from the witness of others to keep going.

1 Chapter 12 follows a long list of people of faith in chapter 11.

2. These include Abel, Noah, Abaham, Isaac, Moses, and many

others.

3. These people, through their trials, their failures, looked to the promise of God’s love through the Messiah.

4. The example of these witnesses can help the people this letter is written to, can help Christians today to **fix our eyes on Jesus,** He is our hope!

II. Please take a moment and take your pencil and write down 3 names.

A. Who has been an example to you?

1. Who in the Bible has helped you to **fix your eyes on Jesus . . . so you won't grow weary and lose heart?** This is a way the believers, the saints of Scripture continue to help us.
 2. Who from your family has helped you to **fix your eyes on Jesus . . . so you won't grow weary and lose heart? so that you will not grow weary and lose heart?** This is a way the believers, the saints of today made holy by Jesus' forgiveness help us.
 3. Who in your life today has helped you to **fix your eyes on Jesus . . . so you won't grow weary and lose heart? so that you will not grow weary and lose heart?** This is a way God uses our friends who are believers, the saints of today made holy by Jesus' forgiveness, to help us.
- B. My inspiration from Scripture is a real bumbler, a man of weakness, whom Jesus still called to serve - Peter.
1. Peter was called by Jesus, but knew he was a sinner.
 2. Peter was often stumbling, and at times failed Jesus.
 3. But Jesus used this sinner as the leader of the church to bring the Gospel around the world. Peter did not trust himself, but Jesus and his love and forgiveness.
 4. This example is an encouragement to me to **fix my eyes on Jesus . . . so I don't grow weary and lose heart?**
- C. The inspiration from my family, and I am blessed to have many, was especially my grandfather. He struggled with faith and life, but always made sure to encourage me in love and word, and even though others didn't always think so, by example, as far as I could tell. His example is an encouragement to me to **fix my eyes on Jesus . . . so I don't grow weary and lose heart?**
- D. My inspiration today is the man I still consider my pastor. He is not perfect, he endures and seeks faithfulness to God and to God's people. He has and continues to serve me in this way.
- E. Who have you written down that inspired you? His example is an encouragement to me to **fix my eyes on Jesus . . . so I don't grow weary and lose heart?**

III. Do you watch sports? Do you know who Charles Barkley is? Today's he's a broadcaster, but when he was a player he often got into trouble. When he got into trouble he was famous for saying, "I don't want to be a role model for children or others." Even if he didn't want to be a role model, however, they looked to him and his example.

- A. The question today is, Who will be helped by YOUR example of faith? Which friend, family member, or person in the community has seen your faith and is using your example as encouragement to look to Jesus, as you do?
1. You may not want to be an example, but you are.
 2. But, the idea is not to point others to ourselves, but to the Savior whose love changes our lives!
- B. You, and all of us today, are actually saints. We aren't holy because of what we do, but we are made holy by the love and forgiveness of Jesus.
1. God is using His church today. (Pictures)
 2. He is using you to encourage others, to point them to Jesus and His love and forgiveness as your strength.

CONCLUSION - It has happened to Pastor Allen and to me. A child will tell their mom, "There's God!" Whether we like it or not we are examples. But, we are people who are not perfect, but forgiven and live in that forgiveness. How about you. Who will be helped by YOUR example of faith? As others have been an example and pointed you to the love of Jesus, who is watching you?