

10/3/2010

**THE PSALM AND THE CALL TO WORSHIP Psalm 62:1-8** *A psalm of David*

Lay Minister: 1 My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him.

**People: 2 He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.**

Lay Minister: 3 How long will you assault a man? Would all of you throw him down-- this leaning wall, this tottering fence?

**People: 4 They fully intend to topple him from his lofty place; they take delight in lies. With their mouths they bless, but in their hearts they curse.**

Lay Minister: 5 Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him.

**People: 6 He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken.**

Lay Minister: 7 My salvation and my honor depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge.

**People: 8 Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.**

Lay Minister: We begin our worship trusting in the one who alone is our rock, our salvation, our fortress and our refuge.

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

Lay Minister: (louder) Praise the Lord and trust Him.

**People: (louder still!) Amen**

**THE PRAYER OF THE DAY O God our heavenly Father, give us faith according to the will of your Son and the power of the Spirit, that we may respond to your every call, even to forgive. We pray through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

**THE EPISTLE LESSON** 2 Timothy 1:1-14

*(Pastor Timothy is called to treasure and protect his sincere faith.)*

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus, 2 To Timothy, my dear son: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. 3 I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. 4 Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. 5 I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. 6 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. 7 For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

8 So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, 9 who has saved us and called us to a holy life-- not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, 10 but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

11 And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. 12 That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day. 13 What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. 14 Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you-- guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

### **THE GOSPEL LESSON** Luke 17:1-10

*(The disciples ask for greater faith.)*

1 Jesus said to his disciples: **"Things that cause people to sin are bound to come, but woe to that person through whom they come. 2 It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around his neck than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin. 3 So watch yourselves. "If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. 4 If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, 'I repent,' forgive him."**

5 The apostles said to the Lord, **"Increase our faith!"** 6 He replied, **"If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you. 7 "Suppose one of you had a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Would he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, 'Come along now and sit down to eat'? 8 Would he not rather say, 'Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink'? 9 Would he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? 10 So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.'"**

### **THE SERMON** "Impossible Faith because of the Lord we Trust" Luke 17

INTRO -Maybe you've had the experience I have hiking in some of the local mountains. I'm not used to walking and climbing like some. I am used to fishing and hunting, and other exercise. One beautiful day about 15 or 16 years ago I took the family hiking up Lazy Mountain. Tim was about 2, and I carried him most of the first quarter of the distance. We left him and Kathy and kept hiking. Finally, when I was getting tired, I could see the crest of the mountain ahead of me, I thought. I climbed and gave it my all, glad to finally reach the top, when I realized that I hadn't reached the top, I had only crested one of the many hills on the way to the top. I felt like I had worked hard and was tired getting to where I had gotten, but now I

needed to hike more, quite a bit more?

I. Jesus calls the disciples to a difficult task, and they balk, so he tells them a story.

A. **"If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you. .**

1. But, what I really want you to do is something more difficult than what seems impossible.

2. I want you to live with character as children of God in a world of sin.

B. First, beware of sinning yourselves. Don't lead others to sin. Especially set a good example for children. **"Things that cause people to sin are bound to come, but woe to that person through whom they come. 2 It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around his neck than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin.**

C. And secondly, as you work hard not to sin, I want you to forgive others who sin against you. **"If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. 4 If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, 'I repent,' forgive him."**

1. Act with character. If someone sins against you, talk to him about this sin as spiritually dangerous to their own well being.

2. Act with character, if your brother or your friend sins against you, but says he's sorry, don't hold it against him, forgive him.

3. In fact, act with such character that not only do you stay away from sinful behavior, but you are willing to forgive those who sin against you many times, even seven times in a day.

4. You think commanding a tree to move is difficult. Try resisting sin and living a holy life yourself, while graciously forgiving others who fail.

D. No wonder the disciples responded the way they did.

1. **5 The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!"**

2. In other words, Lord, we are weak and sinful people. To resist sin can seem impossible.

3. But, to forgive those who do sin. That seems beyond our ability.

II. This month we are considering the Call of Discipleship. The Disciples in today's lesson had it right. It calls for Faith. "Increase our Faith" They prayed. But, they may not have known that faith didn't come from them, it came from God. So Jesus told a parable to explain the faith the disciples should have, and to explain God's way of dealing with this situation.

Jesus told his disciples, 'If you have a *servant*, you expect that servant to serve you, not you to serve them. That is what a servant is for. So, if you are children of God, you likewise should do what a child of God does. You are expected to do the difficult things. Your attitude to my teaching should be. "Yes Lord. We'll do what you say. We are only unworthy servants. We seek only to do what we are told to do."

A. So, when Jesus calls us to difficult tasks, He expect us to do them.

1. He expects us to actually seek to live faithful and holy lives in a world which has given itself over to selfish desires and sin.

2. He expects us to love and forgive our enemies, even though that may seem difficult.

3. He expects us to continue to see Him, even though the world around us is full of sin and evil.
4. God expects us to live in His family the church, even though everyone else in the church, like me, is sinful and weak.
5. God expects me to live as a child of God in a world which rejects God, in a world which rejects his authority, and in a world which makes fun of his followers.

B. But, we don't always live a life of love, and righteousness and faith.

1. We can be and often are selfish, mean spirited, lazy, greedy.
2. It can seem that living as a Child of God is impossible, and the harder we try.

III. In the news this week there was a story that a man had done the *previously* impossible. He had actually flown in a wing flapping contraption that was powered by that man's legs. It was announced this September 23, that on August 2, a student at the University of Toronto made history with a machine called 'The Snowbird.' He flew for 19.2 seconds a total of 475 feet in a machine that flaps its wings. People have been trying to do this for centuries. What allowed this man to do the impossible? He wasn't stronger. He had studied aeronautical engineering enough to discover what physical characteristics would allow him to do the what no one else had done, the seemingly impossible.

A. What knowledge allows me to do the impossible, to obey the Lord to do what seems beyond my ability?

1. The disciples had it right. Faith that knows and trusts God.
2. Jesus told the story of the servant who served dinner for a reason. When the servant knows the master is master, and the servant is the servant, the servant does what servants do. When we know that Jesus is the Lord, the Creator, and that we are children of God. That is the beginning.

B. But, the difference is that in this account, Jesus, the Son of God, is on this earth, because He came to sacrifice His life, to forgive and save his people.

1. Who IS the Servant?
2. Jesus said, "The son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."

C. When we know that Jesus is God, yet as servant He gave himself, that Changes our hearts.

1. It leads us to trust God's love
2. It leads us to follow His call, even to obey, even to forgive.

CONCLUSION - This year we are considering what the Christian life looks like. This month we are considering discipleship. God's followers know Him so well, their faith shows in obedience, even when God calls us to do the impossible, to love the unloveable. We don't do that because of our strength, but, because we love and trust the God who called us.