

11/7/2010

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY O Lord, almighty and everlasting God, throughout the ages You have revealed yourself to us in power and mercy and wisdom, especially through Your Son, Jesus. Give us humble minds and hearts to trust your wisdom and believe your words, so that by Your grace we may receive the gift of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Exodus 3:1–15

(God reveals Himself to Moses and promises His help and presence.)

1 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2 There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. 3 So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight-- why the bush does not burn up." 4 When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am." 5 "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." 6 Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

7 The LORD said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. 8 So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey-- the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. 9 And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. 10 So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt."

11 But Moses said to God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" 12 And God said, "I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain." 13 Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"

14 God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" 15 God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers-- the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob-- has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation.

THE GOSPEL LESSON Luke 20:27–40

(The Sadducees, a Jewish sect, try to trap Jesus with their idea of wisdom.)

27 Some of the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Jesus with a question. 28 "Teacher," they said, "Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and have children for his

brother. 29 Now there were seven brothers. The first one married a woman and died childless. 30 The second 31 and then the third married her, and in the same way the seven died, leaving no children. 32 Finally, the woman died too. 33 Now then, at the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?"

34 Jesus replied, "The people of this age marry and are given in marriage. 35 But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, 36 and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection. **37 But in the account of the bush, even Moses showed that the dead rise, for he calls the Lord 'the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.'** 38 He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive."

39 Some of the teachers of the law responded, "Well said, teacher!" 40 And no one dared to ask him any more questions.

THE SERMON
20

Trusting God when we don't understand"

Luke

INTRO Before painting a picture with the words of a story, today I'll try to paint a picture with the words of a song.

Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling, calling to you and to me

See by the portals he waiting and watching, watching for you and for me.

REFRAIN

Come home, Come home, ye who are weary come home.

Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling, calling 'O sinner' "Come Home."

In today's lesson Jesus softly calls foolish, hard headed rebels, to the blessings of coming home to him.

I. But, now a story. Josiah is a fictional name that portrays many people I have known, and this is a fictional story that portrays many situations I have known. Josiah's mom was a church lady, but more than that, a lady who knew and trusted Jesus. She trusted Jesus' love, Jesus' wisdom, Jesus' strength. In her own faulty way she responded to Jesus' love by living for Him. She raised Josiah to know and follow the Lord, bringing him to worship and Sunday School, praying with him, guiding his ways, but Josiah heard a different voice more loudly. His friends at school called him to have fun, live life to the fullest, to forget what Mom told him and do what felt good. So, when friends asked him drinking, he went. When they asked him to smoke dope, he went. When they asked him to move in with them and live the party life he went. Only, life was not good. He had trouble holding down a job. He never had enough money. He was constantly in scrapes with the law. His mom asked him to come home, but he trusted his friends and the good times, so he looked on her as an old lady who didn't know anything about the real world. He lived for the moment, and he suffered for it.

A. The Sadducees are those rebellious sons of God.

1. God had called them to trust Him, to trust His word, to walk humbly with God in faith and love. They knew better.

2. They decided they would only believe part of the Bible, the first 5 books. They decided that there was no resurrection. In today's lesson they came to Jesus to show Him how smart they were and how foolish he was to talk about a resurrection. They did

it in the story about the woman with 7 husbands.

- B. Only, the wiser they thought they were the more foolish they became.
1. Jesus used the part of the Old Testament they believed, and pointed to the resurrection in a place they never thought they would find it. In verse 37 of today's Gospel, Jesus quotes Exodus 3. **37 But in the account of the bush, even Moses showed that the dead rise, for he calls the Lord 'the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' 38 He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive."**
 2. Jesus shows the foolishness of these wayward men, and the wisdom of God.

- C. But more than that, Jesus gently calls them to God's love and blessings, like this.
1. If you really read God's Word, you see not only that there is a resurrection, but that God is wiser, and greater than you can ever dream of being. Imagine finding the resurrection in Exodus.
 2. God in His wisdom and love has eternal life in heaven waiting for His children.
 3. I am not so much here today to point to your rebellion, your foolishness, your doubt, but to call you to trust our Father and His love and come home to His eternal blessings.

II. Josiah did not realize the lure of this world led away from wisdom, and joy, and love, and life. He listened to others he trusted and followed them. Only, he was led away from God.

- A. We don't even know all the times and ways we have left God, but we can know some of them.
1. There are times the world obviously calls us to doubt the Word of God and doubt his love, and it is tempting to follow. The world says things like this.
 - a. "Don't believe God created the world in wisdom and love, It is all an accident."
 - b. "Don't believe there is just one God the Triune God, and just one way to heaven, Jesus" we are told, "that is discrimination."
 - c. We're told, "Forget the commandments. Those are old fashioned. Don't honor and pray for your leaders. "And, make sure you pay back those who hurt you. And, don't believe there is right and wrong in the use of sexuality. If it feels good do it." we're told
 2. The wisdom of the world can sound good. The call of God can sound old fashioned.

- B. But, Jesus gently used the foolishness of the Sadducees to offer them the eternal love of God. God gently calls us today to His wisdom, His Word, His love, and His blessings.

III. Josiah came home after mom bailed him out of jail. He had no choice. He went to church with her, got a job, listened to the old fashioned words and wisdom about God's love, and amazingly his life began to turn around. In today's Scripture lesson, the gentle wisdom and love of Jesus in the face of the foolishness of these worldly wise men, teaches us important life giving lessons.

- A. First God is beyond our understanding.
1. We shouldn't be surprised when life doesn't go as we expect. We shouldn't be surprised to find the Bible saying more than we realize. After all, Isaiah says of God, **"His ways are higher than our ways, and His thought than our thoughts."**
 2. This means humbly admitting we don't know everything, but God does. There is a wisdom in humility that trusts God.
- B. Second, in God is wisdom that informs life, and love that blesses us eternally.
1. Proverbs 1:7 says, **"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge."**
 2. Proverbs 9 says, **10 "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."**
 3. Knowing this, that God is wiser than we are and that his ways bless us, knowing this is called 'faith.'
 4. This means there is a wisdom in seeking to understand God and His Word, a wisdom

in following God as much as sinful people like us can.

C. Finally, our heavenly father calls us not just to His Word or His wisdom, but to Himself.

This is a mystery, but what this means is our lives should be spent seeking God.

1. In John 17 Jesus prays for us, **20 "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.**

2. Jesus calls us to be one with Him, in communion with him, in fellowship with Him, to have koinonia with him.

3. That is what God does for us in Baptism, according to Romans 6:3-4. We die with Christ and rise with Him.

4. That is what God does for us in the Lord's Supper, according to 1 Corinthians 10. Along with the forgiveness and eternal life, receiving the body is a oneness or communion in Jesus' body. Along with the forgiveness and eternal life, receiving the wine is a oneness, a participation in, a fellowship in the blood of Christ.

5. God comes seeking us, so that we receive Him, and make receiving him is the first goal of our life, even though we can't understand it.

D. Trusting the wisdom and love of God, and seeking him is more practical than seeking any other possession or accomplishment in life.

1. Oneness with God gives humility in the face of God's almighty glory

2. Oneness with God gives peace by His love, especially his love in Jesus, in the face of the worst of times.

3. When we seek oneness with God, our lives flow with obedience, peace, joy, strength.

CONCLUSION - Today we are witnesses to and even participants in an act of God, a baptism. How can God do such wonderful things as work forgiveness, save eternally, and give new life through such simple tools as water and His Word? God is beyond our understanding, but in His mysterious powerful working He calls us to real life in this world, and blessings eternally in Him.

Would you join me in singing the song with which we began?

Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling, calling to you and to me

See by the portals he waiting and watching, watching for you and for me.

Come home, Come home, ye who are weary come home.

Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling, calling 'O sinner' "Come Home."