

6/13/2010

THE PSALM AND THE INVOCATION

Psalm 25 Of David.

Lay Minister: 1 To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul;

People: 2 in you I trust, O my God.

Lay Minister: Do not let me be put to shame,

People: nor let my enemies triumph over me.

Lay Minister: 3 No one whose hope is in you will ever be put to shame,

People: but they will be put to shame who are treacherous without excuse.

Lay Minister: 4 Show me your ways, O LORD, teach me your paths; 5 guide me in your truth and teach me,

People: for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long.

Lay Minister: 6 Remember, O LORD, your great mercy and love,

People: for they are from of old.

Lay Minister: 7 Remember not the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways;

People: according to your love remember me, for you are good, O LORD.

Lay Minister: 8 Good and upright is the LORD;

People: therefore he instructs sinners in his ways.

Lay Minister: 9 He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way.

People: 10 All the ways of the LORD are loving and faithful for those who keep the

demands of his covenant.

Lay Minister: We begin our worship in the name of the Lord, the one who is Good and Upright.

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.

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY Almighty and everlasting God, increase in us Your gifts of faith, hope, and love that we may receive the forgiveness You have promised and love what You have commanded; 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 Galatians 2:15-21; 3:10-14 (*Forgiveness and life come by faith alone.*)

15 "We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners' 16 know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified. 17 "If, while we seek to be justified in Christ, it becomes evident that we ourselves are sinners, does that mean that Christ promotes sin? Absolutely not! 18 If I rebuild what I destroyed, I prove that I am a lawbreaker. 19 For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. 20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. 21 I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"

Galatians 3:10 All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is

written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." 11 Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith." 12 The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, "The man who does these things will live by them." 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." 14 He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

THE GOSPEL LESSON Luke 7:36---8:3

(Those who are forgiven much love much.)

36 Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. 37 When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, 38 and as she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them. 39 When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is-- that she is a sinner."

40 Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you." "Tell me, teacher," he said. 41 "Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?" 43 Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled." "You have judged correctly," Jesus said. 44 Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. 45 You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. 46 You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. 47 Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven-- for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little." 48 Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

49 The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" 50 Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

8:1 After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, 2 and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; 3 Joanna the wife of Cuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means.

INTRO - The Elders of St. John are reading a book this year called, "UnChristian." The basic idea of this book is that young adults consider that members of the Church often act in a way that is actually, UnChristian. Young people see church members acting in ways that seem to be contrary to the teachings of Jesus. The book does not say that the perception is always true, but, this is the way that many see the organized church. Because of the way that many see the church, people today are less likely to be involved in the church, and less likely to join the church.

I. This may seem like a modern day problem, but in many ways we see this same problem in Jesus' day.

- A. The Pharisee in the account from Luke was a leader in the church of his time.
 - 1. But, rather than trusting in the love of God, rather than trusting in God's mercy, he trusted in his own goodness, in his own accomplishments.
 - 2. We can see this "self-righteousness" because of the way he treated the woman who anointed Jesus' feet with perfume.
 - 3. Rather than reaching out to a fellow sinner, he looked down on this lady because she did not live up to the behavior he had attained.
 - 4. This man trusted himself, and loved himself, rather than trusting God and loving others.
- B. The same situation happened in the Epistles lesson for today from Galatians.
 - 1. Paul taught the Galatians that we are saved by the undeserved grace of God, only through faith in Jesus.
 - 2. But, some people from Jerusalem had come to Galatia to tell the new believers there that if they wanted to be saved they needed to obey the Jewish ceremonial laws, including being circumcised.
 - 3. The whole book of Galatians calls people not to trust in their goodness, but in Jesus, in His love and death and rising, to trust in God's grace.
 - 4. That is what God inspired Paul to write in verses 15 and 16. **15 "We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners' 16 know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.**
- C. When people trust their goodness today similar reactions happen.
 - 1. If we trust how good we have been, they why love God? After all, God's love is something we earned.
 - 2. If we trust our own goodness then it is easier to look down on others. Often they don't seem to live up to our standards or our accomplishments.
 - 3. If you think about it, loving ourselves rather more than God, looking down on others, this really is not Christian behavior.
 - 4. In other words, people may be right about Christians.

II. The other day I confused my son. Actually, I confused my son, my daughter, and

my wife. My son told me he had bent the blade on our lawn mower when he was using it to mow the lawn. I told him to buy a new blade and put it on the mower. But, then I thought I was being a little harsh, so I simply told him to take the blade off. I figured I'd get a new blade and replace it. My son went to Sears and got a new blade and I asked him why. Needless to say, he was confused.

- A. Sometimes people feel that about God's directions for life.
 - 1. God does call us to lives lived for Him, holy lives.
 - 2. He calls us to obey the ten commandments, and these are commandments, not suggestions.
 - 3. Many of us have been raised as Christians to do what God says.
 - 4. So, when we begin to learn and follow Christian behavior, isn't that something to be happy about. Can't we be proud.
- B. Actually, that is one way that we become confused.
 - 1. Today's verse says, **by observing the law no one will be justified.**
 - 2. God has given us the commandments because, as sinners, we wouldn't know how to live.
 - 3. No one can live a perfect life of no selfishness, no rebellion, no sin.
- C. When we work to keep God's law, and begin to do so, even partially, we can forget that we are sinners. We can forget that our love from God is a gift. We can forget that we are sinners like other others and treat them with contempt.

III. A couple married for 15 years began having more than usual disagreements. They wanted to make their marriage work and agreed on an idea the wife had. For one month they planned to drop a slip in a "Fault" box. The boxes would provide a place to let the other know about daily irritations. The wife was diligent in her efforts and approach: "leaving the jelly top off the jar," "wet towels on the shower floor," "dirty socks not in hamper," on and on until the end of the month. After dinner, at the end of the month, they exchanged boxes. The husband reflected on what he had done wrong. Then the wife opened her box and began reading. They were all the same, the message on each slip was, "I love you!"

Obviously, she also had done things that perturbed her husband. His forgiveness was not necessarily deserved. But, this undeserved love, this forgiveness, this grace, would have moved her to appreciate her husband even more.

- A. Galatians 2:16 says, **by observing the law no one will be justified.**
 - 1. We are all sinful, but God loves us and sent Jesus.
 - 2. When we realize, and when we remember, that God's love is not earned by our good works, but a gift, we are led to love God and serve Him.
 - 3. When we realize that we are sinful, yet loved by God, we look on other sinners in a different way, and want to share God's love with them too.

CONCLUSION - When we open the box with a list of our sins, it says, "I love you." You see, God has paid for our sins in Jesus. The key to a life that is not UnChristian, but is Christian, a life that serves God and loves others, is knowing the grace of God.