

8/8/2010

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON / PSALM AND CALL TO WORSHIP Psalm

119:15-20

Lay Minister: 15 I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways.

People: 16 I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.

Lay Minister: 17 Do good to your servant, and I will live;

People: I will obey your word.

Lay Minister: 18 Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.

People: 19 I am a stranger on earth;

Lay Minister: do not hide your commands from me.

People: 20 My soul is consumed with longing for your laws at all times.

Lay Minister: We begin our worship today, going to Almighty God, seeking the guidance of His Word, so that our eyes may be opened, so that we may believe and have life.

People: We begin our worship 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, bless our homes and families with faith and love. Move us to regularly use your word so that you may speak to us and help us grow. 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 3:14-17 (*God's Word builds people up for the Christian life.*)

14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, **15** and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. **16** All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, **17** so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

THE GOSPEL LESSON John 20:24-32 (*Jesus tells us the purpose of His Word, that we Believe*)

24 Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. **25** So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it." **26** A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" **27** Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." **28** Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" **29** Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

30 Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

THE SERMON “Christian Parenting – Regular Family Devotions”

INTRO - Today is the Sunday that the High School youth of St. John will share their experiences from the National Youth Gathering last month in New Orleans. Our youth were part of 25,000 in New Orleans who served God by serving others. They attended worship services with special bands, interesting drama, great speakers, and vibrant singing. It was a high for everyone who attended, and our youth benefitted. I'm sure that their faith in God and love for one another are at one of the high points of their lives following their experiences.

Our church mission statement says that we share Jesus so that our members live and grow in Biblical Christian faith. This month we are looking at ways to grow faith that lasts in our children. The National Youth Gathering helped our youth to grow in their faith by living in their faith.

I. But, what happens when it has been a month, or two months since the Gathering, or school is in session and our youth are wrapped up in the busy-ness of school. What happens when troubles come? Will their faith remain strong? Will they continue their relationships of love? Mountaintop experiences are wonderful times in life, and can really help someone see the glory of God. But, they last only so long. What can feed faith to last for the marathon race of life?

- A. Today's lessons share with us the gift God has given to build faith and keep it strong.
1. Psalm 119 says, **15 I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways. 16 I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.** God's Word builds faith in His people. He calls us not to neglect His Word, but to use it.
 2. In 2 Timothy, Paul writes to Timothy about building people of Christian faith. **14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, 15 and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.** The Word of God makes us wise for salvation. The word of God useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness. The word of God equips God's people. It not only builds faith but keeps faith going.
 3. But our Gospel lesson for today is perhaps the best verse to tell God's people how to grow and remain in faith through life's troubles. John 20:30-31 say, **30 Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.** It is the word of

God that creates faith. It is the word of God that points to Jesus, so that people believe and have eternal life. This, by the way, was the theme verse of the Youth gathering and led to the theme, "We Believe."

II. I studied Hebrew in college. But, that was over 35 years ago, and I have forgotten it. A youth Gathering can be a once in a lifetime mountaintop experience. Weekly worship, if it happens that often, can feed the faith of God's people once a week. But what feeds the faith of God's people every day? This month we are considering ways to grow faith in our children, our grandchildren, the children in our congregation, which will last.

A. Regular family devotions have been found to help build faith that lasts, because these devotions bring God's word to our homes, our families, our children and grand children and those in our church.

1. There are good reasons for this. Devotions that use God's Word, point where God's Word points. 2 Timothy tells us that **the holy Scriptures . . . are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.**

2. Devotions that use God's Word, point where God's Word points. John 20 says about the things written in God's Word, **But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.** God's Word points to Jesus, who is THE Word of Life.

B. There is no one book that helps build such faith, just so long as they share God's Word faithfully.

1. In our family our favorite devotion book was this one, Little visits with Jesus.

2. But, we have used many others, like these books, and like the magazine, "My Devotions." We even used Portals of Prayer as our children God older.

3. When families use regular devotions there are opportunities to talk about God's love and His strength and His wisdom.

4. When families use devotions they look to someone other than themselves for this love and strength and wisdom. And where we fall short, god is Good.

C. Actually, some may think, my children are gone, or it's too late.

1. God's word used regularly helps all God's people.

2. Some may say, we're too busy. But, if you miss 5 days a week and only do devotions twice each week, that is still 100 times a year more that God is speaking to you and your children, and growing faith, faith that will last through the storms of life.

CONCLUSION - The Bible calls the church a building. How do you build the church? How do you build faith that will last? In Ephesians 2 God tells us, "**you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.**" Regular use of God's Word in our homes, in our personal lives, build faith that lasts, because it points us to Jesus.

