

9/5/2010

**THE PSALM AND THE CALL TO WORSHIP**                      **Psalm 1**

Lay Minister: 1 Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked

**People:            or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.**

Lay Minister: 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD,

**People:            and on his law he meditates day and night.**

Lay Minister: 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither.

**People:            Whatever he does prospers.**

Lay Minister: 4 Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away.

**People:            5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.**

Lay Minister: 6 For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous,

**People:            but the way of the wicked will perish.**

**THE PRAYER OF THE DAY    O merciful Lord, You did not spare Your only Son but delivered Him up for us all. Grant us courage and strength to take up the cross and follow Him, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen**

**THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON** Deuteronomy 30:15-20 page

*(The Lord calls upon His people to walk in His ways and keep His Word.)*

15 See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. 16 For I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess. 17 But **if your heart turns away and you are not obedient**, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, 18 I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. 19 This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. **Now choose life**, so that you and your children may live 20 and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. **For the LORD is your life**, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

**THE GOSPEL LESSON** Luke 14:25-35 page

*(Jesus speaks of the cost of discipleship and calls on those who would follow Him to deny themselves and take up the cross.)*

25 Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: 26 "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters-- yes, even his own life-- he cannot be my disciple. 27 And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

28 "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? 29 For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, 30 saying,

'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.'

31 "Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? 32 If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace.

33 In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple. 34 "Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? 35 It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out. "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

## THE SERMON "It's all about the Heart"

## Deuteronomy 30

INTRO - Lucille Brown was lady in our first church who was a lady of faith and faithfulness. She was a book keeper and had two grown sons. Skip still lived at home. When our first son, Josh, was born she asked me a number of times, "You just can't help but love him, can you?" She knew the natural love of a mother for her children and was not afraid to express that love.

I. As you think about those you love, today's Old Testament Lesson leads us to ask a question. Do you love God?

A. Look at the call to love God, stated not once but twice.

1. In verse 16 we are told, **16 For I command you today to love the LORD your God,**

2. And again, in verse 20, as God summarizes the call to choose between life and death, blessings and curses, he summarizes that choice by calling us so **that you may love the LORD your God,**

3. This may be surprising, but our first love is to be for God, A famous verse in Deuteronomy, chapter 6, a verse repeated many times in Scripture says, **4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.**

B. Thinking of the love you have for your family, for your friends, Do you love *God*?

II. Lucille talked about the love of a parent for a child, but the love of a child for a parent can be a little more difficult, especially in the teenage years and young adult years when the child may want to leave behind the influence of the parents and make their own life. Lucille wished her son, Skip, would come to church, but it very rarely happened. She worried about him.

A. In our verse, God may call us to love Him, but, loving God can be difficult.

1. 1 John 4 acknowledges it can be tough enough loving people we see, but, we don't see God in the flesh.

2. The things and possessions of this world can seem more real and inviting than God.

B. But, God tells us in verses 17 and 18, **17 But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, 18 I declare to you this day that you will certainly be**

**destroyed.**

1. Our Relationship with God is all about the heart.
2. If we neglect to love God, **if our heart turns away**, we lose connection with our *Heavenly Father*, and there are consequences in turning away from the one who loves us.

III. The famous American author, Mark Twain is quoted saying, *“When I was a boy of fourteen, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be twenty-one, I was astonished by how much he'd learned in seven years.”*

Twain had trouble loving his Father. What changed Twain's perception of his Father? A dose of reality given by the experience of life as a man.

- A. Deuteronomy gives a dose of reality that can help us really love God.
  1. Did you hear what God says in verses 19 and 20? **Now choose life, so that you and your children may live 20 and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the LORD is your life,**
  2. **The Lord is your life!**
  3. When people realize that God loves us, the He is life, our life, our perspective changes.
- B. Consider just how God is our life.
  1. Regardless of what some might say, we did not appear in this world on our own. Our life comes from Him. God made us. He made the world. He made us with wisdom and love. Actually, because He made us we belong to God.
  2. Secondly, even though we belong to God, we have turned away from God and His love in rebellion. Like a teenager we want our own life away from our heavenly parent.
    - a. Do you know how much that hurts a parent when a child rejects them?
    - b. Do you understand how it hurts God when we do what it says in verse 18, **our heart turns away?**
    - c. No wonder our rebellion leads to our judgment and punishment. It's not that God wants to punish, but we have brought it on ourselves.
  3. But, God didn't let our rebellion stand as the final word. He sent His only begotten heavenly son to suffer and die to pay the punishment we deserved for our sin and for rebelling against our creator.
    - a. We brought judgement on ourselves, but God offers forgiveness and life as a gift through faith in Jesus.
    - b. We deserve God's judgement, but God sacrifices so we might still be loved.
  4. And God keeps calling us to His love through His word, through the Church, through the Holy Spirit.
    - a. Today God calls Marina Hermon to forgiveness and eternal life through baptism.
    - b. Today God calls you and me through the Lord's Supper.
- C. A dose of reality about how God loves us can change our heart so that we

are overwhelmed by His undeserved grace and mercy and love.

1. We deserve punishment and death.
2. God sacrifices to offer us life. **The Lord is your life!**
3. How can we help but love Him? That's what Lucille used to say, isn't it.

CONCLUSION - Before we left St. Louis Lucille was in a horrible accident. She lost so much blood she received 40 units to stay alive. Her Son, Skip, was at the hospital every day. He knew His moms love, and he loved her back.

Do you love God? He loves you with a love that is your very life. When we realize God's love for us, we can't help but love and serve Him.