

REVIVE

SURRENDER SANCTIFICATION HEALING FAITH IN ACTION

JANUARY 21-24
SUNDAY 10A & 6:30P, MONDAY-WEDNESDAY 6:30P
JOIN US FOR THEMED DINNERS MONDAY-WEDNESDAY AT 5:30P

SPEAKER
LAMORRIS CRAWFORD
CHAPLAIN TO CINCINNATI BENGALS

Sunday, December 31, 2017

Trusting God's Leading

Joshua 1:6-9, 4:1-7 & Deut. 6:4-18 & Philippians 3:7-21

God is a leader. A leader who asks us to look forward. He's a shepherd who guides, a King who conquers, a Servant who disciplines back and leave reminders of his faithful provision in order that we can move forward a Lord who commands. He commands us to go into unknown territories with courage because He is with us; commands us to take up our cross and bear suffering like Christ so that some may come to faith—including ourselves; commands us to love him with all our heart, mind, body and soul so that we may walk with Him in righteousness.

He is all of these and more so that we may journey closer to him and where he is taking his people. God remains the same, yet is constantly moving. Throughout the Old and New Testament, He encouraged his sheep to move. Movement is the constant undercurrent of the Bible. As we moved ourselves out of the garden, He's restoring our place with Him as he moves his people. Abraham moved, Jacob and the tribes moved, Moses and Joshua moved, the Israelites were exiled and moved. Joseph and Mary moved. The early church was forced to move. Paul moved along with the disciples throughout the world. His commission moves us today. He's progressing us physically so that we may move closer to his purposes, heart and side. He's leading us toward restoration, healing, forgiveness. We can move with Him or we can remain stagnant. If there are areas in your heart in which you need to surrender into his leadership remember Paul's words, "...I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead." What does God have ahead for you and are you willing to trust his leading?

Beth Forshee

Monday, January 1st, 2018

What Do You Love ?

Mark 12:30

Whatever we worship, we think about most of the time. If you love golf, you find yourself thinking, I wonder if I can fit in a little time at the driving range. If you love shopping, you frequently wonder, what time do the stores close? If you love football, you know exactly how many days until the next season begins. If you want to escape winter for warmer weather, you are likely to find a clock counting down the days, hours, minutes until the next vacation. I haven't met anyone, myself included, who has that kind of counter showing how long until the next worship service. If you want to experience a breath of fresh air, a real burst of life giving breath, then examine your affections, your thoughts, and your activities to see where you're directing them. Whatever excites you most in life – be it sports or traveling or spending time with family – should pale in comparison to how passionate you are about God.

“And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.” - Mark 12:30

Christopher Tolbert

Tuesday, January 2nd, 2018

A Post-Christmas Reflection

Zechariah 2

One of the things I love best about reading the Old Testament is how many ways the Old Testament points to the coming Messiah. Beginning in Genesis, Christ our Saviour is present. Christ is foretold through the stories of Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, David and the Prophets. Some were heroes of the faith but many (Rahab, Gideon, Jonah, Samson to name a few) show how imperfect and unlikely they were to be the ancestors of Christ. Yet God used them to accomplish great and mighty things. He still most often uses “ordinary” people to accomplish extraordinary things.

I also love discovering verses and promises I don't remember reading before – the Bible never gets old, does it? Here are recent promises I rediscovered from the Old Testament book of Zechariah:

Zechariah 2:5 “I Myself will be a wall of fire around it and I will be its glory within.”
(God's wall of fire protects me!)

Zechariah 2:8 “Whoever touches you will touch the apple of His eye.”
(I am the apple of God's eye!)

Zechariah 3:8,11 “I am going to bring my Servant, the Branch ... and I will remove the sin of the land in a single day.”
(Messiah will forever remove my sin!)

Zechariah 14:9 “The Lord will be King over the whole earth and His Name, the only Name.”
(I serve the One and Only King – forever!)

Finally, I love how Christmas is a powerful reminder of God's redemptive work for the world. He promises to protect (our wall of fire) His people (the apple of His eye) and one day will overcome all the evil in this tired world (removes all our sin) to reign forever (our One and only King).

May the peace, joy and hope of Christmas surround you this New Year.

Marsha DeHollander

Wednesday, January 3rd, 2018

Do Not Conform

Romans 12:2; Philippians 4:8-9

Romans 12:2 “*Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.*”

This verse became a favorite of mine several years ago as my husband and I facilitated a Dave Ramsey *Financial Peace* class. Dave Ramsey uses this verse as an example of finances. He often says “Normal is broke, be weird.” It's difficult and challenging to say no to things and

experiences, especially when it seems as if everyone around you is saying yes. In our younger years there seemed to be a big competition to keep up with our friends. They were going on huge, fancy vacations while we chose a different route - camping. They were often going out to eat while we enjoyed pizza and a movie on a Friday night. We may have been looked down on (sometimes criticized) for those choices, but we never regretted our decisions. They were right for our family and we never gave into the peer pressure to do what everyone else seemed to be doing. We didn't feel as if we suffered or were missing out. What wasn't seen was that we were living within our means, staying out of debt and saving for important things –like college, retirement and emergencies. We were still creating very special memories and teaching our children the importance of financial decisions.

I believe this verse speaks to us in all areas of our lives, not just a financial aspect. As Christians, we are called to stand out, to let our lights shine for all to see. Maybe now more than ever, Christians are being watched by all of society. There is much judgement on how we behave, speak and treat others. Our media sends many conflicting messages, we need to be careful of the messages we send. Encourage one another and lift each other up. Another verse that comes to mind is Philippians 4:8-9

“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.”

As you go through your day today, ask yourself if you are conforming to the World or if your choices are on things above. Are you spending more than you should on things to keep up with “the Jones”? What tv shows or movies are you watching? How do you speak to or treat others? Do you give your all to your employer? Are you a kind, thoughtful neighbor? A Christian life is one of true discipline in all aspects.

Eva Vander Woude

Thursday, January 4th, 2018

Motivated By Love

Revelation 2:1-5

Revelation 2: 1-5 - I know what you have done and how hard you have worked. I know how long you can wait and not give up. I know that you cannot put up with sinful men. I know that you have put men to the test who call themselves missionaries. You have found they are not missionaries but are false. You have waited long and have not given up. You have suffered because of Me. You have kept going on and have not become tired. But I have this one thing against you. You do not love Me as you did at first. Remember how you once loved Me. Be sorry for your sin and love Me again as you did at first. If you do not, I will come to you and take your light out of its place. I will do this unless you are sorry for your sin and turn from it.

What a sobering passage! Jesus commends the Ephesians for their many good works and hard work. They tested missionary's teachings to discern if it was true; they endured hardship and persevered without growing weary.

But in all their activity and hard work, they had lost their warmth and zeal for Christ. They went “through the motions” of good works, but were not motivated by the love of and for Christ, but by

the works themselves. Christ was not charging them with having left and forsaken the object of their love, but having lost the fervent degree of that love as it first appeared.

Prayerfully examine the fervency of your relationship with Christ and your motivations in ministry and good works.

People do not drift toward holiness. Apart from grace-driven effort, people do not gravitate toward godliness, prayer, obedience to Scripture, faith, and delight in the Word. We drift toward disobedience and call it freedom; we drift toward superstition and call it faith. We cherish the indiscipline of lost self-control and call it relaxation; we slough toward prayerlessness and delude ourselves into thinking we have escaped legalism; we slide toward godlessness and convince ourselves we have been liberated. D.A. Carson

- Eva Schoon

Friday, January 5th, 2018

Really Living at Last

Psalm 63:1-8 [MSG]

"¹ God—you're my God! I can't get enough of you! I've worked up such hunger and thirst for God, traveling across dry and weary deserts. ²⁻⁴ So here I am in the place of worship, eyes open, drinking in your strength and glory. In your generous love I am really living at last!

My lips brim praises like fountains. I bless you every time I take a breath;

My arms wave like banners of praise to you.

⁵⁻⁸ I eat my fill of choicest foods; I smack my lips. It's time to shout praises! If I'm sleepless at midnight, I spend the hours in grateful reflection. Because you've always stood up for me, I'm free to run and play. I hold on to you for dear life, and you hold me steady as a post."

In Your generous love I am really living at last! To really live at last because of God's generous love—what does that look like? How do we move from merely existing to living at last? And what happens when we come to a place of living at last?

It's good to take time to reflect on the journey we are on – to see God's merciful hand upon us in various seasons of life. I remember a season of life in which I traveled through a dry and weary desert—really a time where I was only existing – a time of grief and pain that ran so deep it took everything within me to even pull myself out of bed to face another day. A time when my faith in God couldn't stand alone and I needed to hold onto the faith and prayers of my brothers and sisters in Christ to see me through. It was a dark time.

But God's grace is amazing! And His mercies really are new every morning. Looking back on those days, I see God's fingerprints – working redemptively and lovingly—even in the midst of my mere existing. A number of months later, I found myself sitting in a theology class and something happened in my heart and mind. It was as if this huge light bulb came on and suddenly I found myself overwhelmed with the love of a God who would send His Son to earth to live, die, and be raised again in order to reconcile humanity to God. I've known this my whole life, but that day this truth swept over me anew. God loves His people and He loves generously – He holds nothing back!

Shortly after that day, I described in my prayer journal that I suddenly felt so alive in a way I'd never experienced before. I don't know how I moved from just existing to this place of being alive, except by the hand of God, but something had changed! In your generous love, I am really living at last!

There's a risk to really living at last. Because when we're really living in His love, His love changes us – it changes our hearts, our minds, our perspectives, our attitudes, and sometimes even our passion and call...His is a transforming love. And He invites us to participate in His

kingdom work. I'm so grateful God uses every hurt, pain, joy, experience, love, desire and time in our lives and He takes those and redeems them to draw us closer to Himself. And when all we can do is hold unto God for dear life as the Psalmist says, He will hold us steady, moving us toward a place of really living at last in His generous love. And we won't be able to get enough of Him!

- Becca Graham

Saturday, January 6th, 2018

Promises over Explanations

Habakkuk 3:16

Anyone who has lived in the Great Lakes state for a period of time has concluded that the winters are *gloomy*. Dark, cloudy, overcast. We are at the mercy of lake effect weather delivered in the form of what's called a perma cloud—that low, dark cloud that sits over our state for six months out of the year. And every year we lament, “*how long until we see the sun?*”

Seasons of our life can seem the same way—at the mercy of uncontrollable circumstances, feeling low-spirited, and wondering if/when the conditions will improve.

Habakkuk can relate. A prophet documented with only three chapters in scripture depicts a story of lament and questioning of why God has allowed violence, despair, destruction, and injustice to rule all around him. He pleads with God, “How long O lord, must I call for help and you do not listen?” Insert your circumstances here. Why God have you allowed...
...divorce/addiction/unemployment/depression/barrenness/illness in my life? When will this dark cloud over this season dissipate?

As we wrestle with our “why” and “when” questions, the Lord's answer remains the same today as it was to Habakkuk: He reminds us of His promises, refocuses us on His character, and reorients our gaze to look up at what He is already doing. He says I am sovereign and remain on my throne (v. 20), I am going to do something so great in your lifetime that you wouldn't believe me even if I told you (v.5).

The season may be dark, the perma cloud may not disappear, but if we are willing to lift our gaze and press into the truth that even though we can't see it, the sun still shines above the perma cloud and God remains in full authority over our circumstances. As we fixate on God's promises over His explanations, our questions of “why” and “when” are exchanged with the hope and praise of God's presence and faithfulness in our lives.

- Ali Rose

Sunday, January 7th 2018

Service: An Outpouring of Love

Philippians 2:5-8

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death- even death on a cross! - Philippians 2:5-8 NIV

Take some time to really think about the ramifications of this scripture. Consider that Christ, the all-powerful, all-knowing, all-loving God, did not just set aside his true nature to become a servant. He didn't even consider his equality with God before humbling himself to become the atonement for our sin. It was his natural reaction to lower himself to rescue us, like the parent who darts out into the street to rescue their wayward child from on-coming traffic. Christ's reaction was and is the result of an overwhelming love for us.

As we become more like Christ, we too, will begin to humble ourselves to serve others out of the love that fills our hearts. Take time today to check your “parental instincts.” Perhaps Christ is calling you to serve.

Nan Evans