

Bible Study on Lessons for October 9-10, 2010

Well I've had several folks tell me that the bible studies on our recent sermon series *have a little faith*, have been a great help. So I'll just keep it up and do the lessons for our weekly worship.

The Theme for October 9 and 10 Worship services is:

Bloom Where You're Planted

Read Jeremiah 29:1, 4-7 this is the Key text on which the sermon will be based. I wouldn't have wanted Jeremiah's job. You see God called Jeremiah to warn His people that big trouble was coming their way. They had chosen to turn away from God and great tragedy would come upon them. It came alright! It came in the form of the armies of Babylon and their king Nebuchadnezzar. The nation of Judah was defeated in battle and their king and many of their people were taken as slaves to live in Babylon.

Question: *What would you say to people who have lost everything and now are slaves in a land not of their own choosing?* Jeremiah, speaking for God, tells the people to roll up their sleeves and get to work. They are to: build houses, plant gardens, get married, have kids, and then have their kids have more kids! And get this! God tells the people to work for the good of their captors for by doing this not only will their captors prosper but they will prosper as well. What an astounding answer! Would you have replied this way? Or would you have been more inclined to tell folks to search for ways to free themselves from their captors. Look at our American History. Our forefathers rebelled against the British over conditions that in no way were as oppressive as those faced by Jeremiah's people. How is this possible?

Now read Psalm 66:1-12

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Psalm 66 is described as a Psalm of Praise and Thanksgiving. In this psalm God is seen as being all powerful. We are invited to see the wonderful things that God can do. Enemies bow before him, everyone on earth worships Him, and God changes the sea into dry land, and on and on goes the Psalmist. Now would this help you if disaster had fallen on you? Well, reading on we see that all is not joy and happiness. In verse 10 we read that God is putting his people to the test – they will fall and heavy burdens will be placed upon them. Their enemies will trample on them and they will go through fire and flood, but there is still hope! Why? Because God will bring them to a place of safety. Questions: *Doing your hard times have you ever thought that God might be testing you? Do you believe that God has a place of safety in mind for all of us?*

Now read 2 Timothy 2:8-15

The letters to Timothy are very personal letters. Timothy is a young Christian who was a companion and assistant to Paul in his missionary work. Now Timothy is on his own doing mission work. Paul writes to give advice and instructions to his young colleague. Paul's second letter to Timothy consists largely of personal advice with the main theme stressing endurance. Paul is telling Timothy to "hang in there" no matter what kind of opposition he might face. Paul uses his own difficulties and how he endured them as an example for Timothy to follow. In verse 8 he tells Timothy that above everything else remember that Jesus was raised from the dead, and to remember this in the way that he had heard it in Paul's preaching of the Good News. Then Paul goes on to describe that he suffered persecution because he dared to preach the Good News of Jesus Christ. Paul goes on to tell Timothy that he was even put in chains like a common criminal, but Paul declares that no one can chain the Gospel! In verse 10 Paul concludes that he can endure all of this suffering. Why? So that people might hear the Gospel and be saved. In other words Paul is making it very clear that there is a purpose to his suffering. Now we all have gone through suffering

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So here's the question: *When you have suffered has it helped to believe there was a reason or purpose for your suffering?*

Now verses 11-13 are most interesting. Biblical scholars believe Paul is actually quoting from one of the earliest hymns of the Christian Church. It's named the Song of the Martyr. Note the stress in this hymn on remaining faithful, and even if we fail to be faithful God remains faithful because to do otherwise would go against God's very own nature. Then in verses 14 and 15 Paul instructs Timothy on how to speak to the people about God and to not be ashamed of the work he is doing which is to correctly teach the truth about God.

Now read Luke 17:11-19 The Gospel lesson takes us in a different direction; instead of trying to understand and deal with tragedy and human suffering it describes a wonderful and joyful event. Jesus heals ten lepers. Now remember that in biblical times leprosy was just the most terrible thing that could happen to a person. It was a filthy disease. As it spread body parts would rot and fall off: fingers, nose, ears and toes. You would be branded an outcast and your only companions were other lepers. You remained this way until you finally died; often alone and forsaken. What a terrible fate! Now ten lepers come up to Jesus and ask him to have mercy on them. He does better than that! He heals them! They realize they have been healed of this dreaded and foul disease, but only one returned to thank our Lord. Where's the gratitude? Why would the nine not return to give thanks? In our lessons we have been encourage and challenged to give thanks and praise to our God in all situations of life. Yet this seems so hard to do. Now in the Gospel lesson we see that even when good things happen to us we can fail to offer thanks to God. *Now make a list of the times you have been truly grateful to God.*

Now how do you think this connects to the sermon theme *Bloom Where You are Planted?* Come and find out in worship!