

## **Bible Study on lessons for October 16-17, 2010**

**Greetings! The sermon theme for this series of lessons is: *We're off to the races!* The Key Text is 2 Timothy 4:1-8**

**So let's begin with the Old Testament lesson. Read Jeremiah 31:31-34. If you looked at last week's bible study you would know that last week the key text was from Jeremiah. Furthermore you would know that the prophet Jeremiah had a difficult, if not an almost impossible task. He was to warn God's people of a great catastrophe that was to fall on their nation because they had turned away from God. Unfortunately Jeremiah lived to see this prediction come true. In 587 or 586 Jerusalem falls to the Babylonia king, Nebuchadnezzar, and the king and many other leaders of the people are taken in chains to live in exile in Babylon. Now Jeremiah's message takes a dramatic change. Instead of a warning of death and destruction he proclaims that in the future the people will return and the nation will be restored. Today's lesson is part of that message of hope, and it is truly astounding. In verse 31 Jeremiah announces that God will make a new covenant with his people. This announcement of a new covenant would have been more than a surprise to the people. It would have been met with shock – even disbelief. Remember the Israelites saw themselves as God's Chosen people. This Covenant that God had made, first with Abraham and then with the rest of their ancestors, was understood to be an everlasting covenant. The idea that God would change his mind and make and make a new covenant.....well that would have been very hard to swallow. But Jeremiah goes right on and describes what this covenant will be like. It's not going to be written down and then honored as a historical document. No sir! This was to be a whole different ball game. This law will be written on people's hearts, and the law will say that I will be the God of my people and they will be mine. Nobody will have to teach it! No confirmation or adult instruction classes, because everyone will know me says God - from the greatest to the least.**

**Finally in this New Covenant God will forgive and forget the wrongs of his people. Clearly this is not a legal document. This is a spiritual relationship initiated and maintained by God!**

**Question: Do you feel more at ease with the idea that God never changes or that God can and does change?**

**Now reflect on your own life and ask yourself if you have ever made profound changes in how you believe or in what you believe?**

**Next read Psalm 119:97-104**

**This is the longest psalm in scripture. It is unique among the psalms by its extraordinary tribute to the law of Israel. Verses 97-104 describe the psalmist's love for and obedience to the law. It stands in sharp contrast to the words of Jeremiah and his announcement that God is about to create a new covenant. Again we can see the amazing change in God's intentions is his relationship with His people.**

**Now read the key text for this week: 2 Timothy 4:1-8 Paul's second letter to Timothy is deeply personal. Paul is writing to his young colleague and assistant. He is encouraging him to hold to the true faith and to witness faithfully about the Good News of Jesus Christ. Paul uses his own life as an example of faith, patience, love, endurance, and suffering. Imagine that you are Timothy a young Christian who is encountering opposition.**

**Question: If you were in Timothy's shoes would Paul's words in verses 1-8 bring you hope?**

**Page 3**

**Read Luke 18: 1-8 in this simple story our Lord challenges us to keep on praying no matter how much opposition we meet. So how's your prayer life? Do you keep on praying even though it seems God is not answering your prayer? What is the purpose of prayer? Some would have us believe that prayer is a process for getting what we want. How do you understand the last part of verse eight? It reads: "But will the Son of Man find faith on earth when he comes?" Remember what the story is about that goes before this sentence. It's all about a woman who is so stubborn that even when she is ignored by the judge she just keeps on coming back until finally she wears him out! I think it's pretty clear from this story that prayer is not "instant gratification." Prayer is an ongoing relationship with God and one another.**

**Now what does any of this have to do with the sermon theme *We're off to the races?***

**Care to find out? Come to worship on the 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup>**

**God's Peace,**

**PM**