

3-5-23 Sermon #9 Where's the truth?

Over the last two weeks, I hope you've taken the time to ponder and reflect on "The Meaning of Life", and I hope you've also been reviewing your "timeline" of life, for seeing when God was in it. I want to challenge you with finding when God was present in your life, because of how important it is for us to know when we accepted Christ as our personal Savior. Having the Holy Spirit living in us and having Jesus as Lord of our lives changes how we think, and we get to experience some incredible things. Advancing our walk with Christ is a personal choice, and my desire is to help us take our relationship with God to a deeper level. Asking an adult to do homework is different than it is with a child. Adults know they can just blow it off but, if you've thought about these two questions during the week, then you're engaging in the message. When we think about or ponder these questions, "What's the meaning of life?" or "When did I find Christ?", were asking God to be more present in our day.

James 4:7-8 says,

⁷ Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

The more we chose to draw near to God, the more He draws near to us.

Another example of how we draw near to God would be when we choose to attend the Sunday morning classes or the Wednesday night classes on Prayer, Ecclesiastes, Men's and Ladies' class, or the Thursday morning Prayer & Praise. During these times it helps bring God into our week.

Spending time with other saints, brings strength into our relationship with Christ.

I'd like to go back to the "Up, In & Out" way that Jesus ministered to people. In John, Jesus prays for us to seek God, live by the Holy Spirit, and share the good news about Christ. The "Up" part is all about praying and it's about praying without ceasing. The "In" part is about having "daily" teaching and daily fellowship. It's about times that we make the effort to learn more about God and we connect with Christ in our minds and in our hearts.

This is unavailable in the world, and we have to desire it. Spending time with the other believers/saints has so much benefit and brings us strength.

A great example of this was last Wednesday. That was our class on prayer. It was so dynamic, and you could feel God in the room.

The "Out" part is about taking Christ to the lost. Having natural God conversations with people happens when we know how our life has changed by having Christ in it. Knowing how God changed our individual life is all we need to tell. Planting and watering are how we give God the opportunity to make it grow. Knowing what Christ has done for you requires knowing when and why we let Him in.

What has God done for you?

Romans 8:12-17 says,

¹²Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. ¹³For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. ¹⁵The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “*Abba, Father.*” ¹⁶The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. ¹⁷Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

What does this mean to you? Does your relationship with God make you “feel” like your one of God’s children?! What does it mean to know you are heirs of God or co-heirs of Christ?

I was thinking about times we tell others about our earthly parents, telling them our memories or sharing how they impacted our lives.

Do we talk about our Father in heaven like that? Our relationship with God is about being able to see heaven. The joy that Adam and Eve had before the fall is what Christ give us. It’s only because of God’s LOVE that Christ came to die for our sin. Drawing near to God brings blessings.

In the times that we don’t lean on God, think about how many blessing from God we’ve missed.

Every one of us prays, but can we say that we pray without ceasing? Praying without ceasing is a huge challenge in our culture. We live in an individualistic society, and we’re taught to depend on ourselves for everything.

Matthew 7:7-11 tells us the opposite:

⁷“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

This requires asking God to intervene. Do we need to do this for all things? You can say “No”, just like we don’t have to do homework. Praying in all things or talking to God about everything isn’t meant to insult us. It doesn’t mean we’re not able to do anything on our own. The biggest benefit that comes from seeking God in all things is, it teaches us God’s voice!!!

God’s voice is different than how we speak to each other. The gift of the Holy Spirit is in us to help us know God’s ways. The Holy Spirit teaches us a Godly vocabulary. Reading our bibles, praying, and meeting together for learning is when God speaks to us the most.

I think about all the times that a sermon connected with me. It's like God was talking right to me.

When we gather together for fellowship, we're feeding the Spirit, and we're learning more about God's voice. If we believe that God is truly our Father or that He truly does want to walk with us, then the Holy Spirit will become more alive in us. I've made the statement about how I've come to believe that my thoughts are actually a form of prayer. I've also recently challenged us to think of our thoughts as either from God or Satan.

This may be controversial, but James 4:7 tells us,

⁷ Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Are we double minded? If it's true that 85% of our thoughts are negative, then I can say my thoughts are either from God or Satan?

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 says,

¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray continually, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. ¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not treat prophecies with contempt ²¹ but test them all; hold on to what is good, ²² reject every kind of evil.

If we pray without ceasing, we're not weak, we're not alone, and we're also being hopeful. The Spirit cannot be associated with EVIL, and every time we talk to God, we're calling and relying on the Spirit. You may want to wrestle with this, and your negative nature may want to disagree, but we'll never be able to be truly content or find complete satisfaction "APART FROM GOD". Taking our thoughts captive requires that we become dependent on Christ and the Holy Spirit. Without living by the Spirit, we're living according to the world. If we live by the law, we'll die by the law.

Let's read Romans 8:1-15, Life Through the Spirit:

⁸ Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. ³ For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Verse 5 is so powerful:

⁵ Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit

desires. ⁶The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.

The mind seems to be one of two things. Of the flesh or of the Spirit:

⁸Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God. ⁹You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. ¹¹And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

Let this soak in. The Spirit is alive in our lives.

As we read earlier,

¹²Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. ¹³For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; “but if by the Spirit “ you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. ¹⁵The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “*Abba*,^[g] Father.”

Being a light to a lost world is about having a GLOW about us. When we're living by the Spirit, it creates a natural light that pours out of us. This kind of light requires knowing when and how God changed our lives. The more we seek and ask God to walk with us, the more we'll cast this Natural light around us.

We're all at different spots in our walks. Taking a good relationship with God and making it better comes by trying to have a better walk with the Spirit. I hope these words cause you to think about what it is you believe. Maybe they're making you wrestle a little bit. All I want to do is make you talk more to God and to feel the love of the Spirit.

“Who Is This JESUS?” “Who are You?”

Proverbs is a great book, and I'd like to share Proverbs 3:1-8

3 My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, ²for they will prolong your life many years and bring you peace and prosperity. ³Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. ⁴Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man. ⁵Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. ⁷Do not be wise in your

own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil. ⁸This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.

Taking a good relationship with God and making it better is available for all of us. No matter what our pasts were like, today is a new day. “Apart from God” we have no chance and because we live on this side of the cross, we can have the gift of the Holy Spirit. We need to depend on the blood of Christ for the forgiveness of sin and receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit is how we become pure.

If you need to claim Christ and be baptized, or if you need to reclaim Him in your life, please do.

Let’s pray.