

impress God and learn to love and enjoy who he is. We need to get our focus off of what we are going to do for God and focus on what God is doing for and in us. Take a few minutes to reflect on all the fallible people described in the Bible and how God loved them and worked through them. This is a reminder of God's love for us.

Saturday, March 6, 2010

Daily theme: God's love for us provides us with a hope and an inheritance.

Questions

Read Ephesians 1:18

1. Why do so many people not understand God's love for us?
2. What does Paul mean by "hope of His calling" and "His inheritance"?

Consider

One of man's problems in relating to God is that he is blind to him. God is there, but man doesn't see him. Not seeing God is a little like what research tells us happens when drivers don't see bicyclists or motorcyclists. When we drive, our brains are conditioned to look for other cars to avoid. That means our brains can actually filter out a motorcycle or bicycle coming down the road. The motorcyclist or bicyclist was sure that the driver saw them, but the driver didn't; he looked right through him. Due to sin in our life, we are unable to see God unless God enlightens our understanding and draws us to him (John 6:44). We look right through God; we see the evidence of God, but we don't recognize him. Paul reminded the Romans that God's ways are beyond our ability to comprehend (Romans 8:33). In Ephesians Paul is writing to Christians, yet he prays that their eyes would be opened so that they would live according to the truth. By hope and calling Paul directed the Ephesians attention toward their future with Jesus. In Romans 8, Paul contrasted the struggles we face in this life with the glory that we will enjoy in the presence of Jesus (Romans 8:18). God's love for you and me means that he changes the filtering aspect of our minds so that we no longer look right through him, but begin to see his hand at work in our lives, in the lives of those we love and in the world. God is no longer invisible but visible and beautiful. What didn't make sense before begins to make sense now. We have hope and peace in our life when we wouldn't have before knowing God (Philippians 4:7).

Crazy Love

Jeremiah 1:4-19

Sermon Series: Crazy Love: Overwhelmed by a relentless God
Devotional Notes March 1-6, 2010

Monday, March 1, 2010

Daily theme: God's love is revealed by his always giving us what is best.

Questions

Read Matthew 7:9-11

1. In what ways is our love for our children imperfect?
2. Why doesn't God give us what we want?

Consider

In this passage Jesus contrasts our imperfect parenting with that of God the Father. Jesus' point is that even though we are evil, we give good things to our children. We provide what they need; we give them gifts to give them joy in their hearts. If we do that, then the Father who is perfect will give even better gifts to his children. Even though we love our children, we still do not have a complete knowledge of what is best for our children. Our lack of knowledge sometimes leads us to giving too much to our children and spoiling them. Our children could have a medical condition that has not been diagnosed and we unaware of that condition. We might give our children something that could make their condition even worse. God has perfect knowledge of us, preventing him from ever making that type of mistake. At other times our sinful nature causes us to react either too strongly or ignore behaviors that we should address. Our perfect Father always knows what is the appropriate response. His response never has his own issues mixed in, but always has our benefit in mind. This is one reason why God does not always give us what we want. Our requests do not always reflect a complete understanding of the situation. Our tendency is for God to solve our problems and take away our pain in the quickest and easiest manner possible. However, God has a reason for us to go through something difficult. Consider Paul's situation. Jesus had permitted a painful situation in Paul's life. He requested Jesus to remove it, but Jesus refused, because he would extend his grace to Paul (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). Paul made a request, but Jesus didn't grant it because he had something better he desired to give to Paul. In the moment it probably didn't feel that way to Paul, as it doesn't to us when things don't work out the way that we hope. When we understand how much the Father loves us, then we can trust him to give us what is best even though it isn't what we asked for.

Tuesday, March 2, 2010

Daily theme: Since God loves us so completely, our love for him should be total.

Questions

Read Matthew 22:37-38

1. What does it mean to love God with all our heart, soul and mind?
2. Why is this command the greatest command?

Consider

When Jesus declared that the greatest commandment was to love the Lord God with all our heart, soul and mind, he quoted a section from the law (Deuteronomy 6:5). The point of this command was that we would love God with our entire being. In Scripture the heart is the center of who we are. Solomon identified the heart as the wellspring of our life (Proverbs 4:23). When we love God with our heart, we love him with the core of our being. We are to love God with our soul. The Hebrew word referred to the center of our emotional life. When we love God with our soul, we engage our emotions in our relationship with him. Finally the mind refers to the seat of our intellectual activity, but also involves our attitudes. Our love for God involves our thoughts and attitudes. David spoke about meditating on God's law (Psalm 119:15-16) and delighting in it. Since God is the only perfect being in existence, then it follows that we should love him more than anyone or anything else. To love someone or something more than God is to love something that is less than perfect. In giving us this command Jesus encourages us to love that which is perfect and not settle for anything less than perfection.

Wednesday, March 3, 2010

Daily theme: God's knowledge of and love for us overcomes our inadequacies.

Questions

Read Jeremiah 1:4-8

1. In what ways did Jeremiah see himself as inadequate to be a prophet of God?
2. Why does God seem to choose people who have so many inadequacies?

Consider

Like many of us, Jeremiah assumed that he had to be a certain type of person in order to serve God. Jeremiah looked to his inability to speak and his youth and concluded that he was not able to be God's prophet. The lesson that God had for Jeremiah was that God had formed him from his mother's womb. God had knit him together to make him into the person that God desired. The issue was not Jeremiah's inadequacies, or his skills for that matter, the important point was that God was working in his life. God's involvement in Jeremiah's life was not something limited to the past, but also would continue in the future. God would give Jeremiah the words to speak (v. 7) and protect him from all those who would oppose him (v. 8). What made Jeremiah so special was not his youth, his skills or his inadequacies, but God's involvement and love in his life. We tend to assume that God can only use people who have extraordinary capacities, but that is not the case. God uses normal, fallible and ordinary people, just like us. Our inadequacies become opportunities for God's power and love to be on display. Since Jeremiah was a youth who didn't speak so well, God's power in his life was even more evident. Peter and John amazed the Jewish leaders because they were uneducated men who had been with Jesus (Acts 4:13). The power of Jesus in their life was so evident that the Jewish leaders could not deny it. In other words, the fact that we have deficiencies in our lives should not be an excuse to do that which we believe Jesus is directing us to do. Jesus works in and through us in spite of

who we are. When we see Jesus work through us we are filled with joy.

Thursday, March 4, 2010

Daily theme: God's love for us enables us to accomplish our purpose.

Questions

Read Jeremiah 1:9-10

1. How does God overcome our inadequacies?
2. How did God demonstrate his love for Jeremiah?

Consider

God did not merely tell Jeremiah what to do, but he interacted with him (v. 9). God did something similar with Isaiah, when he cleansed Isaiah's mouth (Isaiah 6:6-7). God demonstrates his love and power in our life through relationship. God touched Jeremiah's mouth. From that point forward Jeremiah could reflect back on his meeting God and being transformed by God's touching his mouth and preparing him to be his spokesman. God knew the struggles that Jeremiah would face, so he gave Jeremiah himself. He would sustain Jeremiah in the face of tremendous opposition. Nobles, kings and powerful men would oppose Jeremiah, yet God would sustain him. God would sustain Jeremiah through the siege of Jerusalem. Jeremiah would survive the destruction of Jerusalem. God would also give him a message of hope enabling him to see beyond the current destruction and even over 500 years into the future when God would give to his people a new covenant through Jesus (Jeremiah 31:31-34). The story of Jeremiah gives us hope and power to trust God through the challenges of our life. God sustained Jeremiah, he will do the same for us. God didn't protect Jeremiah from facing difficulties, but he did empower Jeremiah to walk through them in his power. We have that same power with us in the person of the Holy Spirit.

Friday, March 5, 2010

Daily theme: God loves us in spite of our polluted religious actions.

Questions

Read Isaiah 64:6

1. Why are our religious actions so disgusting to God?
2. If our religious actions are so disgusting, how do we please God?

Consider

The people of Isaiah's time enjoyed affluence and apparent blessing. They assumed that just because they enjoyed wealth, affluence and good health that God was pleased with them. They assumed that God was pleased with their religious rituals. They could not have been further from the truth. The truth was that God was disgusted with them. The reason God was disgusted was that their words did not coincide with their hearts (Isaiah 29:13). Their religion was done out of tradition and not from the heart. Isaiah used graphic language to describe how God views insincere religious actions. The words are translated into English a filthy rags, but the meaning was soiled menstrual cloths. Everything that was done in order to impress God was actually repulsive to God. Even so, God loves us, desires a relationship with us and to work through us. We need to stop trying to