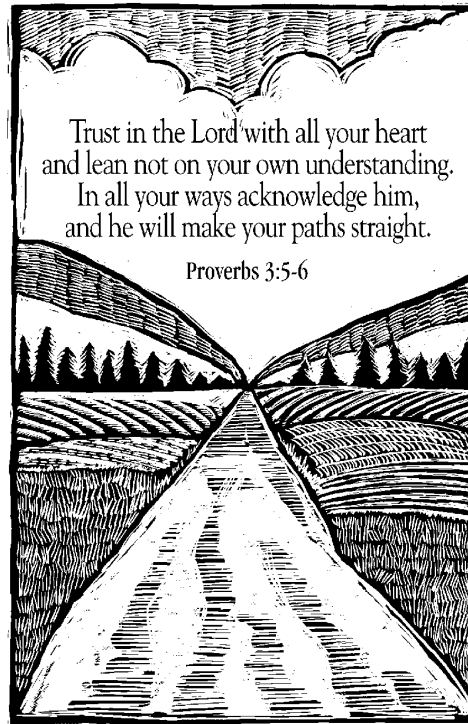


THE DAILY WALK



*Trinity Presbyterian Church
Berwyn, Pennsylvania*

August 24 -- September 19, 2009

August, 2009

Dear Daily Walkers,

The Daily Walk with the Scripture passages for worship each week returns to the “Revised Common Lectionary” for the church year. The gospel for “Year B” is Mark, and the other passages now focus on themes from some of “the writings” of the Old Testament-- Song of Solomon and Proverbs . The second reading from the New Testament takes us through the letter of James.

I invite you to join the members of the church as we “recycle” some of their reflections and follow the leading of the Spirit spreading the good news of Jesus Christ in the ancient world, and today.

In Christ,

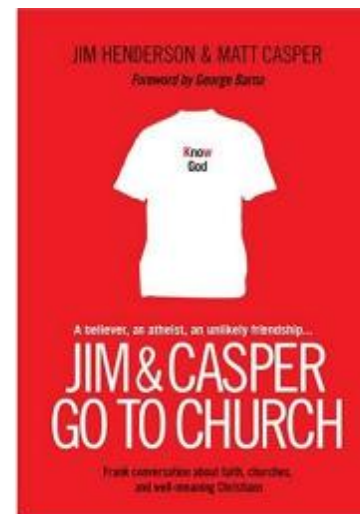
Jay Wilkins

NEW STUDY OPPORTUNITY ...

“Is this what Jesus told you guys to do?”

Jim Hatfield is gathering a small group to read, reflect, and discuss how we experience worship. Part of this new opportunity will include visits to other churches to experience being a stranger in another place, and develop an on-going conversation on what being Christian means, even what being Trinity Presbyterian Church means.

Initial group meeting: September 13 @ 9 AM



LECTIONARY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE
August 24 – August 29, 2009

The lectionary passages this week seem to echo the hymn tune Sandringham and the words written by Dorothy Blomfield Gurney, "O perfect Love, all human thought transcending, lowly we kneel, in prayer before thy throne ... " Add to that a wedding anniversary on August 28, the day we read the royal wedding psalm, and you begin to sense Divine intervention. If we but listen, God leaves no room for doubt about how he wants us to live our lives.

MONDAY, August 24: James 1: 17 - 27

Our letter writer is James, identified in his epistle only as "a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ." From tradition and New Testament scripture, we can infer that James was the early leader of the Jerusalem Church and that he was martyred for his faith. Moreover, he has been called the brother of Jesus.

In the letter James sends greetings to the twelve tribes who are scattered throughout the world. He is obviously writing to Jewish Christians what likely is a sermon. In its 108 verses he records 59 imperatives for the good life. Chief among them is the belief that God is the source of every good and perfect gift.

We love you, Lord; what can we offer to you for all your goodness to us?

TUESDAY, August 25: James 1: 17 - 27

What kind of behavior matches the assurance that every perfect gift comes from God? Generosity, of course. James describes two types of generosity: generosity of spirit exemplified by listening and being slow to anger, and generosity of effort and provision as demonstrated in caring for widows and orphans. There is a challenge here not only for us as individuals to put our faith into action but also for our faith communities.

Often our encounters with the letter of James focus on whether or not we are doing the word without giving sufficient reflection to what the word is. First we must ask, as James asks and answers, what do we believe about God? James invites us to believe that God loves us unconditionally, steadfastly, eternally.

God, whose loving kindness sustains all life, praise be to you, for you give us tasks.

WEDNESDAY, August 26: Song of Solomon 2:8-13

The Song of Solomon is a book of poetry celebrating love. It is set in blossoming springtime, abounding in metaphors, and a profusion of sensuous images. One can almost hear the voice of the beloved calling. Someone said, "I can't imagine why that's in the Bible!" My response is, "The world in which we live is as bountiful and as full of love as this poem," thanks to God, the giver of every perfect gift.

Dear God, teach us to love as you love.

THURSDAY, August 27: Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

The washing of hands that is here referred to was not for sanitary purposes, but purely a religious tradition. Such "traditions" were not actually the word or law itself, but a group of supplementary laws established by the Scribes as practices of faith. Jesus responds that such traditions were of no value, and denounces them soundly by differentiating between the "commandment of God" and the "tradition of the elders."

Lord, deliver us from weak resolve - and help us always to do your will.

FRIDAY, August 28: Psalm 45:1-2, 6-9

This is a so called royal psalm, and it describes a royal wedding although which of the various kings of Israel is not known. The verses affirm the king's just nature, highlight the closeness of his relationship with God, and describe his robes and the people who surround him. The first part of verse 7 indicates that royal splendor is bestowed upon this king because of how he acts: he treats people fairly, loves righteousness, and hates wickedness. His relationship with God, generous and loving, shapes the way in which he lives and rules, and the entire kingdom is blessed.

Help us, our Lord, to love righteousness and hate wickedness, as you do.

SATURDAY, August 29: Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

Then Jesus called the crowd close to him again and spoke to them a parable about "that which defiles." Our lives are lived out of inner resources that become available by/placing God at the center of life. It is not what is outside that purifies or defiles us, but what issues out of the heart. God, we thank you for all your blessings.

In your infinite wisdom grant us understanding and a thankful heart. Amen.

LECTIONARY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE
August 31 -- September 5, 2009

Boundaries can enfold, providing places of sanctuary. But boundaries can also divide, separating persons from one another and God. How does God inspire us to words and deeds of opening and advocacy, of crossing boundaries? This week's Scriptures explore boundaries and openings in the life of faith.

MONDAY, August 31: Mark 7:24-37

In this scripture we find Jesus has left Nazareth and traveled to Galilee, "Gentile territory", with his disciples. He went out of his way to find retreat or isolation. In his home town his teachings and ministry were rejected. According to Barclay, in seeking peace and seclusion, and withdrawing from the hostility of the Jews, the foundation of the Kingdom of the Gentiles was laid. It is the forecast of the whole of Christianity. The rejection of the Jews had become opportunity of the Gentiles.

God, we thank you for being with us now and forever. Amen.

TUESDAY, September 1: Mark 7:24-37

In this first miracle the woman presents several boundaries and obstacles that should not have been breached. Her ethnicity, her religion, and her gender all set her apart from Jesus. Public contact and conversation with him risked censure for her and for him. What connected them was the well-being of a child. Although Jesus uses an uncharacteristically harsh word, for the child's sake the woman is tenacious and disregards all boundaries. She will not relent until she pries open Jesus' compassion on behalf of this child, even if it is just a crumb of concern. So the woman said, "I know the children are fed first, but can't I even get the scraps the children throw away?" Here was a faith that would not take no for an answer and Jesus loved it. Her faith was tested, her faith was real. And her prayer was answered.

Lord God, teach me to sincerely seek you each day, for you have only good in mind for us. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, September 2: Mark 7:24-37

In this second miracle again there are boundaries to be dealt with. This man cannot hear or speak for himself. Others must be willing to act on his behalf. For his part, he must rely on others and this involves trust. As the woman who brought the child to Jesus, the people who brought this man to Jesus acted as his advocate. They were "begging" for the well-being of another, not for themselves.

According to Barclay, there is no other miracle which so beautifully shows Jesus' way of treating people. He did not consider the man merely as "a case," he considered him "an individual." By taking the man aside from the crowd, all by himself, Jesus showed tender consideration for the feelings of a man for whom life was very difficult. He recognized the fact that deaf people are always a little embarrassed and often feel helpless and vulnerable when in a crowd. Jesus looked up to heaven to show that it was from God that help was to come. Then he spoke the word -"Ephphatha," or "be opened," and the man was healed. When the people saw this miracle completed they declared Jesus had done all things well. This is the same verdict of God upon his own creation in the very beginning (Genesis 1:31). As Barclay explains, "When Jesus came, bringing healing to men's bodies and salvation to their souls, he had begun the work of creation all over again. In the beginning everything had been good; man's sin had spoiled it all; and now Jesus was bringing back the beauty of God to the world which man's sin had rendered ugly".

Creating God, open my ears that I may hear. Amen.

THURSDAY, September 3: Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23

Beginning with chapter 22, Solomon shifts the emphasis from knowing the truth to doing the truth. The issue is not how many proverbs you know in your head, but how many proverbs you apply in your heart. In verses 1-2, 8-9, and 22-23, the writers admonish their hearers to value a good name and favor over silver and gold; to sow justice in order to avoid calamity and anger; and to not rob the poor or crush the afflicted just because they are poor and afflicted. These, verses outline a number of functions of the ideal king in the ancient Near East. The ideal king was to give security and protection for the inhabitants of that king's city and to provide for those who could not adequately provide for themselves - the widows, the orphans, and the poor. In the book of Proverbs, these community obligations are addressed not to a king, but to all humanity. It is humanity's responsibility not only to establish and maintain a right relationship with its God, but also to establish a right relationship with its human companions in this enterprise we call life.

God, it is better to be chosen by you and for us to choose a life of service than for us to be without you. Amen

FRIDAY, September 4: Psalm 121

The Security of God's Love and Presence

Jimmy, a former street youth, visited my office. Weeping, he explained, "I have had more chances than any one person deserves. I was put into a foster home when I was two years old. By the age of twelve, I had been in fourteen foster homes. Then I ran

away and lived on the streets until I was nearly twenty. Then some street workers helped me. I got some education and a place to live. The guys shared the good news of forgiveness in Christ with me. I now have a fine wife and two wonderful children and a good job as a mechanic. God just kept on giving me chances I didn't deserve!" God gives us more chances than we deserve; this is proof of God's unconditional love for us. God knows when we are steadfast in our faith and lives out the promise to surround us forever. We have a sense of security; at last we can feel the goodness of God's presence in our lives. (from Reg Gaskin in "These Days")

"He keeps you from all evil, and preserves your life " (Psalm 121:7).

SATURDAY, September 5: James 2:1-10, (11-13), 14-17

James is trying to answer the question, "What is the purpose of religion?" He was troubled by people whose way of life was not being shaped by the faith they professed. Rich and poor were being treated differently in the church. Obviously, their behavior was being shaped by the values of the culture not a commitment to God. It is the purpose of religion, with all of its doctrines and rituals and customs, to lead us into a relationship with God that will shape our lives. If the Christian faith is your real faith, it will shape your life and your works. Faith (religion) that produces no loving works is dead. James goes on to say, "Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith" (2:18).

Remember, your talk will only be as believable as your walk.

***Trinity Presbyterian Church Hosts
Melmark Joybells Concert***

Sunday, September 13, 2009 . . . 7:00 pm

Trinity Presbyterian Church of Berwyn is hosting a concert with The Melmark Joybells of Berwyn. The concert will begin at 7:00 pm at the church on Sunday, September 13, 2009. Admission is free. This unique handbell choir presents a varied repertoire which includes sacred, classical, pop, Broadway, Disney, patriotic, and Christmas musical selections on their 5-octave Schulmerich handbells, silver melody bells, handchimes, and percussion. The Joybells is under the direction of Sue Graves and Joyce Klinck.

Make your plans!

Lectionary Devotional Guide
September 7 – September 12, 2006

The time between Pentecost and Advent is usually referred to as “ordinary time”. The dictionary defines the word “ordinary” as “that which is commonplace”. Our readings this week show the glory of God – the creative power that gives everything life - being proclaimed in the ordinary and not-so-ordinary places in which we find ourselves.

Monday, September 7: Proverbs 1:20-33

In today’s reading, Wisdom is personified as a woman, inviting all to come to her and learn. Most, however, refuse to hear her appeal. Wisdom makes her appeal in the city, at the head of the street, in the public square, in ordinary places. The results of refusing to pay attention to her offer are unpleasant and disastrous. In our day I think we tend to ignore Wisdom’s advice (which is just as appropriate now as it was then), perhaps because we do not consider the words in the Old Testament to be directly applicable to our situations. Or perhaps we do not look for connections to the advice which was given. We may be in for the same sort of results promised to those residents of a much earlier time, for their (and our) failure to heed the words of Wisdom.

Tuesday, September 8: Psalm 19

Today we find God’s glory being proclaimed in two ways – through creation and through God’s law. The first part of the chapter relates how everything God created proclaims God’s glory – the heavens, the skies, day and night. The sun rises and dashes across the sky, burning a trail that, although we are quite used to it (and certainly expect it!), is not truly “ordinary”. Then follows the law of the Lord, which is perfect. The attributes of the law are proclaimed in beautiful language, such that most times we find the words inapplicable, or at least hard to relate to. The chapter ends with the prayer used at the start of many sermons. This prayer recognizes that, just as creation and the law proclaim God’s glory, we too are called on to proclaim God’s greatness no matter who or where we are.

Wednesday, September 9: James 3:1-4

James provides advice for church leaders, particularly teachers. Teaching was very important in the early church (as it still is today!) because it was the way people became Christians and learned how to live in order to follow Christ. Jesus was called a teacher, and the ability to teach was considered a gift of the Holy Spirit. Early

Christians had to be very careful because there were people who tried to deceive them through false teaching. Teachers will be judged with greater strictness than those who learn from them.

Thursday, September 10: James 3:5-12

James follows up with advice about controlling what a teacher (or any of us) say – how we use our words. He links the danger of false teaching with the use of the tongue. Since we must talk in order to teach, Christians have to realize that the tongue is a powerful instrument which can be used for good or evil. It is referred to as a fire and as destructive as fire. Note the many negative ways James refers to the tongue. It is a deadly evil, full of poison, and can be used to both curse and bless. The tongue, in order not to do evil, must be, and can be controlled. Can you think of cases in your own experience where wrong use of or simply unthinking use of words has caused trouble?

Friday, September 11: Mark 8:27-33

Today's and tomorrow's readings focus on the suffering Messiah, and address his concerns about how his message is being received and what service in him means. Today he addresses his disciples as they travel to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. He asked who the people said he was. When the disciples replied that some said he was John the Baptist, others Elijah, and still others that he was one of the prophets, he asked who they thought he was. Peter's confession "You are the Christ" resulted in Jesus' admonition to tell no one about him. He then made his first Passion prediction, telling them about what must befall him. He spoke plainly about this and Peter responded in typical Peter fashion, rebuking him for saying such things. Jesus then rebuked Peter, chiding him for placing the things of men ahead of the things of God. The proclamation of coming events was to be kept among the disciples for a while longer.

Saturday, September 12: Mark 8:34-38

Jesus then addressed both his disciples and the crowd, laying out for them what it would mean to follow him. His mention of taking up one's cross and following him must have seemed strange to them, because the cross was certainly well-known to them at that time. It was probably not totally clear to any of his listeners on that particular day. Is it really clear to us? What actions are we faced with today?

LECTIONARY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE
September 14 – September 19, 2009

Understanding discipleship is the theme for this week. The term disciple, meaning student, is used to describe the twelve original followers of Jesus, as well as the wide range of Jesus' followers and friends. Being a follower means being willing to live the life of the Suffering Servant. In these readings, the Biblical writers help us to understand that being in relationship with God is not about status, but it involves hard work, compassion and love.

MONDAY, September 14: Proverbs 31: 10-31

This is the last poem in Proverbs, the wisdom book. This selection describes the qualities needed and valued in a “capable wife.” It is written in the form of an acrostic – each line of the poem begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet, from aleph to taz. It details, from A to Z, all the qualities a truly good wife/woman possesses.

Here is a woman who does good, works with her hands, rises while it is still night, has the power to buy a field, sell merchandise, and contribute to the income of the household. She is physically strong, compassionate toward the poor and needy, is wise, dignified, self-assured and praised by others, including her husband. It should come as no surprise that this passage is a favorite for Mother's Day! This ideal woman provides a model of discipleship as she serves her family and community.

TUESDAY, September 15: Psalm 1

“Blessed,” from the RSV, or “Happy,” from the Good News Bible, reminds us of the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus was carrying on the teaching methods of the Old Testament wisdom literature found in Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Job and several Psalms. Wisdom, a feminine noun in Hebrew, means the teaching of God about the true way of life.

Psalm 1 portrays the type of person who is nurtured by the words of the psalmist. Those who study and live according to God's laws are happy. Those who do not- the wicked, sinful, scornful and ungodly – are blown away. This may be viewed as simplistic, but the point is valid nonetheless. Given two ways of living – obeying the law or rejecting it – the true way of life is to be lived in fellowship with God in community. How comforting for us to know that when we honestly try to be faithful and obedient to God's revealed way of life, our daily walk is guided by the Lord who loves and protects us.

WEDNESDAY, September 16: James 3: 13-4: 3; 7-8a

James begins this passage with a distinction between good wisdom, a gift from God, and wisdom that is evil. Worldly wisdom is characterized by envy, jealousy, bitterness and selfishness. It leads to conflicts and disputes. Wisdom from above is pure, peaceful, gentle and friendly, full of compassion and good deeds.

People who take their faith seriously will demonstrate the presence of this wisdom from above by living good lives filled with good deeds. Those who take the good wisdom into themselves and allow it to shape their lives will experience a changed life.

THURSDAY, September 17: Mark 9: 30-32

Jesus kept coming back to the topic of his death because the disciples found it difficult to understand. They were afraid to ask for the simple reason they were afraid to know anymore. It wasn't the death itself, but the resurrection that stymied them. So Jesus left the crowds and made time to be alone with them. He knew his band of followers had to understand what he had come to do so that his message could be written in their hearts.

Are we not like the disciples? According to Barclay, the human mind has an amazing faculty for rejecting what it does not want to see. We hear the message over and over again. We know the glory of accepting it and the tragedy of rejecting it. But we still fall short of giving it our full allegiance and molding our lives to fit it.

FRIDAY, September 18: Mark 9: 33-37

Who is the greatest? The disciples didn't get it. They failed to realize the real meaning of Jesus' messiahship. While Jesus was preparing to face the events awaiting him in Jerusalem, they were arguing among themselves about who was the greatest among them. When Jesus asked what they were arguing about, they had nothing to say. The silence of shame. So long as they thought Jesus was not listening, the argument about who should be the greatest seemed okay. But when that argument had to be stated, in the presence of Jesus, it was seen in all its unworthiness.

Jesus used this opportunity to teach a lesson. He sat down, which was the position of a rabbi teaching his students. He told them that greatness in his kingdom was not to be found by being first, but by being last. He taught a servant ministry. For the ambition to rule he substituted an ambition to serve, to do for others rather than selves. Do we get it?

SATURDAY, September 19: Mark 9: 33-37

In Jesus' time, children had no legal rights or social status. They were dependent on the good will of the male head of the household. While many fathers were generous and loving, there were also many stories in the Bible of children whose lives are sacrificed or put at risk. By using a child as the standard for discipleship, Jesus is saying that discipleship involves standing with the weakest members of society -- serving hungry families in our community through Caring Cupboard, nurturing the school children in Chester, ministering to those in need in Honduras.

May we have the courage and commitment to live our lives as faithful disciples.

**“Why Calvin?”**

September 20 – October 25

Many celebrated the 500th Anniversary of his birthday.

Why bother?

What meaning does Calvin have for us today?

Jay Wilkins will lead a conversation on the continuing relevance of the Reformation and Calvin in the contemporary church and life in America, including that great series “Calvin & Hobbes.”

Sunday mornings at 9 AM in the Parlor.