

November 2, 2019

Adult Sunday School Class

Objective: Increase understanding of the peace and rest made available to those who believe.

Opening Prayer: Thank you Father, we pause now to acknowledge your presence..... I thank you that you always hear me. That you never leave me or forsake me and that you are an ever present help. I ask for a special anointing on this lesson plan and the time we will spend together today. Bless both speaker and listener. Open our hearts to receive a fresh revelation from your Spirit. I bind forces that would hinder and welcome the Holy Spirit as our teacher today. In Jesus name!

Read: Hebrews 4

Q – Without articulating the specifics would you agree with me that this world and our individual lives have a boat load of potential anxieties and some pretty significant issues that need our attention? - Rhetorical

Q – What was Paul's recommended solution for our anxieties?

- Philippians 4:4) Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! 5) Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. 6) Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7) And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. 8) Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. 9) Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.
- If we **allow** these thoughts to transfer from our heads and penetrate completely into our hearts we could leave this class and know we've had a genuine encounter with God's Spirit today.

Q – How does the peace of God transcends all understanding?

- When the message of the Spirit of God is received with joy it brings peace to ones heart and mind.
- What allows joy to accompany the message of the Holy Spirit? - Faith.
 - Faith that God's word is true.
 - Faith that He is in control.
 - Faith that He has a plan to deal with the issues at hand.

Q – What do we know about Paul's experience in Philippi and his circumstances when he wrote this letter?

- Paul & Silas were arrested, punished (beaten with rods) without a trial and imprisoned.
- In addition, when he wrote this letter to the Philippians, Paul was in prison in Rome.

Q – Why is it significant that they were not allowed the benefit of a trial before being punished?

- Philippi was a Roman colony.
- Roman law required a trial for any Roman citizen being accused of a crime.
- Both Paul & Silas were Roman citizens.
- Without a trial they were being unjustly treated by the political system of their day.

Q – Where can we find the account of the experiences of Paul & Silas in Philippi? - Acts 16:12 – 40.

- Let's read about their experiences in Philippi.

Q – How would you summarize the experience of Paul & Silas at Philippi?

- They were successful at establishing a small group of believers.

- They were harassed by a demon spirit in a fortune telling slave girl.
- Paul became frustrated by this spirit's continued harassment and cast the demon out of her.
- Her owners lost a source of income, went to the authorities and accused them of preaching a religion that was not approved by the Roman government.
- They were arrested & unjustly punished without a trial.
 - Their punishment was they were beaten with rods that left open wounds on their bodies
 - They received no medical treatment prior to being incarcerated.
- They were considered to be high value prisoners.
 - Held in the inner section of the prison.
 - Immobilized by having their feet placed in stocks.
- At midnight they were praying and singing hymns to God.
 - In the inner prison with their feet being held in stocks.
 - And the other prisoners were listening to them.
- There was a great earthquake.
 - The doors of the prison flew open.
 - Everyone's chains came loose.
- They successfully prevented the jailer from committing suicide and led him to Christ.

Q – What do you envision their conditions to have been as they were approaching the midnight hour?

- It had been a long and difficult day for them, why were they not sleeping?
- Were they comfortable?
- Would they have had a feeling of having been treated fairly or unfairly?
- Did they know how long this period of incarceration was going to be?
- Were their wounds bleeding and causing their clothes to stick to their bodies?
- If clothing sticks to a wound and movement occurs doesn't it pull the scabs loose and irritate?
- Do you get muscle cramps with long periods of immobility?
- Did the stocks have a comfortable padded area for them to rest on?
- Do you believe there were insects and rodents in that prison?

Q – How does their situation stack up against the issues in our lives? - Rhetorical.

Q – What do you believe they were singing, praying and praising God or rejoicing about? - Defer answering.

Q – What is your vision or concept of God?

- How does He operate?
- What is He doing in this period of time?
- How is it that He knows all things, your thoughts, prayers and the intent of your heart?
- Is He personally involved or does He have other ways of getting the job done?
- How does He stay current with what's going on?
- Is God active or passive?
- Is He working on our behalf or resting from all His labors?
- Truth be known, we know very little about God outside of His creation(s) and His revealed word.
- The writer of Hebrews said, his works have been finished since the creation of the world and on the seventh day God rested from all his works.

Q – How can it be true that God is at rest and yet active in the sense that He never leaves us or forsakes us and is an ever present help in time of trouble?

- Because of the support systems that He designed when He created all things.
- We do know about some of the biological support systems that He created.

Q – How is it that one can be cut open for a major surgical procedure and a few months later the scar or area of incision is barely visible and the muscles have all returned to normal operation? - The self healing design of our bodies and most living things.

Q – How is it that our bodies can consume beans, nuts and vegetables and obtain enough nutrients to support muscle mass? - The wonders of the design of our digestive system and our bodies abilities to convert food to energy.

Q – What do we know about immune systems, like the one at work in our bodies?

- It can automatically recognize foreign bacteria.
- It then designs and builds a defense mechanism against them, isolates and/or kills them to prevent the foreign invaders from harming our bodies.

Q – What do we know about the effects of stress on our immune system?

- It can have crippling effects on our bodies ability to physically defend and protect us from disease.
- The medical costs of stress related health issues exceeds that of cancer, smoking, diabetes, and heart disease combined. (https://www.huffpost.com/entry/stress-and-health_b_3313606)
- An estimated 75 percent to 90 percent of all doctor visits are for stress related issues.

Q – How does fear, frustration, worry and anxiety affect our level of stress? - It significantly increases it.

Q – Faith is the opposite of _____, _____ and _____? - Fear, worry and anxiety.

Q – Why are law enforcement agencies developing DNA data bases?

- Because we've learned that like finger prints, our DNA is unique to us as individuals.
- Not only can it be used for identification purposes it is also used by the systems of our bodies from birth to death, to build and replenish all the various types of cells we require.

Q – How does the book of Proverbs describe all of God's creations? - Proverbs 16:4

- NIV - The LORD works out everything to its proper end — even the wicked for a day of disaster.
- Amplified - The Lord has made everything to accommodate itself and contribute to its own end *and* His own purpose—even the wicked are fitted for their role for the day of calamity *and* evil.

Q – Can you give me some examples of specialized professions? - Specialization exists in almost all professions to some extent.

- Doctors or medical practices.
- Law enforcement: traffic control, criminal investigation, prison guards, swat teams, bomb squad, etc.
- Computer programmers, support centers, hardware technicians and engineers.
- Pastors, evangelists, worship leaders, bible teachers, etc.

Q – Why do we have specialization in complex areas of knowledge and skill?

- Because not even the best among us can know or acquire the skills to do everything efficiently.
- We all have different gifts, skills and areas of expertise.

Q – What do we expect our doctors to do when they don't quite know how to handle our medical problems? - Refer us to a specialist or to someone with the expertise to correctly diagnosis the problem we're having.

Q - Back to the question of how can God be both at rest and yet active in our support? How does He do it? - Through the spiritual Support Systems that were designed in the beginning when he created all things.

Q – Who can give me some examples of God's specialized spiritual support systems?

- Faith.
- The Holy Spirit.
- The word or the scriptures.

- Angelic hosts.
- The lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, Jesus Christ our savior.

Q – What is the mission of the Holy Spirit?

- It's defined quite well in the gospel of John chapters 14, 15 & 16.
- I'm going to read from the Amplified version because of the depth and redundancy of meaning it conveys.
- If these scriptures are not underlined or highlighted in your bible I strongly advise you to do it and re-read them as often as necessary to understand the level of support offered by this person of the God Head,
- 14: 16) And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengtheners, and Standby), that He may remain with you forever— 17) The **Spirit of Truth**, Whom the world cannot receive (welcome, take to its heart), because it does not see Him or know *and* recognize Him. But you know *and* recognize Him, for **He lives with you [constantly] and will be in you.**
- 14:26) But the Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengtheners, Standby), the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name [in My place, to represent Me and act on My behalf], He will **teach you all things**. And He will cause you to recall (will **remind you** of, bring to your remembrance) everything I have told you.
- 15: 26) But when the Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Advocate, Intercessor, Strengtheners, Standby) comes, Whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth Who comes (proceeds) from the Father, He [Himself] will **testify regarding Me**.
- 16:7) However, I am telling you nothing but the truth when I say it is profitable (good, expedient, advantageous) for you that I go away. Because if I do not go away, the Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Advocate, Intercessor, Strengtheners, Standby) will not come to you [into close fellowship with you]; but if I go away, I will send Him to you [to be in close fellowship with you]. 8) And when He comes, He will convict *and* convince the world *and* bring demonstration to it about sin and about righteousness (uprightness of heart and right standing with God) and about judgment:
- 16:13) But when He, the Spirit of Truth (the Truth-giving Spirit) comes, **He will guide you into all the Truth** (the whole, full Truth). For He will not speak His own message [on His own authority]; but He will tell whatever He hears [from the Father; He will give the message that has been given to Him], and He will announce *and* declare to you the things that are to come [that will happen in the future] 14) He will honor *and* glorify Me, because He will take of (receive, draw upon) what is Mine and will **reveal** (declare, disclose, transmit) it to you.

Q – Was Jesus referring to the Holy Spirit when he made this statement in John chapter 14:27) Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid?

- I believe He was.
- The other attribute of the mission of the Holy Spirit is He will produce peace in the life of a Believer,.....**if.....we will allow Him to.**
- How can you be anxious about the right course of action if you truly believe the Holy Spirit of God
 - Will teach you what you need to know about the subject and
 - Direct your steps and make them sure?
 - You can't be because those two thoughts are contradictory in nature.
 - Your options,
 - Choose to believe God and allow His peace to settle into your heart.
 - Continue to try to work it out with your own understanding and strength.

Q – What does God say about His word?

- Isaiah 55, 8) “For **my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,**” declares the LORD. 9) “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and

my thoughts than your thoughts.....11) so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

- Isaiah 40:28) Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and **his understanding no one can fathom.** .

Q – How did the writer of Hebrews describe the word of God?

- 4:12) For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword,
 - It penetrates even to dividing soul (will, mind & emotions) and spirit, joints and marrow;
 - It judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.
 - It's alive and active accomplishing what He desires on our behalf and
 - Achieving the purpose for which He sent it.

Q – Why did the translators include verses 12 & 13 in the first paragraph of the chapter?

- Because they are related to the subject of entering God's rest.
- Not only are they related but the word of God is required in the heart of a Believer in order to enable them to enter God's rest.

Q – Why is the word required to enter God's rest?

- It is pivotal to faith, it has been described as the “seed” of faith.
- It is considered a building block or basis of faith.

Q – How does the author restate the need for faith to enter God's rest?

- He says we must rest from our own works.
- Or you might say from our works of self-righteousness.
- The results of our own natural understanding.
- Spiritual insight or understanding defies human logic.

Q – How many who have heard and accepted the gospel will enter God's rest? - Some.

Q – Why only some? - Because some will not combine the gospel or the word of God with faith.

Q – What two things did the author identify that prevent people from entering God's rest?

- Unbelief and disobedience.

Q – What are the angels assigned to do? - Hebrews 1:14) Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

Q – What does this chapter of Hebrews say is necessary to receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need? - Confidence toward God and His throne of grace.

Q - Confidence toward God is another way of describing _____? - Faith!

Q – What do you believe they were singing, praying and praising God or rejoicing about?

- The peace of God in their hearts in spite of some very difficult circumstances.
- A confirmation of God's presence or the assurance He was right there with them.
- The confidence that God's plan would be revealed to them at the appropriate time.
- A quiet assurance that He was working all things for good even though they were not yet visible.
- Their confidence in God was being manifested in their thoughts and actions.
- Out of the abundance of their hearts their mouths were communicating with their heavenly Father.