

### Adult Sunday School Class

**Objective:** The first chapter of Paul's letter to Titus and a review the fundamentals of faith.

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

**Statement:** Before we resume our normal study in Titus chapter 1,

- I'd like to share an experience I had during one of the church services we attended while on vacation in Myrtle Beach in 2013. (Previous time we studied Titus 1.)
- I have had similar experiences in other church services and at various times in my life.
- While attending Colgate University in the mid 80's I attended the most charismatic church in the area which was a very liberal Baptist Church.
- My full gospel friends also attended and complained about the lack of "spiritual food" & worship.
- However, I frequently would come away refreshed and encouraged either by something that was said or the message in the very traditional hymns that were sung.
- In the MB incident referenced above the speaker did not comment on this scripture.
- He spent no more than the time it took to read the verse that was printed in the bulletin under the title, **Preparation For Worship**.
- However in those few seconds, the Spirit of God spoke volumes to my heart.
- **Read:** Psalms 27:4 - One thing I ask from the LORD, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple. (KJV)

Q – What do we mean when we use the terms "all the days of my life"? - The period of our natural existence on this earth.

Q – What is the typical meaning of the term "house of the Lord"? - The church building or in David's day, the temple.

Q – How would most Christians normally complete this sentence? - and I will dwell in the house of the Lord \_\_\_\_\_? (forever)

Q – What do we mean when we say "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever". - I will spend eternity with God in heaven.

S – Now, let's re-read the reference scripture and discuss how some might interpret David's statement in verse 4.

- I only want one thing, that is to live or be in the church or house of the Lord all day every day.
- I seek and want one thing of the Lord, to spend eternity in His house or with Him.
- I have one request Lord, to be in your presence all the days of my life. To walk with you on a daily basis and enjoy your companionship in all the affairs of my life.
- I'm asking GOD for one and only one thing: To live with him in his house my whole life long.
- One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple. (KJV)
- One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek, inquire for, *and* [insistently] require: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord [**in His presence**] all the days of my life, to behold *and* gaze upon the beauty [the sweet attractiveness and the delightful loveliness] of the Lord and to meditate, consider, *and* inquire in His temple

Q – In your own terms, what do you believe, the one thing was that David was really asking God for?

- He was asking for and attempting to live in the presence of God every day, all day long.
- He wanted the peace and insight that only comes in the immediate proximity of our almighty God.
- He wanted his “antenna” permanently set to one and only one frequency, the presence of the Divine.
- He said, I want the Spirit of God to be my portion, at all times in my life.
- David was saying, my one desire is an intense awareness or strong sense of the presence of God.

Q – Was he being realistic? Is it possible to live in the presence or “house of the Lord” all the days of your natural life?

- It is! Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit? (I Corinthians 6:19)
- Not only is it possible, it's the desire of God's heart, that we would know a strong sense of His presence all day, every day or “24/7” as is commonly said today.
- He wants you to know He is with you in the midst of all the issues you are dealing with.
- In your strengths and in your weaknesses.
- In sickness and in health.
- In success and failure.
- He wants you to know that when you're weak, He's strong.
- When you can't find your way He wants to lead you in paths of righteousness.
- When you don't have the answer He wants to reveal it to you.
  - Sometimes He does that directly.
  - Sometimes He will simply lead you one step at a time through the confusing or dark places.
- He wants you to know, “He will never leave you or forsake you” and “is an ever present help”!
- It's the journey that is described in the book written in the 1700's, The practice of His Presence.
  - The author was brother Lawrence, a pot cleaner or kitchen worker, who set as his life long goal.
  - To practice the presence of the Lord, all day, every day, in all he set his hand unto.
  - He like David had one desire, a continuing consciousness of the presence of almighty God.
- It's our journey thru this life that God has sent His Spirit to accompany us on & to be our companion.

Q – How does one live continually in the presence of God?

- By faith.
- By choosing to make His presence a priority.
- By believing He will never leave you or forsake you.
- He is our refuge and strength an ever-present help in trouble.

Q – What did Jesus say to his disciples when they were stunned by the sight of the fig tree that withered and died in less than 24 hrs? - Have faith in God!

Q – How can you believe that God is with you when you can't seem to get victory over the serious illness or issues you're coping with?

- By listening to the Spirit of God and protecting the seed of faith being offered by the “author and finisher” of our faith.
- Hebrews 12 indicates that He initiates our faith and causes it to mature or brings it to completion.
- The key is allowing His Spirit to complete the process in our hearts.

**Read:** Mark 4: 13-20

13) Then Jesus said to them, “Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable? 14) The farmer sows the word. 15) Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. 16) Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. 17) But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. 18) Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; 19) but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it

unfruitful. 20) Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown.”

Q – What seed of faith is the Spirit of God presenting to us right now, today, in this class session?

- Low I am with you always even until the end of the age.
- Never, never, never will I leave you or forsake you.
- **I AM**, the great **I AM** wants to be our ever-present help!

Q – When did Psalms 46 say he was there to help? - When we're in trouble.

Q – Did it say he would make the trouble go away?

- No, but sometimes He will.
- Many times he simply shows us how to cope with it all.

Q – Why didn't God heal Paul from his stated “thorn in the flesh” – God had a better plan for Paul than deliverance from this irritant in his life.

Q – If that conclusion is true, what was the better plan or purpose?

- We can speculate but can't be absolutely sure.
- Truth be told, “God's ways are (always) higher than our ways and His thoughts than our thoughts”.
- Faith draws the conclusion that God is always acting with my best interest at heart.
- If I don't get the answer when and how I want it there must be a good reason.
- Perhaps He's teaching me something, or keeping me from something I don't see.
- Perhaps He's using me for some purpose I don't and can't at this time understand.
- “His ways are higher than our ways and His thoughts than our thoughts!”

Q – Would Paul have written as many of the letters that contain or reinforce so many important elements of our faith if the prayers by the good Christian people for his release from prison had been answered?

- No.
- God had a better plan!

Q – Was Paul aware of God's “better plan”?

- I doubt it.
- Like us, he most likely didn't have a clue.
- Perhaps after the fact we can see the hand of God but for most of us, in real time, our only option is to trust God.

Q – Do you believe that if Paul was aware of the details of God's “better plan” he would have requested relief or would he have been content to live and perhaps die knowing he was in the center of God's will for his life?

- I believe Paul's “flesh” would have resisted at times but his spirit would have been in full support of the plan God had for his life.
- The scriptures tell us that He is aware of every sparrow that falls.
- Believe me when I tell you.....He knows the details of our daily saga!

Q – How do we know if we really believe these truths from God's word?

- We demonstrate our beliefs by our actions. By the things we say and do.
- All speech and behaviors follow our beliefs.
- By the peace and patience we're able to display in difficult situations.
- When we truly believe we're in God's hands and He's acting in our best interest frustrations subside.
- It's OK that I can't yet see the end of the tunnel.
- I'm in my Father's hands, Abba Father! “Daddy” God.

Q – What have you concluded that the Spirit of God spoke to my heart in that MB church service when David's statement from Psalms 24 was read?

- David's desire for a continuous sense of the presence of God.
- The elements of this SS lesson plan.

Q – How much time do you envision it took for the Spirit of God to communicate that message to me?

- Seconds.
- God ways are not our ways!

Q – What are your expectations of the way God will speak to your heart?

- Please be open to the leading of His Spirit.
- He can fill your heart with peace, direction and support in less time than it takes for you to form words on your tongue.
- Have faith in God and His ever presence help!

**Read:** Titus 1.

Q – What are the biggest issues that you've been dealing with for the last month? – Allow me to tell you what was on our plate when I taught this lesson in January of 2002.

- Patty Lawrence (Norton's daughter in-law) had been diagnosed with a large inoperable malignant mass in her pelvic region. It would require chemo and radiation, which as you may know were ultimately unsuccessful treatments.
- Our daughter in-law was having severe headaches, was concerned about a possible calcification in her brain and was haunted by the fact that her sister has MS and the potential hereditary aspects of the disease.
- My sister was still suffering from being divorced for the second time and her ex-husband had recently passed away after a lengthy bout of prostate cancer.
- In addition, she and her daughter were still estranged and the rest of her family was in a constant state of turmoil.

Q – What does any of this have to do with what we've read in Titus chapter 1?

- It's tied to Paul's stated purpose for writing to Titus which was?
- The faith of the elect and knowledge of the truth which leads to godliness.

Q – How might faith be applied to each of the situations we've discussed, including those from the 2002 time frame?

- Healing and recovery.
- Provision and direction to the best resource for medical treatments and/or the best solutions
- The peace of God to garrison about one in the midst of turmoil and crisis.
- The courage and confidence to hold the situation up in prayer even though the prognosis is poor.
- An assurance that God is in control even though answers to prayer seem absent or severely delayed.
- A confidence that God is always acting with our best interests at heart even though we do not understand how the apparent outcome could be His best.

Q – Why would Paul have to say “God does not lie”, isn't that just stating the obvious?

- His stated purpose for writing was the faith of the elect and their knowledge of the truth.
- One very significant element of absolute truth is God does not lie.
- His word is true and His statements come to pass.
- Faith is built on and demands truth!

.....To be continued next week.