

05/01/2015  
The Importance Of Remembering

"My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I will also ignore your children" (Hos.4:6).

How many times have you heard the term, "ignorance is no excuse?" People often go to that plea when they know that they have done something wrong and there's no other way out.

Forgetting can often be disastrous. In Old Testament times, God provided His people with constant reminders of His presence in their lives. God said: "Therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day..."(Deut.5:15). He gave them special feasts like Passover, Succoth and Pentecost as remembrance times... God wanted the people in those days to remember Him. Because those things did not work the way they should have, God did not give up on His desire for people to remember Him. As a demonstration of His love for us, He gave us Jesus! Jesus came to us with His own special set of ways to remember Him and His Father. His teachings were as "spot on" as any in the history of man, as He showed us how to live a worthy life. The crowning achievement, however, was His death and resurrection... When He presented us with the elements of the Lord's Supper, He capped it off by saying, "do this in remembrance of me..." (1 Cor.11:24-25). Each Sunday when we gather to worship, the songs, prayers, Communion, giving and lesson are designed to help us to remember. Remembering Jesus, especially His death, produces a greater and deeper gratitude, appreciation and devotion to the Son of God. The next few devotionals will deal with remembering...

Have a great day... T G I F..... Thank God I'm Forgiven.... Love mark Phil.4:11

05/02/2015  
A Few Bible Questions

Its Saturday, so that means its time to test our Bible knowledge with a few questions... As always, have fun...

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Who was the first man in the Bible to build a city? (a) Noah, (b) Adam, (c) Cain, (d) Abraham.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. What was the name of that first city? (a) Enoch, (b) Irad, (c) Adah, (d) Lamech.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. What woman made a pair of "kid" gloves for her son? (a) Rachel, (b) Rebekah, (c) Sarah, (d) Hannah.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. What queen's blood "splattered on the horses as they trampled her underfoot?" (a) Sheba, (b) Jezebel, (c) Vashti, (d) Rubuleaus.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The first musician in the Bible played a harp and flute. Who was he? (a) Adam, (b) Abel, (c) Jubal, (d) Solomon.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. What Old Testament man cut his hair only once a year and it weighed 200 shekels. (a) Absalom, (b) Samson, (c) Goliath, (d) Sidneaus.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. What Gentile king made Esther his queen? (a) Nebuchadnezzar, (b) Belshazzar, (c) Xerxes (Ahasuerus).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. When Balaam said, "You have made a fool of me! If I had a sword in my hand I would kill you right now," who did he say it to? (a) his servant, (b) his brother, (c) Balak, (d) his donkey.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. The mother-in-law of Ruth was Naomi, Who was her father-in-law?" (a) Elimelech, (b) Elkinah, (c) Mordecai, (d) Kilion.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. How many years were added to Hezekiah's life? (a) 5, (b) 10, (c) 15, (d) 20.

Have a great weekend and a glorifying and uplifting day of worship on His Day... Love mark  
Phil.4:11

05/04/2015  
Remembering The Presence Of Jesus

"Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near" (Phil.4:5).

As we continue our pursuit of remembering Jesus, today's remembrance is a simple, concise and easy one. We must always remember that Jesus is near His people. Our worship services are designed for us be aware of His proximity. Through our singing, prayers, Lord's Supper and

Bible study, we are reminded of His presence. It is so wonderful to be with our brothers and sisters in worship and feel Jesus' nearness to us all, but when we leave the building, He leaves with each of us. He reminds us through His Word to be good and moral people and caps it off by saying: "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you..." (Heb.13:5). We have reason to have hope in times when things aren't going so well when we remember that verse. When the temptations around us are at their strongest, Jesus is right there, promising to help us through...

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one that has been tempted in every way, just as we are --- yet was without sin" (Heb.4:15).

That is one of the glorious things about Jesus having left heaven and taking the form of a

human being. The apostle Paul's words echo in my ears... "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will provide a way out so that you can stand up under it..." (1 Cor.10:13). Lets go through today remembering that Jesus is right there with us....

Have a great start to your week.... Begin it with a RAK or two... Love mark Phil.4:11

05/05/2015

### Remembering Jesus' Words

"Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. The Lord turned and look straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him...'before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times.' He went outside and wept bitterly" (Lk.22:61-62).

After he remembered the words Jesus had spoken to him, Peter realized what he had done and cried... If that were the entire story, Peter would have been a abject failure. The great thing is that Peter remembered many of the other words that Jesus had spoken and became the great stalwart for the Lord he was supposed to become. We would do well to follow the footsteps of Peter (not the denial part) and remember Jesus' words. He was the greatest teacher that ever lived, and his words echo through the corridors of time. On the third day following the crucifixion, women took spices to anoint Jesus' body. But when they got there, the stone was rolled away and the body missing. The two men (angels) told them: "The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified, and on the third day be raised..." (Lk.24:7). The women's response? "And then they remembered His words..." (V 8). We also must remember His words, and when we do they will constrain us to obey, serve, give, fellowship and worship. Lastly, there are these words of Jesus that we must remember: "He who rejects me and does not receive My sayings (remember them) has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day" (Jn.12:48). Jesus is quite clear that we will be judged upon our adherence to His Word... It is so important for us to dwell on Jesus' words, but also these coming from Peter: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (Jn.6:68).

Have a wonderful day... Do good and give God the credit... Love mark Phil.4:11

05/06/2015

### Remembering Jesus' Return

"Do not let your heart be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in Me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will

come back and take you to be with Me that you may be where I am. You know the way to where I am going" (Jn.14:1-4).

As we complete this short series of things to remember about Jesus, it all comes together with the realization that Jesus will be coming back one day. After telling His disciples that He would be leaving them, today's verses were written as words of comfort. Jesus did not apply a time and date for His return, because He wants us to live each day as if His return is eminent... Jesus actually said these words: "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father" (Matt.24:36). What He wants of us is to live a life that reflects His teachings. He has this powerful desire that we obey Him into salvation. Then comes our service to Him, our giving of ourselves, Our fellowshiping together and our worship. Jesus actually couched His return with these words: "Therefore, keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour" (Matt.25:13). When Paul saw the end near he wrote these words to Timothy: "Now there is in store for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award me on that day ----- and not only to me, but also to all those who have longed for His appearing" (2 Tim.4:7-8). Isn't it a bit ironic that we remember many things we should forget and forget any things we ought to remember. Each Lord's day when we gather about His special table, He says, do this in my remembrance...

Have a great day... Make your little part of the world better... Love mark Phil.4:11

05/07/2015  
A Bit Of Symbiosis Please

"But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers" (Lk.22:32).

If I might ask you to clear away the cobwebs, and remember some stuff from a high school or college biology class, you just might recall the term symbiosis. It is the relationship between organisms of different species in which both gain a benefit. You might even remember mutualism, which is similar... There are also parasitic and commensual relationships in which only one organism gets a benefit and the other may even be harmed. Today's verse from the gospel of Luke, takes place just after Jesus lets Peter know that he will deny Him three times on the night of His betrayal. Look at how beautiful this verse is. Rather than chastising Peter for his weakness, Jesus prays that he might not fail. Now some might look at it this way... Peter had known Jesus for about three years and they had become very close friends... Jesus was just trying to encourage Peter and lift him up because its what friends do for one another, but there's more! He says this to Peter... When you get it all in order and you have turned back, strengthen your brothers! Wow... Jesus lets Peter know, just as He does us, that there's a greater responsibility out there than just growing personally... In the Lord's body, its not enough. But rather, we must be concerned about whether our fellow Christians are growing too. If it works

the way its supposed to, here's where the symbiosis kicks in. We will all "be spurring one another on toward love and good deeds..." (Heb.10:24). A little more about this tomorrow...

Have a great day... Let your light shine for Him... Love mark Phil.4:11

05/08/2015

Mutually Yours - It Does A Body Good

"Down in the human heart, Crushed by the tempter, Feelings lie buried that grace can restore;  
Touched by a loving hand, Wakened by kindness, Chords that were broken will vibrate once more."

From "Rescue The Perishing" by Fanny J. Crosby 1869

The body of Christ grows and does what God intended it to do when the members of that body grow together. Each one is to help the other to mature and develop in the work. We just cannot afford to be cavalier about this. Christianity is not something that is done solo, with no concern for anyone but self... It is imperative that we take an active part in the spiritual progress of those we are connected to in the body. This was true in the first century church and is still true today. I guess we live in a sort of individualist type of culture that causes folks to pay less attention to other's need for encouragement than they should. I think we do ourselves an injustice when we underestimate how much influence we actually can have on one another... For better or for worse, we are constantly having an impact on our brethren whether we choose to realize it or not. Our example most likely does far more than we think to either encourage or discourage those around us. Lets be sure that we live our lives in such a way in which that it leads our fellow Christians on the upward path of growth. Beyond example, we can involve ourselves in teaching, admonishing and prayer on behalf of our brethren. It will do the body good...

Have a great day... T G I F Today God Is First... Love mark Phil.4:11

05/09/2015

Some Bible Questions

Its Saturday, so that means its time to test your Bible acumen with a few hard questions... As ever, have fun.

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. Balaam hit the donkey \_\_\_\_\_ times before it spoke. (a) 2, (b) 3, (c) 4, (d) (10).

- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Just before he died, Elisha had King \_\_\_\_\_ shoot the arrow of victory out of his window. (a) Joash, (b) Amaziah, (c) Hezekiah, (d) Ahab.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. What sign did God give Hezekiah that his life would be extended? (a) a rainbow, (b) a whirlwind, (c) the sun went backwards, (d) there was no sign.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Which man was 12 when he became king and reigned for 55 years? (the longest reign) (a) David, (b) Solomon, (c) Manasseh, (d) Hezekiah.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Which prophet was thrown into a dungeon? (a) Jeremiah, (b) Isaiah, (c) Hosea, (d) Obadiah.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. What king tried to take the place of the priest at the altar and was struck with leprosy? (a) Ahab, (b) Uzziah, (c) Naaman, (d) Josiah.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Who put 75-100 pounds of myrrh and aloes on Jesus' dead body? (a) Joseph, (b) Barabbas, (c) Nicodemus, (d) Cleopas.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Who became king when he was 8 years old? (a) Ahab, (b) Solomon, (c) Jehu, (d) Josiah.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Job's friends sat in silence and mourned with him for \_\_\_\_\_ days. (a) 3, (b) 5, (c) 7, (d) they didn't.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Where did Jesus tell Nathaniel that He had seen him before? (a) in the temple, (b) by a boat, (c) under a fig tree.

Have a wonderful weekend and an uplifting and glorifying day of worship on His day.... Love  
mark Phil.4:11

05/11/2015  
The Sharpened Ax

"If the ax is dull and its edge unsharpened, more strength is needed but skill will bring success"

I haven't done a lot of wood cutting in my life, but I've got the difference between using a sharpened ax over a dull one pretty much figured out. The sharp one really slices through the wood easier and allows the job to be done with much less effort. I would like to compare that this morning with having a positive attitude about things, especially in the area of pleasing God. King Solomon said this to his son: "Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of

life" (Prov.4:23). I think that the heart that Solomon is talking about is the attitude one has, and he is telling us to Have a great start to your week... Begin it with a RAK or two... Love mark Phil.4:11... Sometimes we may act with the best intentions, but because our attitude is skewed, the job just doesn't get done the way it ought to. Like most everything, our attitudes must be monitored from time to time, and we do ourselves a big favor when we adjust them in a good direction. The work of the church gets done so much more effectively when everyone is humming along with a positive outlook and attitude. Not only does the work get done better, but we certainly enjoy it more when we have the right mental slant on things. This is an advantage that we are all capable of giving ourselves. The right attitude really helps us to please God and to do his work faithfully. Lets keep the sunny side up today...

Have a great start to your week... Begin it with a RAK or two... Love mark Phil.4:11

05/12/2015  
The Mid-Course Correction

"A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup..." (1 Cor.11:28).

When I allow a person to run my boat, if they have never steered one very often, I tell them about those "mid-course corrections..." Unless there is an emergency, the changes of direction ought to be slight. Though there may be a need to adjust one's direction, it is usually just a very small change. A problem that many of us have, though, is assuming that our attitudes are totally acceptable, when in reality, they need a slight change... You know.... A mid-course correction. Like a boat going slightly off course, attitudes have a way of changing without our noticing. Today's verse is referring to one's attitude about the Lord's Supper, but the idea that a man ought to examine himself pertains to literally everything we do in life... That's why periodic self-examinations ----- and they need to be honest examinations ----- are so important. To do the Lord's work both faithfully and effectively may require a few mid-course corrections. Lets go through the week thinking about the importance of attitudes and be more careful about our own. Many congregations are blessed with members who have numerous talents and abilities in the work the Lord has given us. Those talents will not be as productive as they should be if the matter of attitude is not given a priority. Lets be sure that our work will be helped and not hindered by the way we choose to think, and be thankful for the work we can do together.

Have a great day. Do good and give God the credit... Love mark Phil.4:11

05/13/2015  
Fitting In

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (Jn.13:34-35).

Do you remember those cliques of people as you were growing up. They became especially prevalent in our teen years, and there was nothing anyone could really do about them. Certain people gravitated toward each other for one or more reasons, and a lot of kids found themselves on the outside looking in. In today's society, labels are put on certain general age groups... There are the "Baby Boomers," "Generation Xers," "Generation Ys" and "Millennials." It is sometimes confusing to try to figure out who fits in where... Our Bibles mention certain age groups, and even let us know how they are to behave in relationship to others sometime. What I find so refreshing about the church is that it bridges those gaps and allows all of us who believe in the Lord to fit in. Today's verse is 100% clique-free. The group being spoken to are disciples, and they come in all sizes, shapes, ages and interests... But no cliques... The common denominator for being one of Jesus' disciples is clearly pointed out by Jesus Himself. "Love one another." Jesus set the tone... "As I have loved you, so you must love one another..." There is such clarity here as Jesus wants everyone to know who His disciples are... "By this all men will know that you are my disciples..." Just what is that defined area of commonality? "if you love one another..." No Boomers, Xers or Millennials... Just a group of people who want to follow the example of Jesus by loving one another just as He loves us. When we are able to do this, I think we'll find that we fit in.

Have a wonderful day... Make your little part of the world better... Love mark Phil.4:11

05/14/2015  
What To Get Out Of Worship

"God is spirit, and His worshipers must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (Jn.4:24).

A question that has lingered in the hearts of many people, revolves around today's title. Just what am I supposed to get out of worship services? In 1968, B. J. Thomas recorded a song entitled "Hooked On A Feeling." The song "Feelings" was first released in 1975 and has been recorded by many singers, groups and even orchestras. Does what we get out of worship revolve around the feelings we have while we are singing, praying, giving and participating in the Lord's Supper. I will be the first to tell you that my heart is warmed by being together with my family in worship on the Lord's Day. I cannot deny the feelings that course through me during this time, but also can't deny that there must be more. The prophet Jeremiah wrote this: "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve" (17:9-10). Though our emotions might be stirred, just



where do we get the idea that our feelings are a reliable gauge of what God wants? As a matter of fact, where do we get the notion that our feelings are reliable at all. Great orators have stirred people into action based partially on their feelings. Great evil orators have stirred people toward evil... I don't want to break anyone's bubble about feeling a warmth during worship services... When I don't feel it, I will probably think that something is amiss. Just think of this though... Do I want to bet my eternal life on the way I feel? Lets explore this in a little more depth over the next few days....

Have a great day... Let His light shine through you... Love mark Phil.4:11

05/15/2015  
No Bump On A Log

"Who can grasp your infinite wisdom. who can fathom the depth of your love? You are beautiful beyond description, majesty enthroned above. And I stand, I stand in awe of You, I stand, I stand in awe of You; Holy God to whom all praise is due, I stand in awe of You."

From, I Stand In Awe Words by Mark Altrogge 1987

The warmth that we feel when we worship together ought to be real, but there should be something greater and more encompassing. Our worship on the Lord's Day certainly needs to be more than just going through the motions of those things that are prescribed to be a part of that worship. Many of us may not be the warm and fuzzy types, but all of us need to be more than simply a bump on a log. Being a bump on a log indicates indifference, and the Lord does not want that... I would challenge all of you to read the 33rd Psalm and meditate upon it... The words of today's song are inspired by Psalm 33:8, and it speaks of awe... If there is are emotions that ought to fill folks when they worship the Lord, the words awe and reverence come to mind... We may live in an age where reverence is a lost art. People seem sometimes to be oblivious to their surroundings, as the mobile age has taken hold. Constant communication with people or places that are somewhere else is the norm, and may even happen during worship... There is one thing that we must hold above all others during our worship time, and this is it... No matter who we are with... No matter how good or bad the singing or sermon are, here it is! We are in the presence of our incomparable God and we must respond with awe and reverence. "And I stand, I stand in awe of You, I stand, I stand in awe of You; Holy God to whom all praise is due, I STAND IN AWE OF YOU....

Have a great day... T G I F Thank God I'm Forgiven... Love mark Phil.4:11

05/16/2015  
Today's Quiz

Its time again to test ourselves with some Bible questions. have fun...

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The book of Proverbs says that God hates \_\_\_\_\_ things. How many? (a) 3, (b) 4, (c) 7, (d) 500.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The Bible (Psalms) suggests that the average life span of a human is \_\_\_\_\_ years. (a) 60, (b) 70, (c) 80, (d) it doesn't say.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Along that same vein it says, if we have strength it is \_\_\_\_\_. (a) 60, (b) 70, (c) 80, (d) it doesn't say.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. In a contest against Baal, how many barrels of water were poured over the sacrifice on the altar? (a) 4, (b) 8, (c) 12, (d) none.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Nadab and Abihu died because of what they offered at the altar. What was it? (a) a blemished animal, (b) the wrong animal, (c) strange fire.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. What leader chose his followers by watching how they drank water? (a) Gideon, (b) Moses, (c) David, (d) Clydeous.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. After the children of Israel crossed the Jordan, how many stones were taken from the river? (a) 7, (b) 12, (c) 50, (d) 100.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. As Joshua and the people marched around Jericho, how many priests carried trumpets? (a) 7, (b) 12, (c) 50, (d) 100.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. When Elijah was on Mt. Carmel, how many times did he send his servant to look for a cloud? (a) 3, (b) 5, (c) 7, (d) 1.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. How many men from the tribe of Judah were sent out to capture Samson? (a) 20, (b) 50, (c) 100, (d) 3,000.

Have a great weekend and an uplifting and glorifying day of worship on His day... Love mark  
Phil.4:11

05/18/2015  
Worship Mourning

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart" (Psa.51:17).

My lesson yesterday at Northfield was all about looking forward to Sunday. The last two devotionals involved what we are supposed to get out of worship that included some deep emotions. In the 51st Psalm, King David is remorseful about his sin with Bathsheba. His humble prayer for forgiveness and cleansing is that of a contrite sinner. It is popular to look at worship today, even the Lord's Supper, as a celebration, with every aspect of it upbeat. There is, however, a great deal to mourn in worship. While celebrating God's grace to us at the cross, we might also express remorse that it was our sins that sent Jesus there. In today's verse, David declares that the sacrifices of God require "a broken and contrite heart..." I can't help but remembering the Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector. The Pharisee was "celebrating" his goodness and righteousness, while the tax collector stood at a distance and would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast... His worship consisted of this: "God, have mercy on me, a sinner" (Lk.18:9-13). Our sinful condition suggests that the proper attitude in God's presence ought to be deep humility. James called on us to "humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up..." (4:10). In worship, we are to humble ourselves before the Lord. Though worship is a celebration, we must remember what bought us together... When we do we'll be thankful for Jesus' sacrifice for us and be humbled...

Have a great start to your week.... Begin it with a RAK or two... Love mark Phil.4:11

05/19/2015

Worship With Joy And Gratitude

"With praise and thanksgiving they sang to the Lord: 'He is good; His love to Israel endures forever' " (Ez.3:11)..... "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God" (Phil.4:4-6).

In the first verse I used this morning, the Israelites have returned from the Babylonian captivity. They are gathered at the site of the foundation of the new temple and are singing from Psalm 107... "For He is good, His steadfast love toward Israel endures forever..." Although some wept because they remembered the magnificence of Solomon's temple, others shouted for joy because of the possibilities of a newly established Israel. They must have been deeply aware of God's steadfast love for them, in that He did not abandon them in their exile. In worship, we too ought to experience a profound gratitude, as we celebrate Gods' great patience, His mercy and His Son's death on the cross. If this does fill us completely with gratitude, nothing will. The second verse I am using this morning comes from the Book of Philippians. The apostle Paul, as if he knows about our deep gratitude, lets us in on something else. He says this: "Rejoice in the Lord always..." To make sure that we get it, he proclaims: "I will say it again: Rejoice!" Anticipating that we might have some problems or difficulties in our lives, or in the lives of those

close to us, he adds this: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God..." The profound gratitude we started with should lead to joyful praise and proclamation of His great acts of salvation.... Gratitude and praise in our worship... They are perfect together...

Have a great day... Do good and give God the credit.... Love mark Phil.4:11

05/20/2015

Worshipping To Do Right

"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me' " (Isa.6:8).

Is being determined an emotion? I submit to you, that if it is not, it ought to be... As we look at today's verse about Isaiah's historic commission, what else could it be? Isaiah's fateful vision of a holy God ends with God issuing a summons to serve. In the presence of God, Isaiah makes a life-changing decision and says determinedly, "Here am I. Send me..." You and I might not say those exact words, but there ought to be a moment in worship, whether we say it in our hearts, to others or only before God that we might say something like this.... "Send me" or "Use me" or "Show me the way...." If our worship does not engender this emotion of determination, I feel that it may be vain or empty. Worship should draw from a part of us that is accessed in no other arena of human activity. In our worship, God who is Spirit is worshiped by our spirit. That spirit is the part of us that is most deeply human and the part that will live beyond this life... Jesus said this to the Samaritan woman at the well: "God is spirit, and His worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth..." (Jn.4:24). Worship ought to employ feelings that are deeper than those toward a hobby, team or some human activity. Our bodies might be sitting in the pew, but it is our spirits that meet God in worship...

Have a wonderful day.... Make your little part of the world better... Love mark Phil.4:11

05/21/2015

What Kind Of Person Should I Be?

"What kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming" (2 Pet.3:11-12).

In Chapter three of 2 Peter, he is talking about "the day of the Lord..." This means Jesus' return and the eternity which awaits. In view of this, its context ought to have a sobering effect on us as we look at today's title, "What kind of person should I be..." I think that Peter wrote the

question with the intent that we would get our lives in order, so that when our time is up we would be ready for Jesus' return. I have chosen a few "ways" that we ought to be. It is far from a completely comprehensive list, but maybe a challenge for each of us might be to answer it or even find things to add to it. It will take me a few days to get through the list of the type of people we ought to be, so it will give us all time to reflect and maybe see a thing or two that I left out. My first attribute is that of being steadfast people. The word steadfast means firm in purpose and unwavering. It connotes being strong in our faith. Being steadfast is a condition of success in literally every endeavor of life. Jesus strongly admonishes the church at Laodicea in the Book of Revelation for being wishy/washy or lukewarm... There was no steadfastness among those people... The earliest Christians (Acts 2) at Jerusalem did this: "They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" (2:42). Now that's being steadfast! The apostle Paul used these words to promote steadfastness: "Therefore. my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor.15:58)..... "Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith..." (1 Cor.16:13). Tomorrow we will look at another way or two we ought to be....

Have a great day.... Let His light shine through you.... Love mark Phil.4:11

05/22/2015  
This Kind Of Person

"Father. hear the prayer we offer; Nor for ease that prayer shall be, But for strength that we may  
ever Live our lives courageously.

Let our path be bright or dreary, Storm or sunshine be our share; May our souls in hope  
un-weary Make Thy work our ceaseless prayer."

From "Father Hear The Prayer Offer" Words by Love M. Willis 1856

I would submit to all of you and myself, that we ought to be prayerful people. Prayer is a wonderful friend, but do we make enough use of it? I am often intrigued that when a tragic event takes place in the world, that the reporter bringing the story will end it with something like this.... "Our prayers go out to...." It is so easy to say that our prayers are going out, but another thing all together to mean it and actually say the prayer. Prayer is that lofty expression of trust and submission, and is our inseparable union with God. Some people pray when they have given up all human hope, and I get that. In my humble opinion, however, prayer should not be a last resort, but a first... Jesus wanted us to pray so much, that he dedicated a part of the Sermon On The Mount to it. When you get a bit of time today, read and meditate upon Matt.6:5-14... I admit being a fan of the hymn "Father Hear The Prayer We Offer." There are four verses that are also worth reading and contemplating. The last verse reflects almost everyone's lives. Our daily walk might be bright or dreary, and storm or sunshine may be our share. We should never get tired of

praying because it is where hope begins... "May our souls in hope un-weary, Make Thy work our ceaseless prayer..." The reading from Matt.6 tells us that Jesus wants us to be prayerful people, and Paul's teachings certainly echo His. "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be known to God" (Phil.4:6).... "Pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Jesus Christ" (1 Thess.5:17-18). Second on my list of the kind of people we ought to be is prayerful people....

Have a great day... T G I F Today God Is First... Love mark Phil.4:11

05/23/2015  
Some Bible Questions

I hope you enjoy playing my version of Bible Jeopardy... Have fun with the questions...

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. What kind of bird was sold 2 for a farthing? (penny). (a) rooster, (b) pigeon, (c) sparrow, (d) titmouse.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. What did Achan not steal from Jericho? (a) slaves, (b) gold, (c) silver, (d) a robe.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. When Absalom got his hair caught in a tree, he was riding on what? (a) a horse, (b) a mule, (c) a chariot, (d) a VW.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Who was the witch that Saul visited? (a) Elymas, (b) Samantha, (c) Jambres, (d) Endor.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. In what book of the Bible are men warned not let her captivate you with her eyes? (a) Psalms, (b) Proverbs, (c) Ecclesiastes, (d) Philippians.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. While in prison, Joseph did not interpret the dream of this man. (a) cup bearer, (b) baker, (c) bodyguard.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Whose birthday was the first mentioned in the Bible? (a) Cain, (b) Enoch, (c) Pharaoh, (d) Paul.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. There are \_\_\_\_ men named Judas in the New Testament. (a) 1, (b) 3, (c) 5, (d) 6.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Now the men of \_\_\_\_\_ were wicked exceedingly and sinners against the Lord. (a) Sodom, (b) Crete, (c) Cyprus, (d) Ashdod.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. When Jeremiah said that their heads would be shaved and beards clipped, who was he talking about? (a) Philistine, (b) Moab, (c) Israel, (d) Gomorrah.

Have a great weekend and an uplifting and glorifying day of worship on His Day... Love mark  
Phil.4:11

05/26/2015

"Rejoice in the Lord always: Rejoice!"

As we continue on our quest to ascertain what kind of people we should be, up popped happiness. I believe that God wants us to be happy people. We had a Memorial Day cookout at our home yesterday. After a short service to remind us of what the day was all about, punctuated by the playing of TAPS, we fellowshiped together. We began at about 2 PM and the last folks left at about nightfall. We all had plenty to eat, the kids played, but the best part was spending time with each other and being happy. Little groups chatted with one another, and pretty soon the people moved to different groups. Fellowship is such an important dynamic to church activity, partially, because we get to see how blessed we are. I think we get to see how happy we are as we are together under the umbrella of our faith and belief, basking in the glow of being God's children. In 1 Thessalonians 5:16. the apostle Paul succinctly says; "Be joyful always..." One of the best things about yesterday was seeing all the smiles. There is nothing that replaces a smile. Dogs and cats can't do it.... Gold and diamonds can't do... Money can't do it... Smiles are strictly the prerogative of human beings, and Christians ought to do it the best. Why you ask? Because we're God's children... Because we have an extended family that is second to none... Because we are saved to live again with the Lord. Make a special effort to smile a lot today, and if some rain falls, let that smile be your umbrella...

Have a wonderful day... Do good and give God the credit... Love mark Phil.4:11

05/27/2015

Cooperative And Sacrificial People

"And working together with Him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain" (2 Cor.6:1).... "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship" (Rom.12:1)

The first verse above speaks of cooperation as it urges us to work together... So much more is accomplished in a fellowship of Christians when folks are on the same page and working together. The apostle Paul did not use the wonderful example of unity in 1 Corinthians, chapter four just to hear himself talk. In it he compares the diversity of talents to parts of the human body and lets us know that all are important to the body functioning at its best. I have had 3 joint replacements and I always used the stronger joint to support the new one in my rehabilitation. The writer of the Book of Ecclesiastes says that "a cord of three strands is not easily broken"

(3:12). Don't you love it when things hum along smoothly? Along with cooperation, understanding sacrifice is important too. Christianity was born through sacrifice. God gave (sacrificed) His son (Jn.3:16) and the Son gave (sacrificed) His life... Many early Christians, starting with Stephen, (Acts 8:54-58) sacrificed their lives for their faith. Paul knew that he would lose his life for his faith, but was not afraid. Under Jewish Law, the priest offered animal sacrifices, but today's second verse from Romans 12:1 says that we have a higher calling. We are to present our bodies as living sacrifices and that is acceptable to God, which is our spiritual service of worship... When we give our time, money and service to Him, we are being sacrificial. Cooperative and sacrificial are two examples of the type people that the Lord wants us to be... How are we doing?

Have a great day... Make your little part of the world better... Love mark Phil.4:11

05/28/2015  
Being Exemplary

"Be imitators of me, just as I am of Christ" (1 Cor.11:1) "Therefore I exhort you, be imitators of me..." (1 Cor. 6:16).

I find it very bold for someone, even an apostle, to call out to people to imitate himself. But upon closer examination, its not really far-fetched at all. As a coach, I demonstrated certain skills to my athletes and asked them to perform them the same way. I used instructional films and asked them to imitate the person on the film. With this in mind, why should the concept of a good Christian wanting people to imitate his or her behavior be a foreign one? Upon closer examination, Jesus actually taught this to us... "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again?" "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl." (Matt.5:13-15). I believe that the Lord calls on us to be examples, just as Paul echoed in today's verses. James also held to this teaching when he wrote; "Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do..." (2:18). Even men of the Bible, like Jonah or Moses, tried to hide behind some weakness rather than step up to the plate and do God's will. God shows us that the most effective sermon is a well-lived life... When a person is willing to do good deeds for the right reasons, he or she becomes a most effective of witness for the Lord. The last on my list of the type of people we ought to be for the Lord, is an exemplary one. Perhaps you would like this poem:

"I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day.  
I'd rather one would walk with me, than merely tell the way.  
The eye's a better pupil, and more willing than the ear.  
Fine counsel is confusing, but example's always clear.  
The best of all the preachers, are the ones who live their creeds.



For to see good put into action, is what everybody needs."

Have a great day... Let His light shine through you... Love mark Phil.4:11

05/29/2015  
That Worry Thing

"This is one thing I do, forgetting those things that are behind and straining forward to what is ahead..." (Phil.3:13)

I'd like to begin a series on the causes of worry and anxiety, and use some biblical principles to aid us in this sometimes troublesome arena. One way to help conquer worry lies in not letting the things that happened in the past to dictate and control our present. The apostle Paul gives some sound advice in today's verse as he tries to forget those things that are behind and strain forward to what is ahead... As we read stuff about Paul's past, here's a guy that could have been a "worrying machine..." To think about the guilt he could have had while being a persecutor of Christians to wondering about the beatings, shipwrecks and imprisonments... Whew! Here's a guy who has been through the proverbial wringer and his mantra is still about not letting those things affect his present work or future. If we have made mistakes in our past, we must repent. Then we need to derive what wisdom we can from them, deal with whatever consequences there may be, and move on. Paul learned the secret of being content today, whether he was hungry or well-fed in the past. Let me leave you with a short prayer that may be appropriate at the close of the day..."Father, you gave me this day and I did the best I could with it... If I messed up, forgive me, and if I had some successes, I humbly give you thanks... It was great of you to give me this day, but Father, for good or bad, the day is over and I am through with it. I am giving it back to you and looking forward to tomorrow..."

Have a great day... T G I F Thank God I'm Forgiven... Love mark Phil.4:11

05/30/2015  
Some Bible Questions

I hope you will enjoy these questions from the Bible this morning. I have tried to challenge you...  
As always, have fun...

\_\_\_\_ 1. Who received the first kiss mentioned in the Bible? (a) Eve, (b) Isaac, (c) Jacob, (d) Noah.

- \_\_\_\_ 2. Whose heart pounded, lips quivered and bones decayed when he heard the voice of the Lord? (a) Habakkuk, (b) Zephaniah, (c) Haggai, (d) Malachi.
- \_\_\_\_ 3. In what book do we find the words "Your eyes are like the pools of Heshbon?" (a) Psalms, (b) Proverbs, (c) Ecclesiastes, (d) Song of Solomon.
- \_\_\_\_ 4. Who was the first man in the Bible to have a dream? (a) Lot, (b) Abraham, (c) Abimelech, (d) Clydeous.
- \_\_\_\_ 5. How many chapters are in the Book of Esther? (a) 8, (b) 9, (c) 10, (d) 11.
- \_\_\_\_ 6. How many denari (silver coins) did the Good Samaritan give the innkeeper to care for the wounded man? (a) 1, (b) 2, (c) 3, (d) 5,
- \_\_\_\_ 7. In what book of the Bible is there the first mention of magicians? (a) Genesis, (b) Leviticus, (c) 1 Samuel, (d) 2 Chronicles.
- \_\_\_\_ 8. Of whom does the proverb speak that says; She eats and wipes her mouth and says, "I've done nothing wrong?" (a) a liar, (b) an adulteress, (c) a harlot, (d) a blasphemer.
- \_\_\_\_ 9. What did David do with Goliath's weapons? (a) sold them, (b) destroyed them (c) kept them, (d) put them in a museum.
- \_\_\_\_ 10. At the end of the Book of Job, how much did the Lord give him compared to what he originally had? (a) half as much, (b) the same amount, (c) twice as much, (d) it doesn't say.

Have a great weekend and an uplifting and glorifying day of worship on His Day... Love mark  
Phil.4:11