

I.N.I.

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

August 2, 2015

Philippians 3:1-11

In Christ Jesus, our Priceless Treasure, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

A delinquent churchgoer; that is one who has fallen away in his attendance at the house of God, no longer coming to hear the Word of His Lord, once said to his pastor when asked why he did not come to church, "Pastor, the reason I don't come to church is that I always know in advance what you are going to say in your sermon." The pastor replied, "Why thank you for the compliment. Just read what Paul wrote in Phil. 3:1."

That is the first verse of this morning's sermon text. And what did Paul write? Let's read it again: **FINALLY, MY BRETHREN, REJOICE IN THE LORD. FOR ME TO WRITE THE SAME THINGS TO YOU IS NOT TEDIOUS, BUT FOR YOU IT IS SAFE.**

Paul clearly shows in our text:

WHY CHRISTIANS SHOULD NEVER TIRE OF HEARING THE GOSPEL!

There are actually 2 very distinct, main thoughts in these 11 verses that make up our sermon text this morning. And we will spend some time this morning touching on both of them. I would ask you to take out your bulletins and follow along with the theme and parts that are printed on the inside page.

Again the overall theme this morning is:

WHY CHRISTIANS SHOULD NEVER TIRE OF HEARING THE GOSPEL!

The first point Paul makes in our text is this. We should never tire of hearing the Gospel

I: Because God wants His servants to preach it and to hear it time and time again.

In reading Paul's letter to the Philippians it almost seems as if Paul draws his letter to a close after the second chapter. But then he begins a third chapter and writes these words: **FINALLY, MY BRETHREN, REJOICE IN THE LORD. FOR ME TO WRITE THE SAME THINGS TO YOU IS NOT TEDIOUS, BUT FOR YOU IT IS SAFE.**

That is why we do not have church services only once or twice a year or only at Christmas and Easter. It is because God wants us as Christians to preach God's Word over and over again and He wants us as Christians to hear it over and over again. Why?

Because He knows us better than we do. He knows how weak, frail, and forgetful we are. He knows how easily it is for us to fall into temptations and to be ensnared by the lusts of the flesh, by the desires of our eyes and by the things of this world.

Even those of us who renew our faith every Sunday, strengthened with God's forgiving love through Christ in His Word walk out of our church doors and sometimes promptly fall flat on our face, trip and stumble at the first temptation and give way to Satan's attacks or the world's allurements.

So we see from our second point in our bulletin this morning that God wants His servants to preach His Gospel and to hear His Gospel time and time again because

II: We need the Gospel for our confirmation in the faith and for our defense against sin and error!

When I was a young pastor in Trinity, Millston, our church president was the fire chief of the Millston Volunteer Fire Department. He encouraged me to join the department since I was one of the few men who were in this small town during the day, while most worked in Black River Falls, Tomah or surrounding towns. I enjoyed it very much, but we needed training. We had monthly meetings and classes. We especially needed CPR training over and over again so that when the need arose, at a moment's notice, we could jump into action and try to save a life without having to try to remember how to do it. It is not something that is learned once and never forgotten. There are not many things that are.

In a very real way we need to learn and relearn the Spiritual CPR that God has performed on each of us--the spiritual CPR from His Word. Why? So that we are prepared, at a moment's notice, to help save lives eternally!

How would we respond to someone if they collapsed here in church, besides calling 911? Would we know how to respond with CPR? Or would we have to look to someone else?

Well how would you respond if someone came up to you in desperation and fear and asked: “What must I do to be saved?” Would you know how to respond? Would you know what to say? Or would you have to look to someone else for the right words?

We need to hear this powerful Word of God over and over again so that through the work of the Holy Spirit our hardened hearts of sin and unbelief are destroyed daily through repentance and a loving heart that trusts in Jesus and cares for others is present. But we need to know how to perform spiritual CPR.

The first thing we need to do is ask ourselves what is our chance of entering heaven, how are we saved? Do we all know that our salvation, our redemption is complete, finished, already done? Not because I am a pastor, or because you are good parents, faithful spouses, because we give offerings, or because we are faithful members here in church. We are completely sure of our salvation because Jesus, the God-Man took our place. He lived that perfect life for us, He died the sacrificial, substitutionary death for us paying for the guilt and punishment of all of our sins, He rose again to defeat all of our enemies and assure us of a resurrection to eternal life.

That’s what we need to know to tell others. That’s how we do spiritual CPR on others. By telling them that they are indeed lost and condemned sinners but that God so loved them that He sent His one and only Son to take their place and earn for them eternal life and salvation. Then the Holy Spirit can breathe into them the life creating faith.

Paul says in our text we **WORSHIP GOD IN THE SPIRIT, REJOICE IN CHRIST JESUS, AND HAVE NO CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH.**

We worship God from the heart of faith worked in us by the Holy Spirit. We rejoice in Jesus as our Lord and Savior and put our confidence, our boasting, our faith in Jesus alone! We have no confidence in our flesh, in our works, in our deeds.

That is why the third point in our sermon theme this morning says we should never tire of hearing the Gospel

III: Because the Gospel leads us to KNOW Jesus as our Priceless Treasure.

This is Paul’s second major point. All that we are, all that we have, all that we can acquire without knowing Jesus as Savior is worthless trash! Paul realized it. He writes: **THOUGH I ALSO MIGHT HAVE CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH. IF ANYONE ELSE THINKS HE MAY HAVE CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH, I MORE SO: CIRCUMCISED THE EIGHTH DAY, OF THE STOCK OF ISRAEL, OF THE TRIBE OF BENJAMIN, A HEBREW OF THE HEBREWS; CONCERNING THE LAW, A PHARISEE; CONCERNING ZEAL, PERSECUTING THE CHURCH; CONCERNING THE RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH IS IN THE LAW, BLAMELESS. BUT WHAT THINGS WERE GAIN TO ME, THESE I HAVE COUNTED LOSS FOR CHRIST. YET INDEED I ALSO COUNT ALL THINGS LOSS FOR THE EXCELLENCE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST JESUS MY LORD, FOR WHOM I HAVE SUFFERED THE LOSS OF ALL THINGS, AND COUNT THEM AS RUBBISH, THAT I MAY GAIN CHRIST AND BE FOUND IN HIM, NOT HAVING MY OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS, WHICH IS FROM THE LAW, BUT THAT WHICH IS THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST, THE RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH IS FROM GOD BY FAITH;**

Paul’s being a Jew meant nothing. His being a Pharisee, with moral integrity, blameless in the outward keeping of the Law, zealously religious, and in high standing with his people was as worthless as garbage, without knowing Jesus. Paul willingly gave up what once were his worldly treasures for the One Treasure that really means something—Jesus Christ.

Very often you hear people list their priorities in life and feel they are really non-materialistic when they say “first comes family, then happiness, then others, then work, then money or success.” Well if Christ is not first place on the throne of our hearts than we are still worldly minded!

One man wrote that living the Christian life is one where we walk with our feet on the ground but our heart in heaven.

And finally Paul says: **THAT I MAY KNOW HIM AND THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION, AND THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS, BEING CONFORMED TO HIS DEATH, IF, BY ANY MEANS, I MAY ATTAIN TO THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD.**

Paul is saying “I know Christ, but I want to know Him!” Knowing Christ is not like knowing about somebody; like we know about Governor Walker, or President Obama, we know their political views, opinions and personalities. I read somewhere that “knowing Christ” is like knowing your wife. This person wrote “I know my wife. We have lived and loved together for many, many years.

And yet, I do not know her. She is like a jewel to me with so many facets. Hardly a day passes without my discovering in her some new charm or beauty.”

Yes, we know Christ by faith, but everyday we get to know Christ more and more as we live in Him, are blessed by Him and are led by Him in His Word. This is a knowing by experience. God’s Word tells us about Jesus and then creates a living faith in our hearts to believe, to trust in Jesus and experience His love in our lives. Jesus is like that jewel with so many facets. Everyday we experience His love and concern for us. Everyday we see another facet of His wonderful forgiveness and grace present in our daily lives.

Yes, we know Christ by faith as our only Lord and Savior and someday we will know Him face to face even as we are known by Him now.

May it be that through His Word actively creating a new life within us we continue to know Christ; experiencing His rich love, mercy and grace; knowing the power of His resurrection, that He is the strength of our whole lives giving us the ability to live for Him as well as knowing the power of His suffering and death—that through His death we have been forgiven and God’s anger has been appeased. So even if we are called upon to share in His suffering and lose all that this world has to offer, we can count it all as rubbish so that we too may possess the riches and the treasures of His resurrection.

Let us rise and pray:

I pray Thee, dear Lord Jesus, my heart to keep and train that I Thy holy temple from youth to age remain. Turn Thou my tho’ts forever from worldly wisdom’s lore; If I but learn to KNOW Thee, I shall not want for more.

Amen.