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**Readers**

8:00 9:30 Jodi Sprosti 11:00 David St. George

**Altar Guild**

9:30 Pat Kramer 11:00 Sally Scalzo

**Acolytes**

8:00 Jared Britton & Shannon Wilmoth  
11:00 Jayson Umphrey & Lindsay Sampson

**Ushers**

8:00 Jessie Hernandez Group 9:30 Dutch Kramer Group  
11:00 Frank Schaefer Group

**Greeters**

8:00 a.m. Dorie Smith 9:30 a.m. Tiffany Illingworth  
11:00 a.m. Taine & Diana Howard

**Communion Servers**

8:00 Carol Hill & David Kulcinski  
9:30 Dave & Laurie Henry, Del Larsh & Cindy Conrad  
11:00 Jerry & Elaine Kral

**Worship Leaders**

*Director of Liturgical Arts* James M. Schaefer  
*Director of Music* Jason Harney  
*Organist* Dennis Siebenaler  
*Praise Leaders* Isaiah Coughran



# RED HILL LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL

## THE WEEKLY BRICK

**March 14, 2010.**

*As you come to him, the living Stone, rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. - 1 Peter 2:4-5*

**Lenten Sermon Series: “Jesus Who?”  
“Saviors: What Makes Jesus Different?”  
Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32**

**Context:**

The scriptures testify that Jesus is our savior. Orthodox Christianity affirms that Jesus saves us from sin, death, and the powers of the devil. In the gospel text for today, through the parable commonly known as the “Prodigal Son,” Jesus describes the kind of savior He is; a savior who searches for, and finds, what (who) is lost. This parable should be read within the whole of Luke 15 (the parables of the *lost* sheep, the *lost* coin, and the *lost* son), as well as the larger scriptural theme of exile and homecoming.

**Core Theme/Idea:** Jesus is the kind of savior who searches for the lost, finds the lost, and rejoices when He finds the lost. Jesus summarizes His ministry as a rescue operation, coming to seek and to save that which is lost (Luke 19:10). Because Jesus paid the penalty for our sin with His death, He has achieved victory over the forces of alienation (lostness): death, decay, and disorder.

*Prodigal:* Adjective: “Recklessly extravagant—having spent everything.”

**Relevant Scriptures:****I. The Parable: A Father (God) Who Bears Two Losses: The Younger Son and the Older Son.**

*Luke 15:11-12a, Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons. <sup>12</sup>The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate...’*

*Luke 15:28a The older brother became angry and refused to go in...*

## Two Sons: Two Ways to be Lost.

(Younger Son) *Luke 15:1-2 Now the tax collectors and “sinners” were all gathering around to hear him.*

*Luke 15:13 ...the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living.*

*Luke 15:2 (Older Brother) But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”*

*Luke 15:29 But he (the older son) answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. <sup>30</sup>But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’*

## The Savior Who Looks for and Finds the Lost: “The True ‘Older Brother:’” Jesus

*Luke 15:31-32 “ ‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. <sup>32</sup>But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ ”*

**Prayer/Implications:** Jesus alone is our savior. Jesus saves us from sin (Matthew 1:21), God’s wrath/hell (Romans 5:9), death (2 Timothy 1:10), and Satan (2 Thessalonians 2:6-10). As our savior, Jesus began His work of saving us through His sinless life, Substitutionary death, and resurrection. One day, Jesus will come again to save us from this world of brokenness and travail, bringing us to Heaven and everlasting joy! (Philippians 3:20, 2 Peter 1:11, and Titus 2:13).

## WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY

### Day #1--Monday, March 15<sup>th</sup> Read: 2 Timothy 3:16

The past two weeks we have explored two spiritual disciplines that God uses to grow us up in Christ: Worship and Prayer. This week, our studies will focus on the Bible, the study of scripture, and the application of scripture in our lives.

The Bible is known by many names: “Holy Scripture,” “The Word of God,” and of course, “The Good Book.” The Bible is meant to be read, but more so it is meant to be lived. There are many people who know a lot about the Bible, fewer still live the Bible. This week, I encourage you to set a goal to read the Bible, pray, and meditate on God’s word. You can decide how much time. However, a good suggested time is 30 minutes a day that can be set aside to read a passage of scripture, think, reflect, and meditate on that passage, and then to ask the Holy Spirit to help you apply the truth that has been revealed to you. Do you feel that you can’t do thirty minutes? Start with five minutes and build up. It is important that you begin and let the power of scripture transform your life!

Going Deeper: Psalm 1:2; Luke 11:27-28.

Going Forward: Commit to a specific period of time during the day to be alone, read the Bible, and reflect upon the words you read. How can you apply those words during the day?

Prayer: *Open your word to me living God. May I be more than a hearer, empower me to apply what you have revealed to me in my life. Amen.*

**☐ Day #2--Tuesday, March 16<sup>th</sup> Read: Again 2 Timothy 3:16**

Do you identify with these words of Francois Fenolin?:

Woe to those weak and timid souls who are divided between God and their world! They want and they do not want. They are torn by desire and remorse at the same time...They have a horror of evil and a shame of good. They have the pains of virtue without tasting its sweet consolations. O how wretched they are.

We all struggle with the problem of “double mindedness.” A double minded life is characterized by ambivalence. We are just not sure where we stand. It is exemplified in Augustine’s famous request of God, “Lord, give me chastity, but not yet.” When we live a life of double mindedness we desire intimacy with God, yet spend little time cultivating that intimacy. We desire to be giving people, but we do not share our resources. We want to be servants, but we want others to RECOGNIZE our sacrifices and our “servant-heart.” The daily reading and applying of God’s word transforms our minds and our hearts. The Bible helps us to learn how to live like Jesus lived. The purpose of scripture, writes John Ortberg, “is not to help us get a 100 score on the heavenly entrance exam. It is to help us become equipped for good works.” Another way of saying this is, reading and applying God’s word is God’s way of changing us from being “double-minded” to a “single-minded” focus: living the way Jesus would live if Jesus were me. Again, this is the goal of discipleship.

Going Deeper: Romans 12:2; Matthew 4:3-4.

Going Forward: God’s word helps me to become like Jesus.

Prayer: *Ask God to help you apply a scriptural truth that you have read today.*

**☐Day #3--Wednesday, March 17<sup>th</sup> Read: Ezra 7:10**

We need to read the Bible “meditatively” as well as to study the Bible intellectually. Your goals should be to study God’s word with “the head”, doing research with study tools such as a concordance, biblical encyclopedia, or biblical dictionary as well as to take time to simply “reflect” on a passage of scripture letting a passage or verse speak to a particular situation in your life. Of course, this is not an either/or situation. We can intellectually study the Bible and have our lives transformed AND meditatively read the Bible with head and heart and have its truths change our hearts and minds. Remember, in both instances the goal is transformation—not just information.

Going Deeper: Psalm 77:12.

Going Forward: I need to study diligently and reflect faithfully on God’s word.

Prayer: *Change me Father, through the in-depth study of your word and through my personal reflection on your word. May you use both to make me like your Son my Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.*

**☐Day #4--Thursday, March 18<sup>th</sup> Read: Psalm 27:1**

Today, we look at the suggestions of Dr. John Ortberg, author of *The Life You’ve Always Wanted*. He outlines a five-step process:

1. Ask God to Meet you in Scripture. Ask God to speak to you and EXPECT He will. As you read, certain ideas may strike you. You may feel a “prompt” to take some action such as a change in attitude.
2. Read the Bible in a Repentant Spirit. Read the Bible with a willingness to surrender everything. Resolve that you will be obedient to scripture.
3. Meditate on a Fairly Brief Passage or Narrative. Immerse yourself in a short passage, maybe a few verses. Read it slowly, let the words sink deep into your soul. If you are reading a story, use your imagination and place yourself in the story. The goal is not to get through scripture, but to get the scriptures through us.
4. Take One Thought or Verse with You Through the Day. Choose one verse and think about it throughout your day. Ortberg uses the example of Psalm 46:10, “Be still, and know that I am God!” For a day, let your mind continually return to these words.

5. Allow This Thought to Become Part of Your Memory. Memorize small passages of scripture. It is amazing that as we memorize scripture, God will bring them to our attention when we face situations in which we need comfort, discipline, or direction.

Going Deeper: Psalm 46:10.

Going Forward: Read the scriptures using the five-step process above.

Prayer: *Holy Spirit, shape me through your word. May I discern your direction, your comfort, and your presence through what you reveal to me through the scriptures. Amen*

**☐ Day #5--Friday, March 19<sup>th</sup> Read: Colossians 2:6-7**

Today, we look at the words of E. Stanley Jones regarding the habit of daily Bible reading. It is interesting how he uses the word, “habit.” We all have habits. Perhaps our spiritual disciplines can be considered “spiritual habits?”

The best man that ever lived on our planet illustrated this receptivity and response rhythm. No one was so utterly dependent on God and no one was more personally disciplined in his habits.

He did three things by habit: (1) “He stood up to read as was his custom”—he read the Word of God by habit. (2) “He went out into the mountain to pray as was his custom”—he prayed by habit. (3) “He taught them again as was his custom”—he passed on to others by habit what he had and what he had found.

These simple habits were the foundation habits of his life. They are just as up-to-date as tomorrow morning. No converted person can live without those habits at work vitally in his life.

Going Forward: I can develop a “habit” of reading and applying God’s word in my life.

Prayer: *Jesus, I have many habits. I ask you today to help me develop the habit of spending time with you, reading your word, and living that word in my life. I need you. I want to be like you and glorify my Father in my life. Amen.*

**☐ Day #6--Saturday, March 20<sup>th</sup> Read: Isaiah 40:28-31.**

You may at times feel that it is difficult to keep your attention focused when praying, reading the scriptures, or praying the scriptures. This is natural, especially if you have just started. Like any “habit” developing a quiet time of prayer, Bible reading, and meditation will require sticking with it and developing your spiritual mind and heart. Madame Guyon was a French devotional writer. In her work, *Experiencing the Depths of Jesus Christ*, Madame Guyon writes:

As you begin this new venture you will, of course, discover that it is difficult to bring your mind under control. Why is this? Because through many years of habit your mind has acquired the ability to wander all over the world, just as it pleases, so what I speak of here is something that is to serve as a discipline to your mind. Be assured that as your soul becomes more accustomed to withdrawing to inward things, this process will become easier. There are two reasons that you will find it easier each time to bring your mind under the subjection of the Lord. One is that the mind, after much practice, will form a new habit of turning deep within. The second is that you have a gracious Lord!

Going Deeper: John 14:23-24.

Going Forward: I will grow in my ability to pray, mediate, and apply God’s word in my life.



Prayer: *Keep me focused on you Father. For only in you can I find peace. Amen.*