



# RED HILL LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL

## THE WEEKLY BRICK

**June 6, 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*

### June Sermon Series: “Mission: Possible” Part 2: “The S.O.U.L.L. Path”

*2 Timothy 3:14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it...*

#### Last Week: **Surrender** to God’s Love

Disciple: Greek: *mathetes*, “A learner, pupil, apprentice.” A Disciple: “A person, who day by day surrenders to the divine call and through the Spirit, learns to live his or her life as Jesus would live it.”

Discipleship: “The Jesus-led, transformational path shared with other disciples, which focuses on particular Christian practices that train disciples to obey Jesus and love others.”

“Christian Formation:” “The Spirit driven process of forming the inner world of the human self in such a way that it becomes like the inner being of Jesus himself... This is focused entirely on Jesus.” (Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 22)

#### The Next “Step” on the Path: **Obediently Hear and Respond to Jesus**

*Deuteronomy 6:4-5 Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. [5] Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.*

“Hear”: Hebrew ‘*shama*’ “to hear intelligently, often with implication of attention, obedience.”

*Jeremiah 7:23 But this command I gave them, “Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people; and walk only in the way that I command you, so that it may be well with you.”*

*Romans 1:5-6 Through him and for his name’s sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith. [6] And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.*

“Obedience”: Greek ‘*hupakoe*’ from the Greek verb ‘*akouo*’ meaning “to hear.”

“Obey” Latin: Compound of ‘*ob*’ meaning “to, or toward” + ‘*audire*’ “to hear.” Literally “to move toward (someone) in order to hear.”

How do we “move toward” Jesus in order to hear, follow, and mature in Jesus?

Hearing through: \_\_\_\_\_.

*2 Timothy 3:14-17 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, <sup>15</sup>and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>16</sup>All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup>so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

Responding through: \_\_\_\_\_.

*Matthew 6:6-8 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. <sup>7</sup>And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. <sup>8</sup>Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need*

(Answers: *The Bible, Prayer.*)

# WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY

## ☐ Day #1--Monday, June 7<sup>th</sup> Read: 2 Timothy 3:10-13.

This week we will continue to go deeper in our understanding of the process of discipleship. If Red Hill is to participate in God's mission to redeem and reconcile this world, then our work as a church is to make disciples for this divine mission. When people embrace the life of following Jesus (discipleship), then lives will be transformed, relationships healed and strengthened, and God will be glorified! Last week, we studied the foundational truth that the life of faith begins with God's gracious call in and through Jesus Christ. The presence and power of the Holy Spirit in our lives empowers our response to the divine call. The response is to Surrender! Surrender to Jesus' call of love, mercy, as well as His plan for our lives. The practice of surrender is characterized by a lifestyle of worship. When we worship, we are surrendering to the majesty, mercy, and glory of God. We now come to step two on the "SOULL Path:" Obedience.

2 Timothy is regarded as one of the "Pastoral Epistles." Meaning, these letters written to Timothy by Paul, relate to managing the "household" of faith, the church, by leaders or pastors. Both the church and the pastor of the church must be growing in Christ as disciples or no true spiritual maturity will exist. In the preceding verses (2 Timothy 3:1-9), Paul warned of the "last days" when many will abandon God and seek only personal power and pleasure. Paul then reminded Timothy that he (Paul) had been a faithful servant of God and his life was a witness of his faithfulness. Timothy has had the advantage of observing Paul's teaching and his manner of life. In fact, Paul lists some very powerful criterion when it comes to judging whether a Christian leader is faithful or just having "a form of godliness." (vs.5). Really, the same can be said of all Christians who seek to honor Jesus as His disciples. We will look at these characteristics briefly:

**Their lives are open for all to see** (v. 10a). Paul had nothing to hide. Like his Master Jesus, he could say, "In secret have I said nothing" (John 18:20). Timothy had lived and labored with Paul and knew the man well. Paul had not hidden behind extravagant claims or religious propaganda. As Christians, our lives should be lives marked by integrity. Who we are on the "inside" must be congruent with our conduct on the "outside."

**They teach true doctrine** (v. 10b). "My doctrine" in Paul's case meant the true faith, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. No matter how appealing a preacher may be, if he does not preach the truth of God's Word, he (or she) does nothing more than give a lecture on religion. One of my (Pastor Seth) passions is that all of us know what we believe and why it matters. Theological understanding must be connected to daily life! It is one thing to know about the Trinity; it is another matter to live in the life of the Trinity.

**Question/Reflect:** Do you live a spiritually congruent life? How are your beliefs reflected in your conduct? Pray about this week.

## ☐ Day #2--Tuesday, June 8<sup>th</sup> Read Again: 2 Timothy 3:10-13.

We continue with the characteristics of congruent believers.

**Practicing what we are preaching** (v. 10c). Paul's "manner of life" backed up his messages. He did not preach sacrifice and live in luxury. He gave to others far more than he received from them. He stood up for the truth even when it meant losing friends and, in the end, losing his life. Paul was a servant, not a celebrity. This is the natural result of yesterday's two points.

**The purpose is to glorify God** (v. 10d). There was never a question about Paul's "purpose" in ministry: He wanted to do God's will and finish the work God gave him to do (Acts 20:24; Philippians 1:21). Paul was a man of "faith" who trusted God to meet his needs. He was a man of "long-suffering" who bore up under people's attacks. He was a man of love ("charity") who willingly gave himself to serve others. The word "patience" at the end of 2 Timothy 3:10 means "endurance, the ability to stick with it when the going gets tough." The true motivation of all Christian living is to glorify God in all circumstances.

**A willingness to suffer** (vs. 11-12). Paul did not ask others to suffer for him; *he suffered for others*. The fact that he was persecuted from city to city was proof that he was living a godly life. Some people today have the idea that godliness means *escaping* persecution, when just the opposite is true. In seminary, I made a point that if Paul was alive today and he gave a seminary or church his credentials, I wonder if he would have been hired. He had a prison record; he had a physical affliction; he stirred up problems in just about every place he visited. He was poor, and he did not cater to the rich. Yet God used him, and we are being blessed today because Paul was faithful!

## ☐ Day #3--Wednesday, June 9<sup>th</sup> Read: 2 Timothy 3:14-15

As Paul continues to warn Timothy against the imposters who seek to lead Jesus' people astray, Paul encourages

Timothy to continue in what he has learned and knows from personal conviction (v.14). Of course this encouragement is for us today as well! The origin of imparted knowledge is important—Timothy had not only had the advantage of learning much about the Christian gospel from the apostles, he also had been taught the Scriptures since his earliest years. This emphasis on the Scriptures is important here because Paul himself based so much on the testimony of Scripture.

Note that in verse 15, Paul uses the expression “the holy scriptures,” drawing attention to scripture’s sacred character. The word for *holy* means “consecrated for sacred use.” The Bible is different from every other book—even books about the Bible—because it has been set apart by God for special sacred uses. In verse 15b, Paul writes that the scriptures are able to “make [one] wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” We are not saved by believing in the Bible (John 5:39), but by trusting the Christ who is revealed in the Bible. Satan knows the sacred scriptures, but he is not saved. Timothy was raised on the Holy Scriptures in a godly home. What is the relationship of the Bible to salvation? Lutheran theology is helpful here. The Lutheran hermeneutic (how one interprets scriptures) is Law and Gospel. Through the law, the Bible reveals our need for salvation. It is a mirror that shows us how sinful we are in God’s sight. The Bible explains that every lost sinner is condemned (John 3:18–21) and needs a Savior. This is how the law “kills,” and reveals our true spiritual need.

And the Bible also reveals God’s incredible and merciful plan of salvation; the “good news” (Gospel) that even though the law “kills” Jesus creates new life. Christ died for our sins! If we trust in Jesus’ completed work on the cross and in His resurrection from the dead, He will save us (John 3:16–18). The Bible also helps give us the on-going assurance of our salvation (1 John 5:9–13). Consequently, the Bible becomes our spiritual food to nourish us that we might grow in grace and serve Christ. It equips the disciple to live and grow in faith, hope, and love. The Bible is the norm for our proclamation, faith, and life.

**Question/Reflect:** God uses His word to help me become like His Son. Prayer: *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. Lord, bring me closer to you through the words of the Bible that I may be faithful to you and love my neighbor. Amen.*

#### **Day #4--Thursday, June 10<sup>th</sup> Read: 2 Timothy 3:16-17**

The doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture is vitally important, and a doctrine that Satan has attacked from the beginning (“Did God *really* say...” Gen. 3:1). It is beyond comprehension that our Lord would command us to go make and be disciples (Matthew 28:19ff) and then give His people a book they could not trust for such discipleship! God is the God of truth. (Deuteronomy 32:4); Jesus is “the truth” (John 14:6); and the “Spirit is truth” (1 John 5:6). As we see here the very nature of God as Trinity reveals that the nature of the Trinity is truth-full. Jesus said of the Scriptures, “Thy Word is truth” (John 17:17). The same word for breath and spirit, ‘*pneuma*,’ describes what God did to give us His scriptures. God, who is Spirit, “breathed,” literally, “*in-spired*” (in-spirit) the writers of scripture. The Holy Spirit of God used men of God to write the Word of God (2 Peter 1:20–21). God used the words, symbols, metaphors, and grammars, of particular people in particular times and places. God in His providence prepared the writers for the task of writing the Scriptures. Each book of the Bible grew out of a special set of circumstances. In His preparation of men, in His guiding of history, and in His working through the Spirit, God brought about the miracle of the Scriptures. Let’s look at two purposes of the Holy Scriptures reflected here in 2 Timothy:

**The Scriptures are useful** (v. 16b). The Bible is useful for teaching (learning what we believe), for rebuking (what is not right), for correcting (how to get it right), and for training in righteousness (how to stay right). A disciple who studies the Bible and applies what he/she learns will grow in holiness and love.

**The Scriptures equip us for every good work** (v. 17). By studying the Word of God, obeying it, and letting it control one’s life, the scriptures provide a “map” for “traveling” through this world. It is worth noting that all of the “great saints” named in Scripture—Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, David, and Timothy—were men who were devoted to God’s Word. The purpose of Bible study is *not* just to understand doctrines or to be able to defend the faith, as important as these things are. The ultimate purpose is the equipping of the believers who read it. It is the Word of God that equips God’s people to do the work of God. The beginning of this section noted the difficult context in which Christians live and serve (3:1-5). These descriptions are as true now as they were in the first century! However, while times may be, and will be, hard, Christians can become better people, even in bad times. We must separate ourselves from that which is false, devote ourselves to that which is true, and continue in our study of the Word of God. This is discipleship. This is obediently hearing from Jesus. As God equips us through His word and then uses us in this world, we will have the joy of seeing others come to a saving knowledge of the truth: Jesus the Savior!

**Question/Reflect:** 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 #5--Friday, June 11<sup>th</sup> Read: Matthew 6:5-6**

In the context of Matthew 6, Jesus is teaching about true spiritual practice. Jesus begins by condemning the Pharisaical practice of public praying. Rather than making prayer a matter between an individual and God, the Pharisees had turned it into a way to impress people, apparently to demonstrate their superior righteousness. Their prayers were directed not to God but to others, and consisted of long, repetitive phrases (Matthew 6:7). The point here is not that public prayer is a sin (1 Timothy 2:1ff) (for example, blessing food [John 6:11], seeking God's help [John 11:41-42; Acts 27:35]). Rather, the point is the attitude of the heart. Jesus' instructions (v.7) provide a good example. A prayer request that is repeated does not make it a "vain repetition;" for both Jesus and Paul repeated their petitions (Matthew 26:36-46; 2 Corinthians 12:7-8). A request becomes a "vain repetition" if it is only a babbling of words without a sincere heart desire to seek and do God's will.

Jesus mentions the location of prayer. Likely, Jesus is contrasting the Pharisees praying in the open synagogues and street corners, with the privacy of a room. In verse 6, the word translated "room," means "a private chamber." It could refer to the store-chamber in a house. What Jesus is encouraging is the intentionality of prayer and having a place that is set-apart for this purpose. Isaac went into the field (Genesis 24:63), Jesus to a mountain, Peter to a housetop. Jesus also contrasts the public praying so that others may see and hear what you are praying for, with the private prayer addressed to God the Father who is unseen and who already knows what one needs.(John 1:18; 1 Timothy 1:17).

**Question/Reflect:** Do you have a certain place and time for prayer? If not, consider beginning today. Prayer: *You know the secrets of my heart Father. As I pray, bring me closer to you and your heart and to your love. Amen.*

### ☐ **Day #6--Saturday, June 12<sup>th</sup> Read: Matthew 6:7-8**

The foundation of prayer is a personal relationship with God who is truly our Heavenly Father. Jesus insists that God not only is ready to hear us but is also aware of our needs. The amount of words does not matter in prayer because the power of prayer is not in the eloquence of language or in the verbiage of the one praying. The power of prayer is in the love of the Father for His children. What a view of God Jesus gives us here! The God of Jesus knows His children. Jesus is instructing His disciples here; those who are poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek, hungry and thirsty souls, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, those who allow themselves to have all manner of evil said against them for the Son of man's sake—in short, the new-born children of God (Matthew 5:1ff). Disciples are those who desire to do God's will above all else. The disciples' prayers are offered to a God who is changing the heart of the disciple. God encourages us to draw near and keep near to Him, to talk and walk with Him, to open our every circumstance to Him, and assure ourselves that when asking we shall receive—and seeking we shall find—and knocking it shall be opened. In prayer, we are not to *prescribe*, but *subscribe* to God.

This section ends with Jesus giving the model prayer we have come to know as "The Lord's Prayer." Note: Even though Jesus said we need not pray repetitively, He gives us a prayer that we have repeated throughout the history of the church. Again, Jesus' point about prayer is not the form of prayer as such but the heart of the one praying. Is the heart turned toward God or toward the self ("getting what I want rather than what God wants. In essence, the Pharisees' desire to be seen and heard by others was a self-centered motivation).

The God we pray to is our Father by creation and by covenant; and therefore our addresses to him should be natural, open, and honest; children do not have to make long speeches to their parents when they want something. The Lord's Prayer provides the disciple with both a model prayer as well as a proper understanding of the God we are praying to. God is a Father who is holy, righteous, and just (Our Father, who art in Heaven hallowed be thy name...). God is a faithful Father who has a plan and purpose for His children (thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as in heaven...). God is a Father who knows our situations and desires better than we do ourselves (give us this day our daily bread...). God is a Father who forgives His kids and who wants His kids to forgive one another (forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who have trespassed against us...). God is a Father who is trustworthy and in control (for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever). Our prayers are the way we obediently respond to Jesus as His disciples.

**Question/Reflect:** I can pray at anytime, for anything, anywhere. Prayer: *God, keep me aware of the joys, celebrations, and needs around me. Keep me aware that you are with me every minute of every*