

Rappahannock Christian Church – 7/17/11

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Communion Meditation

What thoughts come to mind when we gather around this Table? Surely one of them is our unworthiness to be part of God's eternal kingdom. We all know that we have strayed from God's perfect Way many times. In fact, it is hard to live a single day without doing anything wrong in thought, in word or in deed. So, when we come to this memorial Table we should remember to confess our sins and ask God to cleanse us. In His loving grace, He has promised to forgive us, if we ask Him.

I Corinthians 11:23-26 – The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Search Me

Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24 –

You have searched me, LORD,
and you know me.
You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.
You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.
Before a word is on my tongue
you, LORD, know it completely.
You hem me in behind and before,
and you lay your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too lofty for me to attain.

Where can I go from your Spirit?

Where can I flee from your presence?
If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,
even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast.
If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me
and the light become night around me,”

even the darkness will not be dark to you;
the night will shine like the day,
for darkness is as light to you.
Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.

We have kind of an older crowd in attendance this morning. I doubt that many of you have a Facebook page. But on Facebook I have seen an application -it's supposed to be something fun to do with your Facebook friends- that asks you how well you know your friends. "How well do you know Fred?" When you select this application you are asked a bunch of questions about your friend. Then you get to see whether or not your friend answered the questions the same way.

Here in this psalm the writer tells us that he is quite well known -- by God. In fact, God knows him intimately and completely. "You know me," he says. "You see me come, and see me go. You see when I sit, and you see when I rise. Before I speak, you know exactly what I am going to say! You are also everywhere I go. Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?" The answer, of course, is NOWHERE! "If I go up to the heavens, you are there. If I descend into the depths, you are there. If I flee to the far side of the sea, you are there. OH! I know! I've been able to hide from people by going to some dark place where there is no light to see by! But, no, that won't work. Even the darkness will not hide me! Darkness is as light to you!"

I wonder, when I read all of this, whether or not the psalmist is speaking from experience. Has he actually TRIED to flee from God and found it impossible? That's what the prophet Jonah did. He got on board a ship and tried to run away from God. But he quickly learned that it couldn't be done. Maybe the psalmist has more sense than that. Maybe he has used his common sense, and knows that it would be impossible to hide from God -- so he has never been stupid enough to try.

In any case, the point he is making is that God knows him, personally. Isn't that amazing? The Creator God knows each of us intimately! Jesus says that God even knows the number of hairs on our head!

God knows all about us. There are no paths down which we *have gone* that are unknown to God. There are no paths down which we *could go* that would be unknown to God. For God, the future is not clouded in mist. God sees it all clearly. Should I not want God -- who is always for me and not against me -- to be my guide? This is where the writer is going.

He concludes his prayer with a request, a petition. "Search me," he says. "Look at me, see if there is some offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

WELL, of course God can already see him! But what the psalmist is saying is that HE himself wants to know what GOD sees. He wants to make sure that he is not his own worst enemy! He is trying to be honest, looking at himself with open eyes. What a spiritually courageous guy! In this prayer he is saying, in effect, "Am I perhaps clinging to some ungodliness, some sin that is preventing me from fully experiencing God's grace and God's blessing? Am I harboring and nurturing desires for the future that have nothing to do with God's plan for me? I want those obstacles cleared out of the way! I want to proceed down the road of God's choosing! I want to know God's will, and I want to be sure to do it!"

It is a very simple, basic prayer: *Show me my weaknesses, and help me to be stronger.* But it is a prayer that takes courage. It is hard to look at yourself honestly. It is hard to look at yourself with a critical eye. This is the prayer of someone who has "sold out," who has surrendered to God. I admire the strength of his devotion, don't you?

There was an African tribesman years ago who lived way out in the bush country -- where people still lived in villages and in huts. This young man, recently married, did not have the wherewithal to build a decent hut for his family. Another man in the village offered to build him a hut on one condition -- that the builder be allowed to keep a small hook in the hut that would be his property. All the rest would belong to the young man and his family. Seeing no harm in this, the young man agreed. A few weeks after the family moved in, the builder came into the hut and hung a cloak on his hook. Well! That was odd, but it didn't seem to be doing any great harm. A while later the builder came in and hung a quiver of arrows on the hook. Again, no big deal, right? Then, a little later the builder came in with the carcass of an animal he had just killed and hung it on the hook. After a day or so it started to turn. It started to stink. It went rancid, and the flies came. It wasn't long before the stench from that carcass was so bad that the young man and his family had to leave the hut!

That's what Satan wants. He wants to have a single little hook. It seems like nothing at first, but if it is allowed to remain, it can bring spiritual ruin. Satan can use that hook to rob you of the life God wants you to have. Pray the prayer of the psalmist! Pray that God will open your eyes! "See if there is any offensive way in me!" Ask God to get that obstacle out of the way so that you can proceed down the road into the future that God wants for you, filled with joy, with purpose and with service to Him!

Benediction

To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy — to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen. – Jude 1:24-25