

Sunday Service: February 10, 2019

Sermonettes: God's People Fear, Follow and Tell

Sermonette Introduction:

What kind of parents did you have? Were they yellors, explainers, or negotiators? Were they lenient or firm?

What did you do when your parents asked or told you to do something? Did you do it, negotiate, argue, or refuse?

It's interesting that God uses the illustration of a parent and children in the Bible. We are called God's children in the Word, he is called our Father.

There is only one way our Father parents us. He is loving with us. Every time we question God, debate with him or want to negotiate our own terms, he could punish us for these sins. But instead he sent his Son to make perfect and holy what is so clearly not. Jesus bought us by his own blood and made us God's children. He washed away every one of our sins and gave us perfection and peace in its place. We can look at our Father and not see an angry judge, we can look at him and see the love that he has for us.

Now as God's children who love their Father and have been graciously forgiven by that Father, we will want to live in a way that thanks that Father for his love and goodness.

In this love, God doesn't debate with us why his way is the best, he just tells us it is. He doesn't argue with us so that we know he loves us, he just says he does. He doesn't negotiate so that we might see the wisdom of his ways, he simply says this is the way. He tells us again and again, this is the what my children do.

In the three sections of God's Word this morning we will see three distinct ways that God's people show their love and thanks to God in the way they act. We will see that each of these ways is pleasing to God. We will see that God's People: Fear, Follow and Tell.

Sermonette #1: God's People Fear God

Lesson: Isaiah 6: 1-8

What would you do if you came face to face with God? What would you say? How would you feel?

As we sit here today, we might think that we would want to ask that one question we always had? We might ask him why something happened? We might ask him something about the future? But, in the end, I don't know if we really know what we would do if we met God face to face.

Our first reading is about God calling Isaiah to be his prophet. In a vision, Isaiah realizes that he is face to face with God and he fears God.

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. ² Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. ³ And they were calling to one another:

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.”

⁴ At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

⁵ “Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.”

⁶ Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷ With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.”

**⁸ 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!”**

The word fear means so much more in the Bible than just being afraid. Fearing means that we are in awe of our God, we respect that God, we trust in that God, we obey and follow that God. When Isaiah realizes he is in God's presence he is struck with awe at the power and majesty that is all around him. He is in the throne room of God with angels flying around and their song not just echoing throughout the room, but making the room shake and the fill with smoke.

When Isaiah realizes where he is, then he is filled with fear. He is afraid. His fear comes from being a sinful person in the presence of a perfect and holy God. His fear is knowing that he has sinned against this God and he does not deserve to be here. His fear is knowing that this God has every right to punish him for his sins. In fear of God, he falls on his knees and confesses that he is a sinner who is not worthy to be in God's presence.

The Lord does not punish him, instead, he forgives him. This love of this awesome God turns Isaiah's fear into a different kind of fear. Isaiah is no longer afraid, he has been forgiven. He is filled with love and thanks to this forgiving God. This is a love and thanks that wants to show itself. When God calls out, “Who will go and work for me,” Isaiah is filled with the fear of God, love for that God, and with faith with answers boldly, “ Here am I, I am ready to work.”

Is Isaiah's story really different from ours? Many times we can fear God, by standing in awe of all the things that he has done in creation or in blessing us. But then something happens when we are confronted with our sins. We realize that we are not good, we do not deserve anything that God gives to us. He is a holy God and no matter what we want to think, we are sinful people. It is then that we realize that this awesome God could also be a just God and punish us for our sins.

As we fall on our knees and confess our sins, what are we expecting to happen? In that moment we are afraid of God and his justice. But God does not destroy us. He sends us much more than an angel to comfort us, he sends us his own Son who says, “Do not fear, I have paid for your sins. You are forgiven.”

Our terror turns into gladness and love as we have the same opportunity that Isaiah had. God calls out to us every day with the same question, “Who will go and work for me.” God's people who have been forgiven will fear and love God by doing the same as Isaiah, we will raise our hand and answer. Here am I Lord, Use me for your purpose.

Sermonette #2: God's People Follow their Savior's Call:

Lesson: Luke 5:1-11

One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the people crowding around him and listening to the word of God, ² he saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. ³ He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

⁴ When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."

⁵ Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."

⁶ When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. ⁷ So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

⁸ When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" ⁹ For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, ¹⁰ and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners.

Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men." ¹¹ So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

So much of the social message over the last 40 or 50 years has been: Do not be a follower. Do not be one of the mindless masses that follows another person. Instead make your own decisions, stand up for yourself, be yourself, follow your own path, be an individual.

This is all well and good until something so important comes along that you should follow. Then you have to decide whether it is better to be part of a group or make your way alone.

In today's world it seems like most people see religion as a personal thing. They think that religion is unique to the person. Religion is what I believe and what I make it. Jesus never intended that his people would make designer religions based upon their own wants and needs. Instead, he wanted people to hear his truth and follow the way that he gave to them.

Jesus didn't just leave it to chance that people would get it right when they designed their own religions. Instead, he chose for himself men who would follow him and learn not only from his words, but also from his actions. These men would preach and teach what he had preached and taught.

In our Gospel this morning we have one of the accounts of Jesus calling some of these disciples. In this account we see: God's People Follow their Savior's call.

Peter, James and John were professional businessmen. They had done all the research, they had the latest in equipment and technology. They had years of experience, not only their own but also from their fathers before them. If you had a question about the business you might go to Peter, James or John and ask for their opinion.

Yet, after a late night and early morning of putting all their tricks and knowledge to the test, they had come up empty, there were no fish in the nets. On this morning, Jesus comes and begins to preach from one of their boats. As he is preaching he asks them to put their nets into the deep water. There are all sorts of reasons why this will not work. It goes against the models and the figures, and the science and the experience. All of the facts says that fish will not be caught in deep water in the middle of the day. You can almost hear the skepticism in Peter's voice when he agrees to do this. **But because you say so, I will let down the nets.**

What happened? A great miracle happened. After this, Jesus calls these men to be his disciples, his fishers of men, and they follow.

Those who fear God will follow him. There is no passage in the Bible that says that we will always understand what God is asking us to do. There is no passage that says that God's path will match our path or that God's way will be according to our charts and maps and facts. In fact, there are many instances, just like this one, where God shows that his path is completely different from anything that we could dream up on our own.

This is what fearing God is all about; being willing to follow in faith, the path that God has laid out for us. Jesus taught these 3 fishermen that following him is more about faith than facts. This is the message that Jesus wants to teach us.

There were so many practical reasons why following Jesus and leaving their fishing jobs would not work. How would they provide for their families, where would the money come from, what kind of vacation plan did a disciple of Jesus have, what would happen to the family business? These were all very good questions, but they were silenced by faith. What is more, Jesus answered every one of them eventually.

Many times our own sinful worries get in the way of faith. "God will provide", is just not enough. "God will take care of this," doesn't give us the answers we are looking for. God is good, doesn't stop the butterflies and stomach ache of fear.

But faith puts down the nets in unlikely places. Faith is willing to put aside a career for the unknown of following Jesus. Faith is willing to put aside our fears about whether God will keep his promises. Faith is about following the Savior's call where and when he gives it.

Sermonette # 3. : God's People Tell:

Lesson: Romans 10:13-17

How did you get the job that you have or had in your life? How did you get the skills that helped you do that job? I would bet that somewhere along the way, someone taught you how to do what you do. Of course there are differing degrees of that. You may have always been good at math or science, but someone taught you that along the way. You may have always liked rules and regulations, but someone had to teach you how to be a lawyer.

We even had to learn the basics that we need in life from someone. Mom and or dad, grandma or grandpa taught us about life. A teacher taught us the basics of reading and writing. A college prof taught us to apply those things. A mentor showed us how they went together, or the ropes of the job we worked at.

If nobody had ever taken the time to teach you anything in your life, no life lessons, no reading and writing, no college classes, no one at the job to show you the ropes, would you still be able to do the job that you do or did?

If we're honest, probably not. We should be very thankful for the people that helped us get to where we are today.

Why would we think that religion is any different? Why do we think that people will come to know and believe in Jesus, but not think they have to be taught? We wouldn't let our son or daughter, niece or nephew put their hand on a hot stove top without stopping them and explaining that it is dangerous for them and can hurt them. Why do we expect others to see their sins and repent of them when we never say anything to them?

The lesson of our final reading this morning is very clear. God's people tell.

What do you expect a firefighter to do when there is a fire? What do you expect a police officer to do when there is a crime? What do you expect a Christian to do when there is an opportunity to share our faith. We tell.

If there was anyone who was less qualified to tell, it was the disciples. Fishermen who were trained to work alone, or in small groups, overnight were not trained to speak with people well. Yet, their faith made them qualified. It was God who would teach and train them to do the work that he had for them to do. It was the Holy Spirit who would build them up in faith to be ready and willing to share this Word with others.

Faith comes from hearing the message. How can they hear about all the savior has done for them, unless someone carries the message to them? How can they believe that Jesus is the only way to heaven, if they have not heard about this Savior? The answer is simple, it is a believers job to tell.

May God give us opportunities to put our faith into action as we fear, follow and tell.

Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

¹⁴ **How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ¹⁵ And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"**

¹⁶ **But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?" ¹⁷ Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.**