

090918

- I. My Notes... WWC message 090918
- II. Series... A Summer of Psalms
 - a. Title: Learning Where to Lean
 - b. Text: Psalm 111
 - c. Quote: "Why me Lord, what have I ever done, To deserve even one, Of the pleasures I've known. Tell me Lord, what did I ever do, That was worth loving you Or the kindness you've shown (Kris Kristosfferson, 1972)
- III. Introduction

Life lessons... they can be tough, they are often challenging, and frequently they are unexpected. I think about a movie I first saw a long time ago – Fiddler on the Roof (1971). It begins with the main character, Tevye, walking thru the town, pulling his milk cart because his horse is lame, talking about all the things and people he knew. He was telling us what he expected and letting us see how his life was laid out. This story is focused on a man, who is trying to maintain his tradition – live by his expectations – as the world around him is being thrust into change. His battle, this story is about the struggle to live when life around doesn't seem to make sense. I know this is a very general oversight but there is a lot of truth that we have a "Fiddler on the Roof" in our lives. We are trying to do the best that we can, to (as Tevye said) "scratch out a pleasant simple tune without breaking his neck".

I'm sure we all live with expectations. I would really like to tell you that I don't. Expectations can certainly put us in some interesting places. It often leads to frustrations and disappointments. I know (and have experienced) that "expectations" can (and most often will) lead to a breakdown in relationships. Being able to live without expectations leads to less stress and worry – it seems that this is the way to be. Now, I'm not saying there aren't things to be concerned about. And there is a need to take responsibility, to be able to make plans, and see the steps necessary to get to our goal in life. That's part of maturity, that's part of growth. The struggle becomes when things that aren't part of our viewpoint take place, how do we react or respond to them. Many live in the stages of stress – of fear, doubt and

worry. Now, many will try to tell you that you need to “detach”, to not let things or fear have a hold on you. For me, that kind of analysis, doesn't do much more than tick me off. Realizing you have fears and doubts can be a good process to growth. There are reasons to live free of expectations, for me it comes down to the simple fact that I need to know who to trust in times of hardship, in days of stress, in the unexpected moments.

“Fear not” or “Don't be afraid” may be the most frequent command in the Bible. (I didn't have time to check this out, so I am trusting some things I am finding on the internet). “Fear not!” is the most repeated command in the Bible. In fact, it's been said that there are 365 “Fear nots” in the Bible — one “Fear not” for every day of the year! Lloyd Ogilvie in *Facing the Future without Fear* even said there are 366 “Fear nots” in the Bible, one for every day of the year, including Leap Year! God doesn't want us to go a single day without hearing his word of comfort: “Fear not!” (soulshepherding.org). Worry and doubt, having those ideals and views you see are “normal” shattered, can cause a lot of discomfort and uncertainty in life – in the moments of the day. Who do you rely on when things seem to be in turmoil, when it feels like everything is out of control? Do you have that “good Christian” friend, who may not understand what is going on, quote to you Proverbs 3:5-6? Does that frustrate you even more because you know down deep your desire is to trust the Lord, but it really helps when life makes sense?

In getting one of many life lessons, the Disciples had this experience. “When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. Darkness had already set in, but Jesus had not yet come to them. A high wind arose, and the sea began to churn. After they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea. He was coming near the boat, and they were afraid. But he said to them, **“It is I. Don't be afraid.”** Then they were willing to take him on board, and at once the boat was at the shore where they were heading.” (John 6:16-21 CSB). This is just one of several instances where the Lord told them to not be afraid – to not stress over the unexpected. In Mark 4: 35-41, Jesus challenges (ok, He actually chastises) the Disciples for their fear. Now,

I'm not saying fear has no place – I won't tell you that there shouldn't be moments of doubt... What I want you to know is that unexpected occurrences should not control the view you have of life.

Psalm 56:3-4 (NLT2)

“But when I am afraid, I will put my trust in you. I praise God for what he has promised. I trust in God, so why should I be afraid? What can mere mortals do to me?” In verses 3-4, and again in verses 10-11, in this psalm, David makes this confident statement... that God alone is the one who gives the power and ability to praise and trust. It is thru His grace and by His Word that we can carry that “attitude of gratitude”, no matter what. So, there is a strong lesson in something we hear.

Romans 10:17 (Phillips NT): Belief you see, can only come from hearing the message, and the message is the word of Christ.

The devotional I passed out last week has this reading for today. “Turn to God's Word!” ... “My covenant I will not break, Nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips.” (Psalm 89:34 NKJV). The devotion addresses how depression and brokenness impact our daily lives. One part jumps out at me. “So what can you do? Turn to the one source of strength, hope, and encouragement that never fails – God's living Word.”

It is God's Word and His powerful name that can carry us to the place we need to be in life. It is by and thru His Word that expectations are fulfilled, and needs are met. I want to briefly look at a Psalm that helps us remember this.

IV. Text

a. **Psalm 111:1-10 (CSB)**

Hallelujah!

I will praise the LORD with all my heart in the assembly of the upright and in the congregation. The LORD's works are great, studied by all who delight in them. All that he does is splendid and majestic; his righteousness endures forever. He has caused his wondrous works to be remembered. The LORD is gracious and compassionate. He has provided food for those who fear him; he remembers his

covenant forever. He has shown his people the power of his works by giving them the inheritance of the nations. The works of his hands are truth and justice; all his instructions are trustworthy. They are established forever and ever, enacted in truth and in uprightness. He has sent redemption to his people. He has ordained his covenant forever. His name is holy and awe-inspiring. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his instructions have good insight. His praise endures forever.

- b. This Psalm is a praise, it provides reasons to praise, and it ends with a tremendous declaration
- c. It's about God's wondrous works and His redemption for those who love Him
- d. This Psalm should turn our focus – it should turn our hearts and minds toward the Lord.

V. Remember

- a. vs. 2 – the Lord's Works are GREAT. We should study them
- b. vs. 3 – all that He does is splendid (grand, impressive) and majestic (regal, stately).
- c. vs. 4 – He is gracious and compassionate
- d. vs. 5 – He provides
- e. vs. 6 – His power is evident and He is generous
- f. vs. 7 and 8 – Truth and Justice are established by the Lord God and they are eternal
- g. vs. 9 – He is holy and awe-inspiring
- h. We should remember what God has done. The times He has met us, even when we didn't realize it.
- i. Throughout the OT altars were built in special places. Do you know why?

- j. It was so they could recognize and remember that God met them at this place. It was also a place of worship for God's provision and grace. Altars were a place where sacrificed happened to offer the Lord something to honor and glorify Him
- k. What we must remember is this truth... God's loves us, always and forever. For that reason alone we should praise Him – no matter what.

VI. Rely

- a. You know, it's a good thing that the Lord God and Moses never agreed on the same day to destroy the Israelites. There can be a lot of frustrations when expectations are not met or understood
- b. Here's a life fact... we need those around us we can trust to love us, to understand us, and (when we are ready) help us
- c. Here's some promises the Lord has made for us...
 - i. Psalm 33:6 – He made all things and holds all things together
 - ii. Col. 1:16 – All things were created through Him and for Him (sound familiar?)
 - iii. Psalm 136 – His love endures forever
 - iv. Romans 8:38,39 – Nothing can get in the way or take us away from His love
 - v. Psalm 139 – YOU are amazing because the Lord has formed you. He knows you intimately
 - vi. Philippians 4:11,12,13 – No matter what the Lord God gives us the strength to endure
- d. God is faithful, He is trustworthy.
- e. So, when things get rough, when the unexpected happens, we have a place to turn and be understood
- f. Our fears, our doubts, our worries are taken care of in the hands of an Omnipotent Lord

- g. We can trust, we can be honest, and we can rest in this relationship we have with Him
- h. And the really awesome thing is... our Lord cares so much that He surrounds us with people that do their best to accept us as He does.
- i. Back to the Fiddler on the Roof. As Tevye begins to see that change is inevitable, that it's going to happen no matter how uncomfortable he is, he begins to accept some things. But there is an underlying question he struggles with.
- j. "Do you love me?" He pleads with his sharp-tongued wife, Golde. And that opens the door to a series of reasons and explanations about actions and choices.
- k. Have you ever wondered, during a rough or even a particularly quiet moment, if...
- l. God, do you LOVE me?
- m. It's the same question Jesus posed to Peter after the resurrection
- n. It's one we must answer for ourselves. Who do you trust? Where does your commitment lie? Do you love me?

VII. Relationship

- a. Here is what I have come to understand
- b. Proverbs 1:7 (NLT2)

Fear of the LORD is the foundation of true knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.
- c. You probably haven't heard of him but there was a Greek philosopher, about 3 centuries before Christ who said something your parents may have quoted to you (and they didn't even know it). Zeno stated, "the reason we have 2 ears and 1 mouth is that we may listen more and talk less".
- d. Interesting that we are told by the Lord God, "Don't be afraid" and then one of the greatest lessons in life is that we should have a healthy fear of the Lord.

- e. We shouldn't be stressed or worried when "life happens". When the bills are too much or that medical condition arises or that senseless argument happens or (shall I go on). Stress and worry wreck us, they destroy relationships
- f. We should have a reverential (humble, deferential) fear, an attitude of awe, a deep admiration and adoration of the Lord God
- g. He has loved us "with an everlasting love" (Jer. 31:3); His mercies are new each day (lam. 3:22-23); He rejoices over you and I (Zeph. 3:17); we are more valuable to Him than everything else created (Matt. 6:25-34)
- h. And, for me, here is the really awesome thing. God wants a relationship with ME
 - i. Song of Songs 7:10 (MSG)

I am my lover's. I'm all he wants. I'm all the world to him!
 - ii. The way the Lord God loves me is with a deep intimacy and great acceptance and understanding
- i. There is something we must understand in the last portion of this Psalm'
- j. The word "beginning" means "the principal part," and we must start somewhere so that we are prepared to learn God's truth. Fear of the Lord leads to obedience, and that obedience is so very important to gaining spiritual understanding (John 7:17).

VIII. Last Thought

- a. I wish I remember where I read it but Oswald Chambers wrote, "With focused attention and great care, you have to 'work out' what God 'works in' you – not work to accomplish or earn 'your own salvation,' but work it out so you will exhibit the evidence of a life based with determined, unshakable faith on the complete and perfect redemption of the Lord."
- b. Our lives are about worship the Lord God and letting that be the example we live by.
- c. Let's Pray

d. May the Lord reveal to you, in moments of difficulty, His love and His plan for that very moment. May His peace and grace prevail during the steps you take, each day. And may you see, may you discover reasons to celebrate every moment.

Note: Because of circumstances, because "life happens", the whole idea for our service today changed. We were going to do a beach service and baptism. People had to cancel, other things rose up. I wrote this message on very short notice in less than 2 hours. I hope it blesses all who read it