An Attitude of Faith

Sermon for Cross Roads 3-9-14

This is the Day! NO SNOW!!! Milder weather!

Today we are all happy to be alive! Every day of life is a gift isn’t it. And we are thankful for another day of life!

\*\*\*We have the gift life today AND God has a purpose for our life. What is mankind’s purpose:? TO GLORIFY GOD AND ENJOY HIM FOREVER!!

That is why each of us were made. To praise and glorify GOD and to ENJOY His presence FOREVER.

**Seems like most of the world didn’t get the Memo did they?** Most people have no idea why they are on planet Earth. Everywhere we go we hear stories of 1) greed 2) murder 3) fear 4) violence 5)injustice 6) war 7) hunger, etc.

\*\*\*We KNOW that GOD has a purpose for His children here on earth – **Our purpose as GOD”S CHILDREN and followers of Jesus is to show the way to JESUS and to tell them about the new life that comes from trusting JESUS as their SAVIOR.** We also are to ENCOURAGE others to have faith in the midst of all that goes on around us.

**\*\*\*The WAY WE SEE THIS WORLD makes a big difference on how our life is lived. Not everyone looks at life the same way do they? How many of you regularly wear glasses? The right glasses help us to see things better.**

**\*\*\*DID YOU KNOW THAT EVERYBODY wears glasses**? Well some people look at life through special glasses.

**SOME PUT ON CRITICAL GLASSES:**

**\*\*\*Those who wear CRITICAL GLASSES criticize everything they see.**  It may be the weather, or the food, or what someone is wearing, or someone’s lack of manners or something someone does who hurt them in the past. Once these CRITICAL glasses are in place we criticize everything…people on TV, politicians, ourselves…I’m too fat or my legs are too skinny or my feet are too big or my teeth are ugly….anything and everything gets criticized.

**IS This HOW GOD WANTS us to live?** Not according to Matt. 7. Let me read some verses from there.

**\*\*\*“Do not judge or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others**

**You will be judged and with the measure you use, It will be measured to you.**

**Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in Your brother’s eye and pay no attention to**

**The plank in your own eyes?.”**

**I GUESS GOD IS TELLING US To take OFF OUR CRITICAL GLASSES.**

**God tells us what not to do and also tells us what to do instead…LET’S LOOK AT PSALM 34:12-14**

**“Whoever of you loves life and desires to see many good days, keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies. Turn from evil and do Good; seek peace and pursue it.”**

**\*\*\*GOD WANTS US TO KEEP OUR LIPS FROM SPEAKING EVIL AND NOT JUDGE OTHERS.**

**\*\*\*GOD’S WORD ALSO TELLS US TO TURN FROM EVIL AND DO GOOD.**

**God’s word is the key to finding contentment in life. That is why a wise person reads God’s word, knows it and does His best to live walking in the truth of God’s word…turning from evil and doing good.**

**THERE ARE OTHER PEOPLE WHO SEE THE WORLD FROM DIFFERENT GLASSES.**

**\*\*\*THOSE WHO WEAR FEARFUL, WORRY-WART GLASSES RESPOND WITH ANXIETY.**

They may read the mail and get panicky when the bills arrive. Or they may be afraid of failure…it could be anything from spiders to fires, from heights to drowning, from stock market to poverty. IT is very easy in this day to find something that causes us to worry. And It is very easy to go from fear to anxiety and let that get the best of us. But GOD’S WORD tells us a different way. It says,:

**\*\*\*In Isaiah 26:3 “You (GOD) will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you.”**

**Psalm 34:4,7 – “I sought the Lord and He answered me; He delivered me from all my fears…The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him and He delivers them.”**

**\*\*\*Philippians 4:6-7 – “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”**

**Psalm 55:22 –“Cast all your cares on the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never let the righteous fall.”**

365 times in the Bible GOD addresses fear and tells us to not be afraid.

REMEMBER CHICKEN LITTLE. Who said “The sky is falling, and got all the barnyard animals all stirred up.?”

Your enemy – the ol devil – wants you to worry. He wants you to think that GOD doesn’t care about you enough to protect you or provide for you.

The Bible reminds us , “Cast all your care upon Him, because He cares for you.”

Let me ask, Does GOD EVER forget about us as His children? NO! He has our names engraved on the palms of his hands!!

Then there are other folks who wear different glasses yet.

**\*\*\*Some people use fix-it glasses and forget to give God Control.**

The Enemy also wants you to think that YOU have to FIX or CONTROL things—because GOD has FORGOTTEN about you and your problems or that God just doesn’t understand things. Think back to the story of Eve being tempted…The devil made her doubt what God told her. Satan talked her into trusting what she saw looked good over God’s instructions. We are all like our original Mother, Eve…we inherited from Adam and Eve our sin nature that figures…we surely have a better way than God!

**When Jesus was here on earth and with His disciples in the very last days here on earth before he died, He shared with them some of the most important things for His followers to know.**

**\*\*\*John 15:5 is one of those passages that Jesus shared with the 12…**

**“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”**

**His words tell us that we are powerless when we try to do things in our own way and strength. Our power comes only when we are a part of Jesus…holding on tight to that vine.**

**WHICH LEADS TO THE KIND OF EYES GOD WANTS FOR US AS FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST…HE WANTS US TO HAVE EYES OF FAITH.**

Here is a verse out of Isa. 43:2,4,5 one of my favorites.

“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you. And when you pass thru the rivers,

They will not sweep over you. When you walk thru the fire,

You will not be burned; The flames will not set you ablaze.

Since you are precious and honored in my sight And because I love you.

Do NOT be afraid for I AM with you!”

**\*\*\*GOD WANTS US TO HAVE EYES OF FAITH!**

**\*\*\*Psa 145:18 says: “The Lord is near to all who call upon Him to all who call on Him in truth.”**

**JOSHUA 1:9 SAYS: “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”**

Do you remember the story in the OT about Shadrack Meshack and Abeddigo who were thrown into the firey furnace by Nebuchanezzer? The heat of that fire was so powerful that it killed off the guys who were stoking the fire to get it super hot.

But what happened to Shadrack, Meshack and Abeddnigo? They came out unburned, with their clothes not even smelling like smoke.

Nebuchanezzer had thrown them into the fire to persecute them for being loyal to GOD. And GOD rescued them because they were faithful and they HAD FAITH IN GOD OVER THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES. THEY WERE FULL OF FAITH!! GOD protected them IN A MIGHTY WAY!

On Wednesday of this past week we began our Lenten season. Lent marks 40 days before Jesus’ resurrection (Easter) and that begins with Ash Wednesday. In observance of Ash Wednesday we placed ashes on our foreheads to remind us that (1 we are made of dust and that (2 the ash cross on our forehead shows others that we are FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST AND HIS WAY – a WORDLESS MESSAGE of the GOSPEL of GOOD NEWS. And 3) In OT times people put ashes on their heads as a SIGN OF REMORSE. So for 6 weeks each year during Lent, we REFLECT ON OUR LIVES and SEEK TO UPROOT OUR SINS.

As you know, we cannot get rid of our own sins – we must have Jesus in our whole life – no idols in our hearts…

We must OPEN our EYES and OPEN our MIND and our HEART to HIM.

We must have NEW VISION, NEW EYES –EYES OF FAITH that see our Lord as Lord of our lives.

PSA 51:10 says it this way, “Create in me a clean heart, O GOD, and put a right spirit within me.”

Lenten time is a time to:

**\*\*\* STOP LOOK AND LISTEN**. As life goes speeding past and around us…STOP! JUST STOP!

**\*\*\*STOP**: **DOING WRONG; STOP AND REST AWHILE**

**LOOK – INWARD FOR SELF EXAMINATION**

**LOOK UP -- WITH HOPE TO THE CROSS OF CHRIST. He bore our sins and He offers to us healing and love. WHOLENESS OF LIFE>**

**LISTEN – to that “Still, small voice” within you – the voice of God. LISTEN to what GOD says in HIS WORD and in our PRAYER TIME….take time to LISTEN when you pray!.**

**JESUS IS COMING SOON ISN’T HE…WE KNOW THIS AS THIS OLD WORLD AND ALL ITS WICKEDNESS IS WINDING DOWN…**

**\*\*\*IN LUKE 12 THESE WORDS OF THE LORD ARE FOUND:**

**“It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when He comes…It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the second or third watch of the night…You must be ready because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.”**

**Jesus is coming soon…His desire is for you to be ready and watching for Him to take you with Him when he returns…as he promised us.**

DURING THIS TIME OF LENT…Let’s use these moments now to LOOK UP, LOOK TO JESUS AND EXAMINE OUR HEARTS . That might mean we need to change the way we have been looking at things…AND TURN THE CONTROL OF OUR LIVES OVER TO HIM.

PSA 51;10 says, “Create in me a clean heart O GOD and put a right spirit within me.”

Let’s make this our prayer today…dear Lord…CREATE IN ME A CLEAN HEART…

AS WE STAND AND SING THE CHORUS OPEN THE EYES OF MY HEART, LORD

YOU ARE INVITED TO COME TO THE ALTAR TO PRAY AS THE LORD LEADS YOU.

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\*\*\*OPEN THE EYES OF MY HEART LORD,OPEN THE EYES OF MY HEART

I WANT TO SEE YOU, I WANT TO SEE YOU.(REPEAT)

TO SEE YOU HIGH AND LIFTED UP

SHINING IN THE LIGHT OF YOUR GLORY

POUR OUT YOUR POWER AND LOVE AS WE SING HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

I WANT TO SEE YOU.

When we see JESUS and HIS LOVE for us, when we CONFESS OUR SINS and see ourselves as we really are—in need of HIS HEALING TOUCH—a CHANGE IN US COMES –NEW LIFE

IN CHRIST! HOPE OF SALVATION AND ETERNAL LIFE IN HEAVEN WITH OUR LOVING LORD.

A right relationship with God our Father …Jesus made us righteous before God…A NEW DAY with a NEW CLEAN HEART.

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