



Pastor's Ponderings

April 17, 2016



Today, I am working on the bulletin and wondering how many of you are using this as a tool for getting closer to God throughout the week? It is made to go home with you. It has everything you need to pray for the needs of the people in the church, our council, and, in case you have not noticed, I am trying to enhance your God time with the Lectio Divina (see page 9). This bulletin also has our prayer list and the upcoming activities that can be held up in prayer. Please take your bulletins home with you and learn to use them to draw closer to God. There is an old song back in the 70's by Seals & Crofts: Get Closer to me. Darling if you want me to be closer to you then get closer to me. It is on YouTube and it is worth hearing. I find it a good instruction for improving relationships... including our relationship with God.

It is so easy to wander away from attending church. We miss a Sunday for a good reason and then we find that we have another and another good reason and many are really good reasons: things we have to do, sickness, family issues. But before we know it, we have missed weeks and then months and then some of us get a feeling we are not where we want to be in our relationship with God. Some of us get very comfortable about not being part of the body of Christ... we feel we no longer fit in. We blame the people we didn't get along with; we blame the pastor. We think it was someone else's actions that are cutting us off and choose to stay away even when, in the depth of our being, we long for more of God's love. God is calling us and wooing us to get closer to him.

The readings today are difficult. We are hearing in the Gospel of Mark that Jesus is giving the message to the disciples that they are to proclaim the news that Jesus is the message that; Jesus Christ is the anointed one, the Messiah. But is also carries a warning that if and when they do that, there is also a price to pay and they may be taken before the government to speak and tell their faith story. This is scary stuff. But they are also told not to worry about what to say because God will empower them for this mission and give the words they need. I have to admit that for me this was a stumbling block for a long time. "Not me. I am not going to do that! No Way." Well we can all see how well that worked. Here I stand joining with the witnesses who went before me. And I can truly say, "Praise be to God."

Then in the reading from the Acts of the disciples we hear about Paul and Silas going to Thessalonica, preaching the Gospel. "This is the Messiah, Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you." Some of the Jews joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and many leading women. This move of God was gaining ground. But the Jews became jealous and caused a mob riot, setting the city in an uproar. Searching for Paul and Silas, they attacked Jason's house. When they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some believers before the city authorities, shouting, "These people have been turning the world upside down and Jason has entertained them as guests." The plan did not work and, while Jason was arrested, after they had taken bail from Jason and the others, they let them go. And Paul and Silas were taken out of town for their protection and the dance went on.

It seems to me, God is always calling us and wanting us to be all that we were created to be. God will empower us and God will save us. God is the center to which we can cling knowing all is well and there is nothing that can separate us from the love that God has for us. As you ponder these words, please know that as one who has already gone through those days of not being part of a church and one realizing the need to return, I can say to you that it's worth the effort to get back where God is calling us to be.

Pastor Gail, pondering with you.