

Good Morning,

For the next two Sunday's we're going to start on a path that will hopefully bring us to a better understanding the role or purpose the Bible has in our lives. For today, we're going to answer this question, **"How do we, as Christians, use the Bible in our lives?"** And then next Sunday we will be answering this question, **"How do we as Christians Study the Bible in our lives?"** So, as we begin to head down our path of discovery, we need to first think about how each one of us currently understands the role or purpose that the Bible plays in our lives. You see there are some of us who may see the Bible as a book to read so we may learn more about God and Jesus. Then there are some of us who may see the Bible as a book where we learn to how to believe in God. Then there are some of us who see the Bible as a book of instructions on how we should live our lives. After all, did you know that the letters B I B L E stand for Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth? And then there are some of us who may see the Bible as a combination of all the above. So, no matter which way you may see yourself understanding the Bible our goal this morning is to see how the Bible relates to us personally in our everyday lives. Now speaking of how the bible relates to each of us in our everyday lives lets see how the Bible relates to a couple of passengers on an airplane. ***There was a religious lady that had to do a lot of traveling for her business, so naturally she did a lot of flying. Flying made her extremely nervous, so she always took her Bible along with her to read since it helped relax her on the long flights. One time, she was sitting next to a man. When he saw her pull out her Bible, he gave a little chuckle, smirked and went back to what he was doing. After a while, he turned to her and asked, "You don't really believe all that stuff in there do you?" The lady replied, "Of course I do. It is the Bible." He said, "Well, what about the guy that was swallowed by the whale?" She replied, "Oh, Jonah. Yes, I believe that, it is in the Bible." He asked, "Well, how do you suppose he survived all that time inside the whale?" The lady said, "Well, I don't really know. I guess when I get to heaven, I will ask him." "What if he isn't in heaven?" the man asked sarcastically. "Then I guess, you can ask him," replied the lady.*** Well, did you know that I actually had a purpose in telling our story this morning beyond just giving us a good laugh? You see I really liked the sentence where ***"she always took her Bible along with her to read since it helped her to relax"***. So according to this sentence reading the Bible just may have an ability to bring a sense of calmness to us when we read it. Isn't it amazing that by just reading the Bible we can actually change the way we react to different situations? As I was researching for our message today, I came across this question

in an online forum, ***“Does reading the Bible make you happier?”*** And within this forum a young man posted, ***“I’m just so stressed and worried, I can barely live anymore. I’ve tried everything, nothing works. I’ve heard that Christians who read the Bible are somewhat calmer and happier than the ones who don’t. Should I try reading the Bible?”*** Now, as I read through the many responses I found one that I would like to share with us this morning, ***“Having a hope for the future can bring you peace of mind and the Bible can provide that hope...If you can change your focus off of things you have no control over, you will relieve some stress. Some have found that scriptures like Psalms 55:22...(which) tells us to throw our burdens on God can be very helpful.”*** Now, that’s some good advice offered to this young man by referring him to Psalm 55:22 as an example of how he could change his frame of mind. Now, after reading this advice I decided to go and read not just verse 22 of Psalm 55 but the entire Psalm. And here are some excerpts from Psalm 55 that I found for us to see how its message may serve to help those who are afraid or anxious in their lives. ***“My heart is in anguish within me, the terrors of death have fallen upon me, fear and trembling come upon me, and horror overwhelms me. And I say, “O that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest; truly, I would flee far away...but I call upon God, and the Lord will save me....He will redeem me unharmed from the battle that I wage...Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you;”*** You know, I think I could imagine that if I was anxious about flying that turning to my Bible and reading Psalm 55 would help to calm me down. After all it’s basically telling me that I should place my fear of flying on the Lord and trust that he will take care of me during the flight. Maybe this is one of the verses that the lady in our story reads to help calm her down when she flies. So what is it that allows the lady on the plane to find sense calmness instead of anxiety when she reads the Bible? After all, anyone can read the words of the Psalm; but is it enough to just read them. What needs to happen to actually connect the dots so to speak and bring together the reading of the words and the effects of those words in one’s life? I believe the answer is that we need to believe and have faith in the truth of what the message is telling us. It would be great to actually believe in your heart that God is right there with you taking away your fear. So what is it that we need to know so we can be the ones believing in the truth of God’s care and love as we read the Bible? I recently came across an article from the Christian Broadcasting Network website that speaks directly to our message today. Debbie Skinner wrote the article and I would like to highlight some of her thoughts for us today. One of her first thoughts is that “reading the Bible is a way Christians

receives communication from God. Like checking your email or voice mail for messages, the Bible is where God allowed some of His thoughts to be written down for us to learn from Him. “ Now in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 we find ***“All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.”*** Debbie goes on to further explain that, ***“because the Bible contains God’s thoughts, recorded by men under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it is different from any other book in the world”***. Now this statement that she just made is at the very heart of our believing in the truth of what we read in the Bible. You see we need to understand and realize that the Bible is God’s thoughts written down for us by inspiring a human author’s mind under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. And the presence of the Holy Spirit being with us when we read the Bible is how we know the truth of what we are reading. As I read on into Debbie’s article she said something that just made perfect sense to me about the Holy Spirit being with us, she said, ***“The Holy Spirit is different. He is present whenever a Christian reads the Bible, anywhere or anytime, much like having the author of a book you are reading sitting beside you as you read their words.”*** Now that’s a wonderful image to picture in our minds; an image where we see ourselves reading the Bible and right beside of us is God’s presence within the Holy Spirit. Have you ever wondered why sometimes when we read a certain verse in the Bible it’s message to us can be different depending upon our situation. One would think that the message would stay the same, after all the words are the same. But we know that we do get different thoughts, or feelings when we read the same verse at different time in our lives. When I was a child, I would read John 3:16, ***“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life.”*** You see that when I first thought about this verse it was a verse that was saying to me, “that if I believe in Jesus, I would not die like my father did”. From a young boy who just lost his father this verse gave me hope that I would not die as my father did, but by believing in Jesus I would be able to live and not die. Now remember these thoughts are from the mind of a 6-7 year old. But as an adult these words speak to me about an everlasting life beyond my earthly life. Sometime the Holy Spirit is called the “Great Comforter” and for me reading this verse as a boy and now as an adult brings a great comfort to my heart knowing that God is watching over me and guiding me in my journey with Him. From 2 Corinthians 1:3-5 we find, ***“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction,***

so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.” Some of you may have come to church today, with an understanding that reading the bible was simply reading a book about the story of God’s creation and how humans have come to know of a relationship with God. You see most of the time the bible is looked at as if it was something to read when things weren’t going so well and you need help from God. Now there is nothing wrong with reading the bible during times of hardship but the point I am trying to make is that our relationship with God should be more than just a 911 call. It should be an ongoing, every day, every minute, and every second kind of relationship. So now let’s go back to our question from the beginning of our message, ***“How do we, as Christians, use the Bible in our lives?”*** Well, I guess it depends on what we believe the bible can do for us. If we feel the Bible is just a reference book that we use only when we need to know its history, than it would not be much use to us when we need help in the present. But if we see the bible as the place where we can talk and listen to God it becomes much more than a library book. You see it becomes our connection to a living God where we can bring our everyday concerns, where we can bring our everyday joys. A connection where we can hear God’s voice working through the Holy Spirit to guide us and help us as we in our every day lives. In today’s culture we find that most everyone has a cell phone in his or her possession. And it’s a wonderful invention that helps us to communicate with each other in times of sharing, in times of need, and in times of socializing. But if we think about it, God gave to us the very same way of communication, in a much simpler version. You see God gave us the Bible and you could say that it works on the network of the Holy Spirit. So when was the last time you used the bible to call God. All you have to do is open it up and begin to read. You don’t even have to worry if your close to a tower or not, as the power you need to complete your call is actually sitting right next to you. So, for next week I would like for us to think about the bible every time we make a call on our cell phones or landlines and wonder if God would like to hear from us too. So, as we close our message today, it’s my hope, that each of us has come to know of a better understanding in how we relate to using the Bible in our daily lives. After all, the Bible is a wonderful gift from God, a gift where we can hear His voice. Amen

Worship Service Reading for July 12, 2015

Psalm 55:1-8; Give ear to my prayer, O God; do not hide yourself from my supplication. Attend to me, and answer me; I am troubled in my complaint. I am distraught by the noise of the enemy, because of the clamor of the wicked. For they bring trouble upon me, and in anger they cherish enmity against me. My heart is in anguish within me, the terrors of death have fallen upon me. Fear and trembling come upon me, and horror overwhelms me. And I say, "O that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest; truly, I would flee far away; I would lodge in the wilderness; Selah I would hurry to find a shelter for myself from the raging wind and tempest."

Please stand and join together as we sing, "Glory be to the Father" No. 70 in our Hymnals

2 Timothy 3: 14-; But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

Please join together as we sing Hymn No. _____
