

St. Matthew AME Church
Orange, New Jersey
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Women's Bible Study
April 13, 2024

Spring Series: "Doing Life with God"
"For in Him we live and move and have our being." Acts 17:28

Session I: "This Is The Day"
" This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."
Psalm 118:24

I. Scripture Background: Acts 17:24-29

- Paul proclaimed God as the Creator of all things in heaven and earth (17:24). He is the source, ruler and sustainer of life. He neither dwells in temples nor depends on humans to serve Him because He is - above, beyond and independent of the physical universe that He made. God needs nothing (17:25). From one man (Adam), God created all people so that they may seek God (17:26-27).

- This affirms that the human race exists because of a personal Creator, not some random impersonal evolutionary process. It also affirms the historicity of Adam and the essential unity and dignity of the human race, leaving no basis for racial superiority.

- Paul said, " In Him we live and move and have our being"(17:28). God is not only above and beyond and independent of the universe He created, He is also present within and interacts with the world He has made. He exists outside of time and space, yet is closer to us than our own breath. Since God is the sum total of all of life, it is in getting to know Him intimately that you truly come to know who you are and what you were created to be.

- Paul even quoted one of their poets to make his point that God is our Creator (17:28). Given this role, we shouldn't represent the divine nature using gold or silver or stone.

- Idols are any nouns (person, place, thing, or thought) that you look to as your source. They misrepresent and diminish the glory of the living and true God.

II. Session I: "This is the Day"

"This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."
Psalm 118:24

- There are days when the last thing we want to do is rejoice. Our mood is down, our situation is out of hand, and our sorrow or guilt is overwhelming. We can relate to the writers of the psalms who often felt this way.

" I am worn out from groaning; all night long, I flood my bed with weeping and drench my couch with tears. My eyes grow weak with sorrow, they fail because of all my foes." Psalm 6:6-7

- Pouring out our heart with tears. David was completely honest with God. We can be honest with God even when we are filled with anger or despair because God knows us thoroughly and wants the very best for us. Anger may result in rash outward acts or turning inward in depression. But because

we trust in our all-powerful God, we don't have to be victims of circumstance or be weighed down by the guilt of sin. Be honest with God, and He will help you turn your attention from yourself to Him and His mercy.

" Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.

" Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from sin." Psalm 51:1-2

- David was truly sorry for his adultery with Bathsheba and for murdering her husband to cover it up. He knew that his actions had hurt many people. But because David repented of those sins, God mercifully forgave him. No sin is too great to be forgiven.

- While God forgives us, however, He does not always erase the natural consequences of our sin. David's life and family were never the same as a result of what he had done.

- No matter how low the psalmist felt they were honest with God. And as they talked to God, their prayers ended in praise.

- When you don't feel like rejoicing, tell God how you truly feel. You will find that God will give you a reason to rejoice. God has given you this day to live. Be glad!

III. Take Advantage of Today"

" Be careful, then, how you live- not as unwise, but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil." Ephesians 5:15-16

- By saying the days are evil, Paul was communicating his sense of urgency because of evil's pervasiveness. We need the same sense of urgency because our days are also difficult. We must keep our standards high, act wisely, and do good whenever we can.

- We must live not as unwise people, but as wise. We must make the most of the time. Don't miss opportunities by making the same choices you've always made. The only way to make right choices is to understand what the Lord's will is- that is to determine God's view on a matter.

" Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him and He will direct your path." Proverbs 3:5-6

- Leaning has the sense of putting your whole weight on something, resting on and trusting in that person or thing. When we have an important decision to make, we sometimes feel that we can't trust anyone-not even God. But God knows what is best for you. He is a better judge of what we want than even we are! We must trust him completely in every choice we make.

- We should not omit careful thinking or belittle our God-given abilities to reason, but we should not trust our own ideas to the exclusion of all others. We must not be wise in our own eyes. We should always be willing to listen to and be corrected by God's Word and wise counselors. Bring your decisions to God in prayer; use the Bible as your guide and then follow God's leading. He will make your paths straight by both guiding and protecting you.

- To receive God's guidance, said Solomon, we must acknowledge God in all our ways. This means turning every area of life over to Him. In many areas of your life you may already acknowledge God, but it is in the areas where you attempt to restrict or ignore God's influence that will cause you grief. Make God a vital part of everyone do.

- Each day you are given 86,400 brand-new seconds to spend however you want. None of that time carries over to the next day. It has to be lived in the present.
- Yesterday is over, tomorrow is not promised.
- YOU HAVE 86,400 SECONDS TO SPEND TODAY!
- Each day is a new opportunity and we should avoid focusing on the things you don't like and perhaps dread.
- Sometimes we let precious time slip by while we grumble, complain, regret, worry, or even give in to fear.
- YOU HAVE ONLY ONE LIFE, ON THIS SIDE OF ETERNITY; IT WOULD BE A TRAGEDY TO WASTE IT.
- Today could be the day you begin making the most of your time and maximizing every moment.

OBEY GOD TODAY!

" But Samuel replied: Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as obeying the voice of the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams." I Samuel 15:22

• Was Samuel saying that sacrifice is unimportant? No, he was urging Saul to look at his reasons for making the sacrifice rather than at the sacrifice itself. A sacrifice was a ritual transaction between man and God that physically demonstrated a relationship between them. But if the person's heart was not truly repentant or if he did not truly love God, the sacrifice was a hollow ritual. Religious ceremonies or rituals are empty unless they are performed with an attitude of love and obedience. Being religious (going to church, serving on a committee, giving your tithe and offerings is not enough if we do not act out of devotion and obedience to God).

• When we learn to obey God's Word and the leading of His Holy Spirit, the very moment He instructs us to do something, you'll be amazed how much more enjoyable your life becomes. You will be more peaceful and fulfilled knowing that you are in the will of God. Nothing is more uncomfortable than a guilty conscience due to knowingly disobeying God.

LOVE TODAY!

- If love is the central theme of your life, then we will love the life we are living.
- For many people, their lives are ruined because of the way someone treated them. An insult, a rumor, an unkind word from a friend, family member, coworker or a church member can steal your joy.
- With God's help, many of you have learned that you are responsible for your own attitude and happiness. We cannot control what other people do or say.
- God will remind us that what someone may do to us that is unjust or unkind isn't nearly as important as how we respond to their actions.

ENJOY TODAY!

- So many people have the mentality that they will be really happy at some time in the future. We don't enjoy the daily blessings because we are too busy looking ahead. We can have a balance, enjoy the moment and also look ahead to the future.
- Learn to maximize the moment and enjoy what God is doing in you, through you and for you now.

• Anybody can get sidetracked and focus on the problems or burdens of the day. We all have inconveniences and irritations we have to face on a regular basis. But only those who truly believe that God wants them to enjoy and love their lives will look past life's problems in order to enjoy each new day to the fullest. For some reason, we tend to think that as long as we have problems, it just wouldn't be right to not worry and instead enjoy life. But that is what God wants us to do, and it is what the devil does not want us to do.

"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy, I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly." John 10:10

• One of God's greatest gifts to us is that He enables us by His grace to enjoy life even in the midst of trouble and difficulty.

• Joy isn't based on having everything go your way all the time or laughing all day long. Joy is deeper than that. Joy can be extreme hilarity or calm delight and everything in between.

"Rejoice in the Lord always, I will say it again: Rejoice!" Philippians 4:4

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS TODAY!

"Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation."
Psalm 68:19

• It's easy to overlook the good things God has given us. We can often get busy with the tasks and challenges of our daily lives. So busy, in fact, that we easily overlook the countless blessings we enjoy. But this is why so many people are living frustrated, joyless, disappointing lives. They've simply forgotten- or maybe they never even realized- how blessed they really are.

- Every good thing we have has been given to us by God is to help us enjoy our lives.
- The Word of God instructs us to "not forget" God's blessings.

"Bless and affectionately praise the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget any of His benefits."
Psalm 103:2

• When we learn to focus on the good things God has done for us, rather than the trouble or distractions we may be facing, there is absolutely nothing that can steal our joy!

- When you are counting your blessings, don't just sit passively, waiting for the big blessings to come along start with what we call little blessings.
- God blesses you and then He gives you the opportunity to bless others. This is one of the best ways to love your life.

THIS IS THE DAY!

*UPCOMING BIBLE STUDY
MAY 11, 2024
SESSION II: "LIFE IS HARD"*