

04/30/17 BUCYRUS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

“GOD’S WORD: LIGHT NOT STRAW”

Pastor Mike Corwin

Text: Isaiah 55:8-11 God’s Word: Proverbs 3:13-18

I - SCARECROW:

This morning I want to talk about the first character Dorothy met as she took her journey on the yellow brick road. The scarecrow.

**(SHOW CLIP WHICH BEGINS WITH BRAINLESS SCARE CROW
AND ENDS WITH EDUCATED ONE.)**

So we start out with a straw stuffed dummy singing "If I only had a brain" and we end with a smart one who can speak in scientific theory and at least sound smart...all because he has a diploma now.

But I don't think that piece of paper gives him wisdom...after all he still has a head full of straw!

II - DARKNESS:

For me, the scarecrow represents someone living in the dark. Locked into the recesses and limitations of his own mind. Even though he seems to have gained knowledge at the end of the movie, he was still in the dark because it wasn't the necessary wisdom to live in this life and the next. For that he needs not just words...he needs "THE WORD."

Let's take a moment and take a closer look at our Scripture from Christmas Eve, which has become our key passage for the year. You read it again this morning as the Call to Worship:

¹In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He existed in the beginning with God. ³God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. ⁴The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.

John 1:1-5 (NLT)

As I look at the beginning of the Bible, the beginning of the creation story, I note that it starts out the same way the Gospel of John starts..."In the beginning." John even talks about the creation story in his Gospel as you look at verse 3. Some may say that is where the comparison ends but they would be wrong. In Genesis we are told about the six days of creation and we are told that God did it all through speaking. God used words to bring everything into existence. Now in John we are told that it wasn't just words he used, but it was "THE WORD" with a capital W. It was Jesus. We are told that he was present at the creation and God used him to make it happen. He tells us that all life comes from this Word...comes from Jesus. In Genesis we are told God

extinguished the darkness by calling forth the light and here in John we find out that Jesus' was that light! We know that his earthly life, death, and resurrection brought the light that cannot be extinguished but is eternal.

III - TEXT:

It's that message of Salvation that the prophet Isaiah was talking about in this morning's text. To understand it you have to go back two chapters. In Chapter 53 we see what's called "The Suffering Servant" passage which foretold the crucifixion and sacrifice of God's Son for our sins. Then in chapter 54 we see that our faith family sprang forth from that sacrifice. Then in Chapter 55 we are given an invitation to join that family of God...we are given an invitation to Salvation.

In verses 6 & 7 we see a call to repentance:

⁶Seek the LORD while you can find him. Call on him now while he is near. ⁷Let the wicked change their ways and banish the very thought of doing wrong. Let them turn to the LORD that he may have mercy on them. Yes, turn to our God, for he will forgive generously.

And then the prophet gives us a substantiation of that call...Tells us the Wisdom and Word of God is far superior to ours and is to be believed.

Isaiah 55:8-11 (NLT)

⁸"My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts," says the LORD. "And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. ⁹For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts. ¹⁰"The rain and snow come down from the heavens and stay on the ground to water the earth. They cause the grain to grow, producing seed for the farmer and bread for the hungry. ¹¹It is the same with my word. I send it out, and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it.

God's ways are governed by his righteousness so his words accomplish a moral purpose that fits in to his being. God's ways and words are there for the reclaiming of sinners from the error and wickedness of their ways.

No matter how smart you think you are...no matter how many diplomas you have...no matter how many books you have read, you will never come close to the wisdom and understanding of God.

Luckily for us, God puts it in language we can understand. He says that his words are efficient and accomplish his purpose. He doesn't need a college professor or text book to explain, very simply and succinctly, that his words are like the rain and the snow. They exist to water the earth and cause things to grow so that we can have food.

In that same way his words are given to us so that Salvation can happen in our lives. His words plant the seed in us, it waters that seed, it fertilizes that seed, and if we are listening it grows and matures into our faith and our Salvation.

It's God's Word - not philosophy or fancy thoughts - that produces fruit...produces Salvation.

IV - KNOWLEDGE VS. WISDOM:

I have nothing against education. I've gone to school. I've studied in secondary education. I've set through endless lectures and seminars to learn in my previous profession and this one. At any given time I'm actively reading one or two magazines, papers, and books. There is nothing wrong with knowledge but we have to remember that knowledge is not wisdom. Knowledge does not get you or anyone else to heaven. Knowledge is from man...wisdom is from God. Knowledge is from "A" book. Wisdom is from "THE" book. Knowledge may tell you about life...wisdom tells you how to live life.

We need to seek God's wisdom instead of our own:

- No diploma will bring you contentment
- No degree will make you smart enough for heaven
- No encyclopedia can teach you all you need to know
- Google isn't infallible
- No classroom can give you Salvation

Only the Bible...the book with God's wisdom can give you all the right answers. Can teach you how to live not only in this life but the next as well. John Wesley said "I am a man of one book" and that book was the Bible. He believed that everything anyone needed to know for Salvation was in this book.

V - LIGHT:

I was amazed as I worked on this message about a revelation I never realized until now. I love to read and wish I had a lot more time to do so. I wasn't always that way. I went through grade school doing the usual "See Spot Run" stuff but did just what I had to do. Then in the 6th grade I had to read a book by C.S. Lewis titled "The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe" and it turned on my need to read and I've never turned back. It just dawned on me that that book was written by a renowned Christian and was about the story of Salvation. I started reading because I was exposed to the light of Jesus. I had started my journey to wisdom.

Oh teachers...there's more than one way to preach!

As we continue to look at extinguishing the darkness in our community, we must always remember to do it with wisdom...not just facts and reports. We have to remember that it is "THE WORD" that brings the light. That it is Jesus the Christ who extinguishes and defeats the darkness in the lives of people. Our job is to spread that light by preaching...teaching...and living the Word of God. It is our calling to fill people with the Light...not straw. AMEN