

Bucyrus United Methodist Church

Sunday, May 31, 2020

Youth Sunday- Sheba

### Christianity is More Than Church

Text: Philippians 4:19

I am sure several of you are familiar with the organization of young life. It is a Christian organization focused mainly on high school youth. It is spread throughout our county and in most of our local high schools. Before all this virus stuff started happening young life would hold a “club night” open to anyone in the county. There they would play games and have a lesson about God. It is basically a county wide youth group. I was never able to make it to these events on the count of my busy schedule. But lucky for me Colonel Crawford (my high school) also did a morning get together called “campaigners” it was pretty much a 15 -20 min lesson every Thursday morning at 7am before school where we would get together with our friends, talk, and eat pop tarts.

Well one day at campaigners we were in small groups, this wasn't uncommon as we did this every so often to make things more interactive, but what we weren't expecting was for the questions to make us think as much as they did. I sat down with a group of friends and we began to look at our question sheet. My friends in my group were all girls, and I had known them all for most of my life. But the answers they had to one certain question really shocked me.

It was a pretty simple straightforward question, “How and when did you become a Christian and accept Christ?” As we went around the table giving our answer almost every girl said, “Well I grew up in a Christian family,” or, “Well I go to church every Sunday.” But that really surprised me. You may be thinking that this is a pretty standard answer and that what they said makes complete sense. But I couldn't wrap my head around it. Didn't they understand that Christianity and accepting Christ is so much more than that? I was the only one in my group that could pinpoint an exact year, day and even moment when I gave my heart to Jesus Christ.

It made me wonder if they understood that having Jesus in your heart doesn't just come from going to church every Sunday. Or having Christian parents. It's about knowing and having a personal relationship with God. It's about accepting Jesus into your heart.

Sure this can happen in church, church is a major way of expanding your relationship with God. But God should be in your heart and on your mind all the time, not just in church. Especially right now, there's no church to go to, no youth group to receive weekly godly lessons at. Since you can't go to church right now, does that mean that you're not a Christian right now? Does that mean that God isn't in your heart right now? **OF COURSE NOT. THAT'S RIDICULOUS!**

God is always with you. He should always be in your heart. And you should always be praising him, not just on Sundays. You should be able to pinpoint that one amazing time in your life where you gave your heart to God. Maybe it was in front of a huge crowd of people and you had a huge celebration afterwards. Maybe it was just you and a friend praying together in a dark room. Maybe this happened on a Chrysalis flight, or at an Emmaus Walk. It could have even been you praying to God, welcoming him into your heart during a praise song at church. For me this happened when I was in the third grade at a summer camp, with my counselor, at midnight,

sitting on a staircase outside the boy's bathroom. It may not have been a huge moment shared by a bunch of people. But to me it was and still is a big deal. That was the night that I realized I don't have to be afraid of everything I might deal with in the years to come, it felt like a huge weight was lifted off of my shoulders. I could feel God's presence entering my life.

Some people are brought to Christ through hymns or prayers, or even just being alone with some one-on-one time with God. Others are brought to God, like I was, by someone else. Whether this be by hearing a pastor's moving sermon, or talking to a friend about God. Being brought to God through other people is what pentecost sunday is all about. The pentecost is about the holy spirit coming upon you to use you to help lead others to Christ. It is pretty much this continuous cycle of someone being led to Christ then that person leading someone else to God and accepting them into their heart. Imagine how many people could be touched by God if every Christian led just one person to Christ, and then they did the same. The world would be a much better place, don't you agree?

In the text Philippians 4:19, the text is inviting you to trust in God to accept him into your heart. It says, "God will meet your every need out of his riches in the glory that is found in Christ Jesus." It says God's got you, he will take care of you, look out for you, anything you need.... All you have to do is accept him into your heart.

This reminds me of the story of the man on the mountain. You may have heard it before. It was told to me by another youth at our church a couple of years ago. This is how it goes:

So there was this man that went out hiking by himself on a mountain. He falls and winds up hanging onto a ledge on the side of the mountain unable to climb back up. And this man is a Christian and has accepted God into his heart and all that good stuff so he prays, "God please save me and get me off this cliff."

Soon after he prayed a man came along, and he just so happened to be carrying a rope, and he sees the guy on the ledge and yells down, "Hey, can I help you, I have a rope?" And the hiker replied, "No, don't worry God will save me." So the man went on his way.

A little time passed then and it was getting kind of hot out so the hiker prayed again, "God please save me and get me off this cliff." And a few minutes later a couple guys walk by with a ladder, they see the hiker and yell down, "Hey can we help you up we have a ladder?" But the hiker still replies. "No, it's okay God will save me." So the men go on their way.

A couple hours pass by and the hiker is now getting really tired. So once again he prays to God and says, "God please save me and get me off this cliff." And that moment a giant helicopter flies in, and the pilot yells to the hiker, "hey get in, I'll get you off this cliff." But the hiker still replies, "Oh no, it's okay God will save me, I'm fine." So the helicopter flew away. And the man remained on the ledge.

Eventually the hiker got too tired and he fell off the ledge and died. However, since he had Jesus in his heart he went to heaven. And when he got there he was talking to God and he said, "God why didn't you save me, I prayed three times and I was waiting for you." And God replied, "Well I sent you three guys and a helicopter!"

You see God wants you to accept Jesus into your heart. But no matter how many Christians he sends into your life, or how clearly he writes the bible verses you read before bed. He can't do it

for you. He can't accept Jesus for you. He wants you to reach out to him so bad. But ultimately that is no one's decision but yours.

Will you reach out and jump into God's wide spread arms and accept his invitation and welcome Jesus into your heart?