

“Back to the Basics Part 1: The Journey; “The Book that Defines Us”

We begin a new sermon series, “Back to the Basics.” This series will be in three parts over the next three months. The first part of the series is called the Journey. People come to their relationship with Christ in a variety of ways, but the journey of deepening our faith is constant. It is such a joy to give Bibles to our third and fourth graders that they can learn how this amazing book defines and helps us on our journey of faith. Pastor Cindy

Things I’d like to remember from today’s sermon: **“The Book that Defines Us”**

Prayer for the Week

*Your word is a light to our feet and a lamp to our path.
Your word is the glue of the universe and wherein the whole creation coheres.
Your word is the address of promise and command by which we live.
Your word has come fleshed among us full of grace and truth.*

For all that, we are more dazzled that your word is carried, uttered, acted on by frail, vulnerable human agents. We ponder and give thanks for those who this day speak your word where it is desperately needed and act your word for newness and peace and justice.

*In thanks for your word, we pray for the courage in the name of the one who emptied himself.
Amen. (Adapted from a prayer by Walter Brueggemann in the book Awed to Heaven, Rooted in Earth)*

Study Guide

Monday, 9/11/17 Proverbs 4: 1-4

The Proverbs are full of “instructions.” The book itself was meant for teaching, particularly children that they might learn the alphabet (not noticeable in English, but in Hebrew some of the poems and statements are done in alphabetical order), the law, and how to behave. The first verse of the first chapter notes they are the proverbs of Solomon, but more likely they have been collected over centuries. “Listen children,” keep the commands, pay attention to what your parents teach you. Those of us with children often think this and say it and our children may or may not pay attention. The scripture though, can guide and direct all of us, regardless of whether or not our parents’ instructions were helpful. *Today, think of how scripture helps define who you are.*

Tuesday, 9/12 /17 Proverbs 4: 5-9

“Get wisdom” is a phrase used over and over again in Proverbs. It isn’t knowledge, but wisdom. The book proverbs doesn’t say knowledge is unimportant, just that wisdom is something that will change one’s life. Get wisdom and get understanding, use the knowledge you have and one’s life will be better for it. Sometimes in our culture, education, wisdom and knowledge are not considered very important. However, in scripture, education, wisdom and knowledge are some of the primary ways we live out our faith in God. *How does wisdom and understanding influence your life and your opinions?*

Wednesday, 9/13/17 Proverbs 4: 10-14

This author promises that the years of life will be many for those who walk the path of wisdom. The one who embraces knowledge and understanding and turns from the path of wickedness and evil will be blessed. I don’t think the author thinks of being blessed in terms of money or success, but in terms of how life is better when lived in relationship with God. *How is your life defined by the Word? How does wisdom define you, your relationships and your faith?*

Thursday, 9/14/17 John 1: 1-5

The beginning verses of John are reminders of the beginning verses in Genesis. In the beginning...God created the heavens and the earth and in the beginning was the Word! The Word is active, creative and is one of the ways in which we understand who Jesus was, is and will be. Jesus brings light, life and love through the words of hope and faith he brings, and through the way he points to the power of God. The Word isn’t just about words, but about the intention of God to make the world into a kingdom of love, justice and peace. Wisdom and knowledge are part of the Word and the gift God gives us. *How do you experience God through the Word as Christ? Do you know life and love because of that Word?*

Friday, 9/15/17 John 1: 14-16

These are some of my favorite verses in the Bible. They help define my life and my understanding of Christ. “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, or the Word made his home among us...and from his fullness we have all received grace upon grace.” The incarnation of God in Jesus defines Christianity through grace and love in a unique way. God defines the Divine through flesh, love, life and grace. I am defined by that fullness and that grace. *How are you defined by this Word of grace and truth?*