

Jesus Then and Now

The Boy Jesus in the Temple

By Rev. P. Michael Williamson January 10th 2010

Introduction: Jesus Then and Now. I really sensed the Lord this week as I have been preparing that he wants us to focus today on the NOW of Jesus then and Now. How does Jesus change our attitude to life and well being now?

Joke: There was a boy who was being very mischievous: no matter how hard and sternly the parents spoke to him they were unable to change his behaviour. In desperation the parents arranged for the boy to see their minister. The boy arrived at the Minister's office and he asked the boy "Where is Jesus?" And the boy was silent.... "Where is Jesus?" The minister asked again and again until the boy fled the office and soon ran into a friend "I have just seen the Minister and they have lost Jesus and they are trying blame me!"

1. LOOSING JESUS

Well in our reading today Mary and Joseph lost Jesus for three days then they found him in the Temple. His first recorded words in scripture relate to his relationship with God: "Didn't you know that I had to be about my Fathers business?" He had just become an adult through his Bar Mitzvah, so he was aware of his new responsibilities, that is why he was discussing matters of God in the temple. Jesus was personally affirming his significant relationship with God the Father.

2. HOW WE LOOSE SIGHT OF JESUS

Now I said that I want to focus on the NOW. How do we loose Jesus or feel that we have lost sight of Jesus?

Mary gives us a clue when she and Joseph found Jesus. They had been "Anxiously searching"

Proverbs 12:25 Message Worry weighs us down; a cheerful word picks us up. Worry is a powerful force. But if you can worry you can pray. Prayer is just turning your worries over to God. Encouragement is a powerful thing that we can do for others: before coming to church each week we could ask "who can I encourage today with a word from the Lord?" PRACTICE BEING an encourager. Phil 4:6 Do not be anxious about anything, (note the command) but in everything, (note the next command) by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving present your requests to God.

There is a very positive consequence to this verse. If you put v.6 into practice then v.7 is the result.

AND the peace of God that transcends/passes all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Two consequences will be

your heart & mind will be defended. Why do they need defending? Our hearts get wounded by words and accusation we feel blamed by others or even by ourselves. Our hearts and minds are the two places we are vulnerable to attack.

Why is Paul so confident? Because he knows who's on his team. JESUS IS ON HIS TEAM!

What else did our gospel passage say? After Jesus had spoken to Mary and Joseph the scriptures said "But they did not understand what he was saying to them." Failure to understand what God is doing in our lives & in the lives of those around us cause us to be anxiously searching in all the wrong places for Jesus.

What else happens to us in life to defeat us?

We get overwhelmed by work by school by circumstances, and events in our lives. By putting on too much weight at Christmas that we have to get off in January.

We are sooooo busy we forget to pray we forget to lay down the burdens of the day at the foot of the cross. We are afraid

We fear failure, we fear being condemned by others. We feel insecure in our significant relationships, in our marriages, etc etc

The list could go on and on....

Regula last week used Psalm 27:1 with the children and it struck me that we need to hear that verse for our lives as well, actually we need to embrace the whole psalm. How does Ps 27 help us live NOW!

3. HOW TO STRENGTHEN FAITH

i. The Lord is...

The Lord is my light and my strength – whom shall I fear? What is the answer to this first question Nothing! I will fear nothing! FEAR has no place in our lives it is from the enemy. The Lord clearly states in PS.23v4 FEAR NO EVIL. How clear is that? Can you fear some evil is that OK? NO! Fear no evil! Why? Because the Lord is with us

The Lord is the stronghold of my life – of whom shall I be afraid? What is the answer to this second question No one! I will be afraid of nothing! WHY? BECAUSE "THE LORD IS WITH ME."

2 When evil men advance against me to devour my flesh, when my enemies and my foes attack me, they will stumble and fall. WHY? Because God is with me! He is my defender
V. 2 & 3 MESSAGE is REALLY NEAT.

2 When vandal hordes ride down ready to eat me alive, Those bullies and toughs fall flat on their faces. 3 When besieged, I'm calm as a baby. When all hell breaks loose, I'm collected and cool. The NIV ends v.3 with even then will I be confident. Note it is not confidence in ourselves but confidence in God!

ii. The best thing to ask God

4 One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple. The securest place to be is in God's presence and close to him. It reaffirms our security can only be found in God.

What do we need to do when we sense Jesus is far off or out of reach V.7 HAS SOME GUIDANCE

7 Hear my voice when I call, O LORD; be merciful to me and answer me.

When we call out to Jesus we often receive a prompting from the HS to do something & v 8 & 9 gives an example.

8 My heart says of you, "Seek his face!" Your face, LORD, I will seek. 9 Do not hide your face from me, do not turn your servant away in anger; you have been my helper. Do not reject me or forsake me, O God my Savior. God's constant love will always sustain us and help us even when others turn against us even those who are closest to us.

10 Though my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will receive me.

iii. Confidence in God

11 Teach me your way, O LORD; lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors.

We have to keep learning from the Lord and express our confidence in him. WHY? Because we are hard pressed on every side and many things in life come against us.

Even though all these things come against us when we FOCUS ON GOD we know where are strength comes from. PSALM 28:7 "The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him and I am helped.

Back in PS. 27 The Psalmist comes to some confident conclusions.

13 I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.

FAITH is not about pie in the sky when you die stuff. Faith is about living life now it is about life in the LAND OF THE LIVING –this is about fullness of life NOW! With God being our helper here and now!

ONE LAST THING.....

iv. Be patient

14 Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.

WAIT COULD BE THE HARDEST THING WE HAVE TO DO. DON'T RUSH AHEAD, DON'T BE IN HURRY BUT TRUST THAT GOD WILL GIVE YOU WHAT YOU NEED FOR EACH DAY

When you loose sight of Jesus quickly re-establish contact: Read a scripture, pray with a friend. Remind yourself of one of God's promises.

Fear not for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are mine. Isaiah 43:1b

"Draw close to God and he will draw close to you." God always keeps his promises.

Be confident in God alone.

Be confident in Jesus that he will walk with you in life talk to him and share your thoughts, concerns, and troubles with him and listen to what he might say to you.

And finally be patient

HAVE PEOPLE IN YOUR HOME GROUP PRAY FOR YOUR SITUATION. I ASKED MY HOME GROUP TO PRAY FOR MY SERMONS THIS WEEK AND NEXT. SHARING OUR CONCERNS IS STRENGTH NOT WEAKNESS

So be patient with yourself and with God, remember he is faithful.

PRAYER: I refuse, O God, to live fearfully or cautiously. I name my fears one by one and turn them over to you, I find my fears simply trivial when set alongside your amazing majesty. With my head lifted to you I will choose to live in the light and love of your presence Jesus and through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Psalm 27 A David Psalm Message

1 Light, space, zest— that's God! So, with him on my side I'm fearless, afraid of no one and nothing.

2 When vandal hordes ride down ready to eat me alive, Those bullies and toughs fall flat on their faces.

3 When besieged, I'm calm as a baby. When all hell breaks loose, I'm collected and cool.

4 I'm asking God for one thing, only one thing: To live with him in his house my whole life long. I'll contemplate his beauty; I'll study at his feet. 5 That's the only quiet, secure place in a noisy world, The perfect getaway, far from the buzz of traffic.

6 God holds me head and shoulders above all who try to pull me down. I'm headed for his place to offer anthems that will raise the roof! Already I'm singing God-songs; I'm making music to God.

7-9 Listen, God, I'm calling at the top of my lungs: "Be good to me! Answer me!" When my heart whispered, "Seek God," my whole being replied, "I'm seeking him!" Don't hide from me now!

9-10 You've always been right there for me; don't turn your back on me now. Don't throw me out, don't abandon me; you've always kept the door open. My father and mother walked out and left me, but God took me in.

11-12 Point me down your highway, God; direct me along a well-lighted street; show my enemies whose side you're on. Don't throw me to the dogs, those liars who are out to get me, filling the air with their threats.

13-14 I'm sure now I'll see God's goodness in the exuberant earth. Stay with God! Take heart. Don't quit. I'll say it again: Stay with God.

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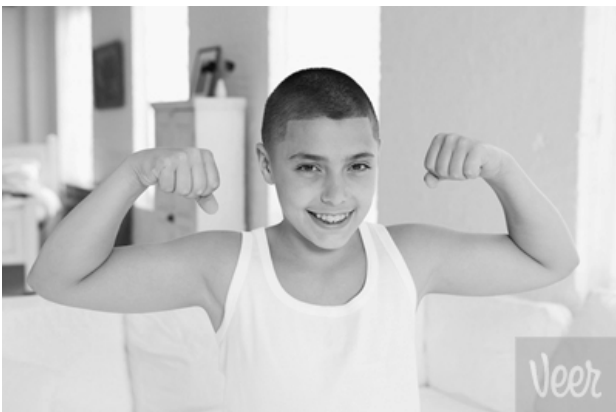
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