

Washington church of Christ

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washingtonnjchurchofchrist.com

Order of Services

Sunday, November 4, 2012

Song Leader	David Osinski
Prayer	Bob Celentano
Preaching	Bob James
Lord's Supper	
Prayer for the Bread	Bill Duryea
Prayer for the Cup	Glenn Montgomery
Prayer for the Collection	Lee Redd
Assisting at the Table	Bob Wydro
Closing Prayer	Derald Sanchez
Announcements	Brian Jeffries

Sunday, November 11, 2012

Song Leader	Tom Dolan
Prayer	Scott Thomas
Preaching	Bob James
Lord's Supper	
Prayer for the Bread	Lee Redd
Prayer for the Cup	Matt Grimaldi
Prayer for the Collection	Bob Wydro
Assisting at the Table	Bob DeGrado
Closing Prayer	Bob Celentano
Announcements	Brian Jeffries

Schedule of Weekly Services

Sunday Morning Bible Classes	9:30 am
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 am
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00 pm
Wednesday Evening Bible Classes	7:30 pm

The Washington Messenger

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A Response to Discouragement ...

Discouragement is truly a devastating experience. A national news magazine once labeled discouragement "the social disease of the 1980s in America." The article went on to describe how the disillusioned 1960s college generation became the "big chill" generation of the 1980s. One of its quote was that "listlessness, despair, and resignation crippled people all across the country in a wave of chronic cynicism."

We all experience discouragement from time to time ... and like most every other undesirable experience of this earthly life, it is no respecter of person. The Bible's account of Elijah's actions in 1 Kings 19 reveal that even a faithful and seemingly fearless servant of God can experience discouragement!

Discouragement has a way of selectively focusing on certain facts from life and conveniently overlooking others. As Elijah uttered his lonely complaint about being the only faithful one left, he forgot about the great multitudes at Carmel who acknowledged that Yahweh was God. He forgot about the one hundred prophets protected by courageous Obadiah. Someone once said that "despair is always color-blind ... it can only see the dark tints."

Of the several theophanies in the Old Testament, God's appearance to Elijah is among the most famous. God sent the wind, earthquake, and fire, but His presence was not found in these spectacular demonstrations of destruction. Instead, it was in the "still small voice" that followed them. In other translations this phrase is rendered "a gentle, little breeze," "a sound of thin silence," or "a light whisper."

The message of this theophany seems to be that Elijah should not always expect God to appear in such spectacular manifestations as wind, earthquake, and fire. God also reveals Himself in clear, intelligible communication.

We live in a day and age where "extreme" is the norm ... it seems that for something to be recognized it must present itself, or be done, in a grandiose fashion.

As Christians, we need to be careful that we don't miss the subtle, yet definite, evidences of God in the ways He manifests Himself in our lives, and in the world.

Elijah seemingly needed to restore his faith in God, his faith in himself, and his faith in others. This experience in the wilderness addressed all three. God was still there, as powerful and loving as ever. Elijah could still trust Him. He could believe in himself because he was still important to God. There was work for him to do. His faith in others was renewed when God reminded him that he was not alone in the battle after all. There were the prophets in the caves ... there was brave Obadiah. There were the multitudes who proclaimed their renewed faith at Carmel, and, he was told in 1Kings 19:18 ...

Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and all whose mouths have not kissed him." (1 Kings 19:18 NIV)

I can just picture Elijah, in reverence and humility, wrap his mantle about his face, bow his head, and return to his cave. He had learned the lesson.

The New Testament has a great deal to say about discouragement, fainting, falling away, and losing heart. Even the apostle Paul had to struggle with Elijah's malady himself. He mentions this ...

"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. ... Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day." (2 Corinthians 4:7, 16 NKJV)

Paul overcame discouragement and discovered strength for endurance by becoming immersed in his work for Christ. He could not give up or disengage, because his task was too important. Like Nehemiah building his wall around Jerusalem, Paul could say, *"I'm doing a great work, I cannot come down."* (Nehemiah 6:3). It was the significance of his task that kept Paul traveling and preaching in spite of persecution and disheartening opposition. In this same way, Elijah was aroused out of his despair by being given another important task by God. That significant task helped him overcome his negative mood.

The LORD said to him...

Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. (1 Kings 19:15 NIV)

On Horeb's mountain, God turned Elijah's eyes away from his own problem and refocused them on others. The prophet needed to begin thinking about the faithful remnant who had not bowed the knee to Baal; he needed to be concerned with Hazael, Jehu, and Elisha, who were waiting for his prophetic word. The vision of need injected the prophet with new enthusiasm for the task. Does this not give credence to the axiom, "a good way to help ourselves is to help others"?

I think though, that the ultimate weapon against discouragement was presented by Paul in the proclamation of his certainty of God's power in his life...

Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:16-18 NKJV)

Power to overcome discouragement comes ultimately from the presence of the Holy Spirit within a Christian's life, reinforcing that life and enabling it to overcome anything. When we focus on transitory circumstances, we will sink like Peter did when he took his eyes off of Jesus and began to look at the waves. But when one's eyes are focused on the Jesus Christ, there is courage to see it through.

For a while at least, Elijah had forgotten the eternal and had focused his vision on the discouraging circumstances surrounding him. No wonder he was down. But when God revealed Himself in the power and stillness of His presence, Elijah focused his perspective on Him and his crippling wave of depression passed.

The lesson to us is this ...

But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. (1 Corinthians 15:57-58 NKJV)

... Bob James

Our Prayer List...

- ⤴ Donna Banghart ... Georgia DeLorenzo ... Glenn Montgomery's father ... Mary Celentano ... Linda Davis of the church at West Point ... our young people here at Washington ... our young people away at college ... our men and women in military service ... leaders of our nation and the upcoming election ... leaders of our congregation ... our congregation ... those impacted by the hurricane.

"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him." (1 John 5:14-15 NIV)

Coming Events - Home & Away...

- ⤴ Our last scheduled Pot-Luck of the season has been cancelled due to the storm and many being without power.
- ⤴ The date for the Gospel Lecture Series at the Bethlehem congregation have been changed due to this past week's storm. The new date is November 9th through 11th. A flyer with additional detail is on the Bulletin Board.

Items of Note...

- ⤴ This past week we received messages on our website from members of the Roanridge church of Christ in Kansas City, MO, and from the church in Mt Pleasant, TN, asking how we fared during the storm and offering assistance. Please remember these congregations in our prayers for their expression of concern and care.
- ⤴ We are continuing our work to complete our new two year Bible School Curriculum based on Bob and Sandra Waldron's *17 time Periods of the Bible*. All teachers are asked to review the Teachers Roster in the foyer and sign-up for the class and period you would like teach.
- ⤴ Our new Washington church of Christ website has launched and is now online at www.washingtonnjchurchofchrist.com. We also encourage each member to register for access to the "members" section. Each week additional content will be added to the site ... and as always, please feel free to give me your suggestions and or questions ... Bob James
- ⤴ Though it's still a few months away, we are planning our Spring 2013 Gospel Meeting with Tommy Peeler from FC. We are currently targeting the week of March 10th, so please plan your 2013 spring vacations and travels around that date if at all possible.