

MONDAY 4.4.22 – MATTHEW 5:10-12

Sticks and stones... we remember the saying from our childhood. Physical things can harm us, but words... words will never hurt us. As we grow older, we find this isn't exactly the case. Words can sting and stick with us as we carry them in our heart. People can be hurtful when they don't understand or agree with what they encounter. This can certainly be the case for us as Christians, those called to light up the world with the Good News.

As humanity grows dim, the Light of the World becomes more offensive to those who do not believe. Some will lash out against it. What a burden... and yet what a gift! Oh, to suffer on this earth as our Lord suffered! Remember, as we are insulted and persecuted for carrying the Sword of the Spirit, we are following His example... looking more like Him... and the hardship we experience pales in comparison to the glory and reward awaiting us in heaven.

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

TUESDAY 4.5.22 – 1 PETER 3:13-17

We in the North American church may not face outright suffering from persecution, but we see a range of opposition, from snide remarks all the way to organized actions to suppress Christian witness...Furthermore, some of us adopt an arrogant tone with unbelievers in a way that is unbecoming of those who claim to be followers of Christ. Therefore, we need to listen to Peter's exhortation here, which echoes other texts:

- ◆ Proverbs 25:22 reveals how doing good to those who harm us "will heap burning coals on his head"
- ◆ Isaiah 8:12-13 cautions us to fear and dread the Lord alone, not our cultural circumstances
- ◆ Jesus reminds us in Matthew 5:10-12 that we are blessed when we suffer all forms of persecution.

We must remain steadfast, no matter what. Peter exhorts all Christ followers to do two things: eagerly do good, readily represent. Both are crucial, because "By doing what is good in the world, they have an opportunity to silence their critics.

And when questioned, they are to explain respectfully why they follow Jesus" (Dennis Edwards). And so, do good and represent, our motivation for both is Jesus himself.

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

WEDNESDAY 4.6.22 – ACTS 4:23-5:11

A wealthy man in the Swiss Alps wanted to give a gift to the townspeople, and he decided to erect a church building. He hired the best craftsmen and purchased the finest materials. When the project was completed, everyone was astonished at its beauty. Then one person noticed a flaw. There were no lights in the building. How could the people worship in the dark? The man explained, "I deliberately designed the church without lights. Every family must bring a lamp to each worship service. When you come and let your light shine, the church will shine. When you aren't here, the church won't shine as it should. I designed the building this way to remind you that everyone in the church is important."

Let your light shine as you gather for worship with fellow believers and focus your attention on Christ.

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

THURSDAY 4.7.22 – PROVERBS 4:23-27

THE HEART SHAPES THE ACTIONS. In the Bible the heart is not primarily the seat of the emotions in contrast to the head as the seat of reason. Rather, the heart is the seat of your deepest trusts, commitments, and loves, from which everything . . . flows. What the heart most loves and trusts, the mind finds reasonable, the emotions find desirable, and the will finds doable. How do you guard your heart? The passage hints that, though ultimately the heart is the central control, our words, eyes, and feet can influence the heart. If we gaze

longingly enough at an object, it may capture our heart through the imagination (as when Achan desired and finally stole the treasure in Joshua 7). If we speak bitterly against someone, we can sour our heart toward them. The best way to guard your heart for wisdom is worship, in which the mouth, the mind, the imagination, and even the body are all oriented to God. Is there some way in which you are failing to guard your heart right now? Are there things you are seeing or doing that may be moving your heart away from God?

PRAYER: Lord, help me to guard my heart. Just as I don't want to digest or take bad things into my body, give me the wisdom and self-control not to allow toxic images and beliefs into my heart through my imagination and thoughts. Amen.

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

FRIDAY 4.8.22 – PSALM 86:11-12

AN UNDIVIDED HEART. David asks for an "undivided heart" (verse 11). A divided heart can have many forms. There is the insincere heart, in which what is said out loud is not matched by the inner attitude (Psalm 12:1). There is the irresolute heart, which cannot fully commit itself (James 1:6-8). Even hearts regenerated by the Spirit and loving God retain much of their older willful resentment of his authority (Romans 7:15-25). David's goal is not psychological healing for its own sake but to "fear" God—to give him joyful, awe-filled love with his entire being. The way to this new heart is not introspection but deliberate worship (vs. 12). "I will praise you," he says.

PRAYER: Lord, I praise you that your praise also is my greatest good. Now, with all the sincerity I can muster, I give myself to you, "for my heart's desire unto thine is bent: I aspire to a full consent." Amen.

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

GROUP OPPORTUNITIES

SUNDAY MORNINGS – 9:40AM*

- Kids** CHILDREN'S CHURCH (Ages 4 – 4th Grade)
LOCATION: Kid's Wing on the Lower Level
*available during 9:40 **AND** 11:00 services
- NURSERY (through Age 3)
LOCATION: Kid's Wing on the Lower Level
available during the 9:40 service
- Youth** YOUTH GROUP (5th – 12th Grade)
LOCATION: Youth Activity Center (across street)
- Adults** EXPLORE THE BIBLE – Room B8-10 (Lower Level)
1 and 2 Thessalonians with Jim Kline
- MASTERWORK – Room B11 (Lower Level)
"All Of Grace" with Lane Kemler (3.6–4.10)
"Absolute Surrender" with Jack Devlin (4.17–5.29)
- PERSON OF INTEREST – Room B1-2 (Lower Level)
with Steven Miller
- *MEMBERSHIP CLASS – Room B11 (Lower Level)
with Executive Pastor - Bob Lehman (11:00am)

SUNDAY EVENINGS – 6:00PM

- Kids** KID'S CLUB (Ages 4 – 4th Grade)
LOCATION: Kid's Wing on the Lower Level
CURRENT SERIES: The Beatitudes
- Youth** YOUTH GROUP (5th – 12th Grade)
LOCATION: Youth Activity Center (across street)
5th–8th Grade meet downstairs
9th–12th Grade meet upstairs
- Adults** DIVE DEEP WITH DOUG
LOCATION: Worship Center
CURRENT SERIES: Israel Tour
- BIG IDEA – SMALL GROUP(S)
LOCATION: Room B8-10 (Lower Level)
Group discussion following the scriptures and themes of Sunday morning's message. Jump in any time as we go through the Book of ACTS together.

TO SIGN UP OR REQUEST MORE INFORMATION FOR ANY GROUPS OR CLASSES,
PLEASE USE THE CONNECT CARD IN YOUR BULLETIN. THANK YOU!

SERMON NOTES

Acts 4:1-22

How should you as a Christian respond to hostility?

1. Understand the _____ for hostility (vv 1-4)

Why are the religious leaders so upset? It isn't so much that Peter and John heal the man. It's that they use it as an opportunity to tell others about Jesus.

- John 16:2; 2 Corinthians 4:4

2. Be _____, but don't back away from sharing the truth (vv 5-12)

- Romans 12:21

Peter and John don't respond with hostility, but they don't let the hostility stop them. They continue to speak the truth. They tell the religious leaders that Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah, and that it's only by faith in Him that a person will have sins forgiven and eternal life.

3. Demonstrate Christ by _____ and _____ (vv 13-22)

The religious leaders know that Peter and John have been with Jesus because they sound like Jesus, and they act like Jesus. Peter and John talk about Christ, and they live in a way that points to Christ.

There is nothing that the religious leaders can do to stop Peter and John from sharing the gospel.

 Edifying and Equipping Every Day
TAKING OUR NEXT STEP TOGETHER IN THE WORD



April 3rd – 8th

INTRODUCTION:

Part of our purpose and strategy as a church is to Edify and Equip every believer. We desire to see every person take their next step with God, both individually as well as with families and small groups (E2 Communities). This devotional is to aid us in just that. We invite you to join us in daily devotion.

OVERVIEW:

This week's readings and will help us take our next step in our teaching series on the book of Acts. Monday's and Tuesday's readings will build on today's message. Wednesday's through Friday's devotions will help prepare as we continue our new sub-series in Acts: STEADFASTNESS. Next week, we will look at Steadfastness in Focus in Acts 4 and 5.

KEY/MEMORY VERSE:

"Jesus is 'the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.' Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."

–ACTS 4:11-12