

Diligently Seeking God (Hebrews 11:6)

PRAIRIE VILLAGE CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Scripture of the Week



1 Timothy 1:3-5

“As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith. But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.”

The goal of the whole Bible is really pretty simple – God wants us to have sincere faith in Him. God wants us to love Him enough to believe what He tells us to believe and do what He tells us to do. The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy about some people who taught strange doctrines, myths, and mere speculations. They did not possess a sincere faith in God, and they were not furthering His causes by teaching their foolishness. If we really love God, we must get serious about serving Him truthfully, sincerely and faithfully. The Parable of the Sower in Mark 4:1-20 teaches us that we must have a good heart in order to receive God’s word and to develop a sincere faith. Paul shows us in 1 Timothy 1:5

that the vital link between a pure heart and a sincere faith is a good conscience. Your good conscience is the mechanism God has blessed you with to apply His good word to your good heart. God has blessed each of us with a conscience to be a moral compass of sorts. God designed our conscience to point us in the direction of righteousness. It accuses us when we do what we think is wrong, and commends us when we do things we think are right (Romans 2:14-16). Your conscience alone isn’t a reliable enough guide to steer you in the right direction. But when your conscience is driven by God, through the truths He teaches you in the Bible, it can lead you all the way to heaven!

A Good Conscience

The Greek word for “conscience” in the New Testament is “*suneidesis*”. It literally means “a knowing with oneself”. Maybe you’ve heard of it described as an “inner voice” that tells you when you should or shouldn’t do or think or say a certain thing. Your conscience is a “moral consciousness” given to you by God to help you do the right things. While your conscience is a wonderful gift, unfortunately it can lead you astray if you aren’t careful. The Apostle Paul said often that he served God with all good conscience (Acts 23:1; 24:15-16). The problem is, his conscience told him he was serving God well, even when he was persecuting Christians and trying with all his might to destroy Christ’s

church. Paul said in Acts 26:9-11, “*So then, I thought to myself that I had to do many things hostile to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them. And as I punished them often in all the synagogues, I tried to force them to blaspheme; and being furiously enraged at them, I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities.*” Paul thought within himself that he had to do these things, but his conscience obviously misguided him. Sometimes things can go wrong with a person’s conscience. The Bible says

that some people have weak consciences (1 Corinthians 8:12), defiled consciences (Titus 1:15), and seared consciences (1 Timothy 4:2). Our conscience is designed to sting us when we do wrong, but we can sin so often that our hearts can become calloused and unable to feel the sting of shame and guilt associated with sin. The only way to make your conscience pure is with the blood of Christ (Hebrews 9:14) as applied in the waters of baptism (1 Peter 3:21). And the keys to maintaining a good conscience are to (1) always try to do what God tells you in the Bible. And (2) when you do sin, don’t numb yourself to the pain your conscience inflicts. That pain will help you repent of the sins that God hates.

Please Come Visit Us At...

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Times of Services

Sunday Morning Bible Study.....9:30
Sunday Morning Worship Service.....10:30
Sunday Evening Worship Service.....6:30
Wednesday Evening Bible Study.....7:30



Satan’s Plans and Schemes

The Parable of the Sower (Mark 4:1-20) is a parable that we need no speculation concerning the meaning, because Jesus gave us the story’s exact interpretation. The seed in the story represents the word of God, and the different types of soils represent the different conditions of heart common to mankind. One of the greatest benefits of this parable is that, in it, Jesus taught us the exact methods Satan uses to keep the word of God from saving us eternally and helping us bear fruit for Him. 2 Corinthians 2:11 tells us that we aren’t ignorant of Satan’s schemes. There is really no reason to be unaware of the devil’s tricks because our Lord spelled them all out for us right here in this remarkable parable. Satan’s initial line of attack is to just keep the word from getting into our hearts in the first

place. The soil on the roadside is hard and compacted and the seed just sits on top of it for the birds to come and peck away at it. If life can harden our hearts enough, like the trampled dirt of a well-beaten path, the word of God will never sink in and have an impact on us. If our heart is soft enough for the word to get in there, Satan’s next tactic is to keep it from getting in too deeply. The rocky soil is actually a thin layer of dirt over a shelf of rock. The soil is too shallow to form a healthy root system that can support and hydrate the plant. When the stalk shoots up and the sun comes out, the heat just scorches it to death. Likewise, when a person hears the word and eagerly obeys it, sometimes he’s not ready when Satan turns up the heat. In times of persecution and affliction (or pressure), he

falls away because his faith is shallow and not firmly rooted in the word of God. Even when the word imbeds deeply within our hearts, Satan still isn’t ready to abandon his plan to take us to hell. The third soil had weeds in it as well as good seed. They subsequently grew up together and the thorns choked out the good plants. That’s what happens when we accept the word of truth, but don’t weed out the worries and lusts that can choke the life out of our faith. The great news is that God is much more powerful than Satan, and He has a plan as well. God’s plan is to save your soul and take you to heaven, but the soil of your heart must be good and receptive to His word. Allow God’s word to penetrate and soften your heart, set its roots deeply and eradicate the thorns of lust and worry.

GOSPEL MEETING AUGUST 15-17 WITH GERRY SANDUSKY — Please mark your calendars and make early plans to attend every day of this short, three day meeting with Gerry Sandusky of Madison Indiana. Brother Gerry has entitled this series of studies, “Standing at the Door of the Day of Eternity”. Each lesson will be taken from the New Testament book of 1 Thessalonians, and the goal of this meeting will be to motivate each one of us to live every day of our lives on planet earth as if it might be our last.