

TRANSCRIPT 07-18-21 PASTOR DAVE'S SERMON-THE COMPASSION OF JESUS

>> Pastor Dave: GRACE AND PEACE TO YOU FROM GOD OUR FATHER AND OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST.

LET'S PRAY.

HEAVENLY FATHER, YOU HAVE CALLED US UNTO JOURNEYS OF WHICH WE CANNOT SEE THE END OF, ON PATHWAYS YET UNTRODDEN, AND THROUGH PERILS YET UNKNOWN.

GRANT US FAITH TO GO FORWARD WITH GOOD COURAGE, NOT KNOWING WHERE WE GO, BUT TRUSTING THAT YOUR HAND WILL GUIDE US AND YOUR LOVE WILL SUSTAIN US.

FOR INTO YOUR HANDS, O LORD, WE COMMEND ALL THAT WE ARE, OUR BODIES, OUR SOULS, AND ALL THINGS.

AMEN.

ANYBODY HERE FAMILIAR WITH MURPHY'S LAW?

ANYTHING THAT CAN GO WRONG WILL GO WRONG.

HAVE YOU EVER HAD A DAY LIKE THAT?

OR WEEK LIKE THAT?

MONTH LIKE THAT?

LIFE LIKE THAT?

JESUS HAD EXPERIENCED THAT VERY SAME THING.

AND OUR GOSPEL OPENS UP, JESUS HAD JUST FOUND OUT THAT HIS COUSIN, JOHN THE BAPTIZER, HAD BEEN MURDERED BY HAROD, BY CHOPPING OFF HIS HEAD.

BAD NEWS.

JESUS HAD SENT HIS DISCIPLES OUT ON A MISSION TRIP.

THEY WERE EXHAUSTED.

THEY HAD RETURNED SUCCESSFUL, FIRED UP BUT TIRED.

AND THEY WERE LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO REST.

BUT THE BIBLE TELLS US THAT THE CROWDS THAT GATHERED WERE SO TIGHT THAT THEY DIDN'T EVEN HAVE A CHANCE TO EAT.

SO JESUS SAID, I KNOW WHAT WE'LL DO; WE'LL GET AWAY TO A DESOLATE PLACE.

WE'LL GO TO A PLACE WHERE NO ONE WILL BE.

WE CAN BE ALL BY OURSELVES, AND WE'LL BE ABLE TO REST AND RESTORE OURSELVES.

THAT WAS THE PLAN.

THEY WERE TIRED.

THEY DESERVED IT.

THEY GET IN A BOAT, AND THEY TAKE OFF SIX MILES ACROSS THE SEA OF GALILEE.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT KIND OF EYESIGHT THESE PEOPLE ON THE SHORE HAD, BUT IT WAS PRETTY GOOD.

I DON'T KNOW -- THERE WAS LIKE A PILLAR OF FIRE OR A CLOUD THAT WENT OVER THEM, LIKE THE ISRAELITES WANDERING THROUGH THE WILDERNESS FOR 40 YEARS -- I DON'T KNOW HOW THEY KNEW, BUT THEY KNEW THAT JESUS WAS GOING SOMEWHERE, SO THEY RAN AHEAD OF HIM, BRINGING ALL OF THEIR SICK, BRINGING ALL OF THEIR PEOPLE THAT NEEDED JESUS' HEALING SO THEY COULD CROWD AROUND HIM. AND WHEN JESUS LANDED ON THE OTHER SHORE, GUESS WHAT?

THAT DESOLATE PLACE WAS NOW FILLED WITH 5,000 MEN, PLUS WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

HAVE YOU EVER HEARD THE EXPRESSION: BE CAREFUL ABOUT HALT.

DON'T GET TOO HUNGRY, ANGRY, LONELY, OR TIRED.

I WOULD SAY JESUS PROBABLY SATISFIED ALL OF THOSE THINGS.

HE WAS HUNGRY.

THEY HAD TO LEAVE BECAUSE THEY COULDN'T EAT.

HE WAS PROBABLY A LITTLE BIT -- I MEAN, THINK ABOUT IT, YOU HAVE THIS TERRIBLE DAY AT WORK.

COMING HOME, YOU'RE STUCK IN TRAFFIC BECAUSE SOMEBODY GOT IN A WRECK, AND THEY'RE OKAY, BUT IT JUST MADE A BIG BACKUP, AND YOU'RE LATE GETTING HOME.

FINALLY YOU GET HOME, YOU'RE HUNGRY.

THEY CALL THAT "HANGRY," BY THE WAY.

SOMETIMES WHEN PEOPLE GET HUNGRY, THEY GET ANGRY: "HANGRY" -- I HAVE A GRANDDAUGHTER LIKE THAT.

ANYWAY, SO YOU GET HOME, AND FINALLY YOU PREPARE YOUR MEAL AND YOU'RE ABOUT READY TO SIT DOWN, AND SOMEONE CALLS AND THEY'RE BROKE DOWN IN THAT SAME AREA THAT THE TRAFFIC WAS ALL BACKED UP, AND YOU'VE GOT TO GO RIGHT BACK INTO THE MIDDLE OF IT.

HOW DO YOU FEEL?

UPSET?

HUNGRY?

ANGRY?

LONELY?

TIRED?

LONELY -- HOW MANY OF YOU KNOW THAT YOU CAN BE LONELY IN THE MIDDLE OF A MILLION PEOPLE AROUND YOU?

IT'S NOT THE AMOUNT OF PEOPLE THAT ARE AROUND YOU; IT'S HOW YOU'RE FEELING IN YOUR VERY SELF.

IT'S HOW YOU'RE FEELING.

JESUS CAME INTO THIS WORLD AS THE SON OF GOD.

THE VERY PEOPLE THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN LOOKING FOR HIM, THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES, THE PEOPLE THAT WERE REPRESENTING GOD'S -- THE PRACTICE OF THE JEWISH RELIGION REJECTED HIM, FOUGHT HIM TOOTH AND NAIL EVERY STEP OF THE WAY, WOULD EVENTUALLY END UP KILLING HIM.

HE FELT LONELY.

WHO DID JESUS HAVE TO GO TALK TO?

HE HAD THE FATHER, THE SAME PERSON WE HAVE WHEN WE FEEL VERY LONELY, TIRED.

HE MUST HAVE BEEN EXHAUSTED.

SO ALL OF THESE THINGS ARE GOING ON IN HIM.

HE PULLS UP TO GET SOME REST, AND HE LOOKS UP AND HERE IS THIS BIG CROWD.

SO WHAT DOES HE DO?

DOES HE START CUSSING AND BREAKING THE OARS?

NO.

THIS IS WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS -- AND IT GIVES US A LITTLE INSIGHT INTO THE MIND OF JESUS.

IT SAYS, "WHEN JESUS LANDED AND SAW A LARGE CROWD, HE HAD COMPASSION ON THEM BECAUSE THEY WERE LIKE SHEEP WITHOUT A SHEPHERD, SO HE BEGAN TO TEACH THEM MANY THINGS."

HE HAD COMPASSION, "SPRIGSOMAI."

THE INTERNAL MOVING OF HIS GUTS THAT CAUSED HIM TO TAKE ACTION.

YOU KNOW THAT EVERY TIME IN THE BIBLE THAT IT SAYS THAT JESUS HAD COMPASSION ON SOMEONE, IT IS FOLLOWED BY AN ACTION.

LET ME READ A FEW OF THEM TO YOU.

FROM MATTHEW 15: "AND JESUS CALLED HIS DISCIPLES TO HIM, I FEEL COMPASSION FOR THE PEOPLE BECAUSE THEY REMAINED WITH ME NOW FOR THREE DAYS AND HAVE HAD NOTHING TO EAT.

I DO NOT WANT TO SEND THEM AWAY HUNGRY, SO HE FED THEM."

MATTHEW 9:36: "SEEING THE PEOPLE, HE FELT COMPASSION FOR THEM BECAUSE THEY WERE DISTRESSED AND DISPIRITED, LIKE SHEEP WITHOUT A SHEPHERD, SO HE HEALED THEM."

HE WENT ASHORE -- IN MATTHEW 14: "HE WENT ASHORE, SAW A LARGE CROWD AND FELT COMPASSION FOR THEM AND HEALED THEIR SICK."

"FOR THE SON OF MAN HAS COME TO SAVE WHICH WAS LOST.

WHAT DO YOU THINK, IF A MAN HAS 100 SHEEP, AND ONE GOES ASTRAY, DOES HE NOT LEAVE THE 99 ON THE MOUNTAINS AND GO SEARCH FOR THE ONE THAT IS STRAYING?

IF IT TURNS OUT THAT HE FINDS IT, TRULY I SAY TO YOU, HE REJOICES OVER IT MORE THAN THE 99 THAT HAVE NOT GONE ASTRAY."

MATTHEW 20:34: "MOVED WITH COMPASSION, JESUS TOUCHED THEIR EYES, AND IMMEDIATELY THEY REGAINED THEIR SIGHT AND FOLLOWED HIM."

AND OUR GOSPEL READING FOR TODAY: "WHEN JESUS WENT ASHORE, HE SAW A LARGE CROWD, HE FELT COMPASSION BECAUSE THEY WERE LIKE SHEEP WITHOUT A SHEPHERD, AND HE BEGAN TO TEACH THEM MANY THINGS."

I'VE GOT A WHOLE LOT MORE.

IT IS ALL THROUGHOUT SCRIPTURE.

THE COMPASSION THAT JESUS HAS FOR PEOPLE, IT IS ALWAYS FOLLOWED BY AN ACTION.

SO JESUS TEACHES THE PEOPLE.

YOU KNOW, IT'S REALLY SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE HOW ARE WE SAVED?

ARE WE SAVED WHEN WE FEED THE HOMELESS WITH PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLY SANDWICHES -- I MEAN, THOSE ARE GOOD THINGS TO DO, BUT IS THERE ANY SALVATION IN THAT?

WHERE IS THE SALVATION?

THE SALVATION IS IN THE GOSPEL.

THE SALVATION IS IN THE WORD OF GOD.

SO JESUS CAME AND TAUGHT.

HE TAUGHT THEM WHAT IT WAS LIKE.

HE CAME PREACHING THE SAME THING THAT JOHN THE BAPTIZER PREACHED.

REPENT, FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS AT HAND.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS IN THE VERY PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST, SO TURN AWAY FROM YOUR SIN AND ACCEPT HIM.

THAT'S THE GOSPEL.

THAT'S THE GOOD NEWS.

"FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHALL NOT PERISH BUT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE."

THAT'S THE GOSPEL.

THE OTHER STUFF IS IMPORTANT, TOO.

AND SOMETIMES WE NEED TO GET A BALANCE BECAUSE JESUS WOULD GO ON THEN TO FEED THEM.

SO IN THE CHURCH, WE NEED TO BALANCE BETWEEN GOOD AND TRUE DOCTRINE AND GOOD AND TRUE SOCIAL SERVICE TO PEOPLE.

ARE YOU FOLLOWING ME HERE NOW?

SOME CHURCHES HAVE GONE TOO FAR TO ONE SIDE, AND SOME CHURCHES HAVE GONE TOO FAR TO OTHER SIDE.

SOME CHURCHES HAVE GONE SO FAR TO THIS SOCIAL JUSTICE AND ACCEPTANCE OF EVERY ONE, THEY HAVE COMPLETELY IGNORED THE HOLINESS OF GOD.

OTHER PEOPLE, ON THE OTHER SIDE, HAVE BEEN SO CAUGHT UP -- ENAMORED IS THE WORD I WAS TRYING TO SAY -- SO ENAMORED WITH THE WORD OF GOD, THAT THEY FORGET THAT THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO BE A LIGHT INTO THE DARKNESS, AND THAT THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO BE A VOICE THAT REACHES OUT TO ALL PEOPLE.

AND THEY JUST KEEP IT FOR THEMSELVES.

SO THERE NEEDS TO BE THIS BALANCE.

THE CHURCHES STRUGGLE WITH THAT HISTORICALLY.

IN REVELATION, JOHN HAD A VISION OF THESE SEVEN CHURCHES WHICH REPRESENT THE COMMUNITIES THAT WERE CHRISTIAN AT THE TIME.

AND THEY SPEAK TO THIS VERY THING.

THE FIRST ONE I WANT TO SHARE WITH YOU IS THE CHURCH THAT VALUED DOCTRINE MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE, THAT'S THE CHURCH TO EPHEBUS.

AND THIS MISSOURI SYNOD, QUITE FRANKLY, HAS BEEN ACCUSED OF FALLING INTO THIS CATEGORY.

I DON'T THINK IT IS TRUE FOR REASONS I'LL GET INTO IN A LITTLE WHILE.

THE ANGEL -- THIS IS CHAPTER 2:1-6: "THE ANGEL OF THE CHURCH IN EPHEBUS WRITES: THESE ARE THE WORDS OF HIM WHO HOLDS THE SEVEN STARS IN HIS RIGHT HAND AND WALKS AMONG THE SEVEN GOLDEN LAMP STANDS."

THOSE ARE THE CHURCHES.

"I KNOW YOUR DEEDS, YOUR HARD WORK, AND YOUR PERSEVERANCE.

I KNOW YOU CANNOT TOLERATE WICKED MEN.

THAT YOU HAVE TESTED THOSE WHO CLAIM TO BE APOSTLES, BUT ARE NOT, AND HAVE FOUND THEM TO BE FALSE.

YOU HAVE PERSEVERED AND HAVE ENDURED HARDSHIPS FOR MY NAME AND HAVE NOT GROWN WEARY.

YET I HOLD THIS AGAINST YOU.

YOU HAVE FORSAKEN YOUR FIRST LOVE.

REMEMBER THE HEIGHT FROM WHICH YOU HAVE FALLEN.

REPENT AND DO THE THINGS YOU DID AT FIRST.

IF YOU DO NOT REPENT, I WILL COME TO YOU AND REMOVE YOUR LAMP STAND FROM ITS PLACE.

BUT YOU HAVE THIS IN YOUR FAVOR: YOU HATE THE PRACTICES OF THE NICOLAITANS, WHICH I ALSO HATE."

SO HERE IS A GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO ARE HOLDING FAST TO THE TRUTH, REJECTING FALSE DOCTRINES BUT ARE LACKING IN LOVE.

TRULY IF WE GRAB A HOLD OF THE TRUTH OF THE WORD OF GOD, IT WILL INSTILL INTO US THIS OTHERNESS, THAT WE WON'T BE SO SELFISH.

WE WILL BE LOOKING TO REACH OUT TO OTHER PEOPLE.

WE WILL NO LONGER JUST BE CONCERNED ABOUT OURSELVES, BUT WE WILL BE CONCERNED ABOUT OTHERS.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST WILL COMPEL US.

WE WON'T EVEN HAVE A CHOICE IN THE MATTER.

BUT THAT'S WHEN WE'RE TOTALLY IN AND WE'RE ALL IN, NOT JUST PUTTING YOUR TOE IN, BUT WHEN WE'RE ALL INTO THE WORD OF GOD, IT WILL CHANGE US.

NOW HERE IS A WORD TO THOSE WHO ARE TEACHING BAD DOCTRINE, FROM REVELATION 2:1 AND 16, AND THIS IS TO THE CHURCH IN PERGAM: "NEVERTHELESS, I HAVE A FEW THINGS AGAINST YOU.

YOU HAVE PEOPLE THERE WHO HOLD TO THE TEACHING OF BALAAM, WHO TAUGHT BALAK TO ENTICE THE ISRAELITES TO SIN, BY EATING FOOD SACRIFICED TO IDOLS AND COMMITTING SEXUAL IMMORALITY.

LIKEWISE, YOU ALSO HAVE THOSE WHO HOLD TO THE TEACHINGS OF THE NICOLAITANS.

REPENT, THEREFORE, OTHERWISE I WILL SOON COME TO YOU AND WILL FIGHT AGAINST THEM WITH THE SWORD OF MY MOUTH."

NOW, THE NICOLAITANS -- YOU'VE HEARD IT TWICE NOW, RIGHT?

THEY ARE PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE THAT YOU CAN BE COMPLETELY SPIRITUAL ON ONE HAND, AND THAT HAS TO DO WITH OUR HEAVENLY EXPERIENCE, BUT IN THE EARTH, WE CAN BE AS SINFUL AS WE WANT TO BE WITHOUT IT AFFECTING OUR SPIRITUALITY.

IT WAS A DUALISM KIND OF A THING, THAT ON THIS EARTH, IT IS ONE THING AND WE CAN BE WHATEVER WE WANT.

AND THEN THERE IS THE SPIRIT, WHICH IS ANOTHER THING.

SO THEY WERE HAVING ONE FOOT IN EACH CAMP.

SO GOD IS CLEARLY CALLING THEM OUT FOR THEIR FALSE DOCTRINE.

OKAY.

SO WHAT DO WE DO?

WE PUT ONE FOOT ON THIS SIDE AND ONE FOOT ON THIS SIDE AND DON'T REALLY MAKE A DECISION EITHER WAY?

GOD HAS A WORD FOR THAT, TOO, IN REVELATION 3, TO THE CHURCH IN LAODICEA, VERSES 14 AND 16: "THESE ARE THE WORDS OF THE GREAT AMEN, THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS, THE RULER OF GOD'S CREATION.

I KNOW YOUR DEEDS, THAT YOU ARE NEITHER HOT NOR COLD.

I WISH YOU WERE EITHER ONE OR THE OTHER.

SO BECAUSE YOU ARE LUKE WARM, NEITHER HOT NOR COLD, I AM ABOUT TO SPIT YOU OUT OF MY MOUTH."

SO GOD DOESN'T HAVE ANY TOLERANCE FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO HAVE IT BOTH WAYS.
SO WE'VE GOT TO HAVE IT ONE WAY OR THE OTHER.
AND THIS IS THE THING THAT HAS CAUSED DIVISION IN MANY, MANY CHURCHES.
LIKE I SAID BEFORE, SOME CHURCHES GET SO INTO THE SOCIAL JUSTICE PART OF IT, THAT THEY
MAKE SALVATION SOMETHING THAT IS UNIVERSAL.
IN THE END, GOD'S LOVE WINS OUT, THAT JESUS DIDN'T DIE FOR -- SUBSTITUTIONALLY TO PAY
THE PRICE FOR YOUR SIN BECAUSE SIN DOESN'T REALLY MATTER TO GOD.
HE JUST LOVES YOU.
THE REASON THAT JESUS WAS CRUCIFIED IS BECAUSE HE BROUGHT IN SUCH A RADICAL VISION
OF SOCIAL JUSTICE THAT THE PEOPLE COULDN'T STAND IT.
SO HE WAS A MARTYR, AN EXAMPLE TO US TO BE ADVOCATES FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE.
NOW, I DON'T KNOW WHERE THEY FIND THAT IN THE BIBLE.
IT'S JUST NOT THERE.
BUT YET THEY BELIEVE IT FIRMLY.
AND BECAUSE THEY GO OFF ON THIS TANGENT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE THAT MEANS MORE THAN
GOD'S HOLY AND UNCHANGING WORD, IT GETS DISTORTED.
SO WE NEED TO CHOOSE, ABOVE EVERYTHING ELSE, THE WORD OF GOD.
AND, YOU KNOW, I'M A LUTHERAN SYNOD BECAUSE I WAS BORN INTO IT.
MY GRANDFATHER WAS A PASTOR.
MY UNCLE WAS A PASTOR.
NOW I'M A PASTOR.
WE'VE GOT SOME GENERATIONS OF THAT GOING ON.
BUT BEFORE I WENT TO THE SEMINARY, I LOOKED AT A WHOLE LOT OF OTHER DIFFERENT
CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS.
I LOOKED AT THE METHODISTS.
I LOOKED AT THE ASSEMBLY OF GOD.
I LOOKED AT CAVALRY CHAPEL.
AND YOU KNOW WHAT I FOUND?
THAT THE MISSOURI SYNOD, WITH ALL OF ITS WARTS, BECAUSE WE'RE HUMANS, TRIES TO
STAY CLOSER TO THE WORD OF GOD THAN ANY OTHER -- THAN ANY OTHER DENOMINATION
OUT THERE.
FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO AREN'T WITH US PERSONALLY IN HERE -- AND I THINK WE HAVE 30
OR 40 PEOPLE THAT WATCH ONLINE -- I WANT TO INCLUDE YOU IN THIS, TOO, BECAUSE YOU
ARE PART OF US.
WE WORSHIP TOGETHER.
WE IDENTIFY.
I'M PRAYING FOR THE DAY THAT YOU CAN JOIN US IN THE SANCTUARY, SO YOU CAN ALSO
RECEIVE THE HOLY COMMUNION.
SO, LET'S GO ON.
I THINK THERE ARE THREE THINGS NOW THAT I WANT TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT, PRACTICAL
LESSONS THAT WE AS THE CHURCH AND AS INDIVIDUALS CAN LEARN FROM THIS FEEDING OF
THE 5,000 PEOPLE.
THE FIRST THING IS: USE WHAT GOD HAS GIVEN YOU.
RIGHT?

REMEMBER LAST WEEK, IN EPHESIANS 1, I TALKED TO YOU ABOUT HOW GOD HAS BLESSED US -- HAS, PAST TENSE -- GOD HAS BLESSED YOU WITH EVERY GIFT OF THE SPIRIT IN THE HEAVENLY REALMS.

DID YOU HEAR WHAT I SAID?

THAT GOD HAS BLESSED YOU WITH EVERY -- HOW MANY?

>> Parish: EVERY.

>> Pastor Dave: EVERY.

EVERY SPIRITUAL GIFT IN THE HEAVENLY REALM.

HE HAS DONE IT.

SO WHEN YOU COME UP AND SAY, YOU KNOW, GOD, I NEED MORE PATIENCE.

FIRST OF ALL, YOU'RE NUTS.

DON'T DO THAT.

DON'T SAY GIVE ME MORE PATIENCE, BECAUSE HE'LL GIVE YOU SOMETHING TO MAKE YOU STRESS OUT TO GIVE YOU MORE PATIENCE.

BUT, REALLY, THE POINT OF IT IS, IS HE HAS ALREADY GIVEN YOU THAT.

HE'S GIVEN YOU EVERY GIFT OF THE SPIRIT.

IF YOU NEED MORE MERCY, HE HAS GIVEN IT TO YOU.

IF YOU NEED MORE FAITH, HE HAS GIVEN IT TO YOU.

YOU ALREADY HAVE IT.

SO USE WHAT YOU HAVE.

SO THESE DISCIPLES, THEY COME TO JESUS AND THEY'RE ALL STRESSED OUT BECAUSE THE PEOPLE ARE GOING TO BE HUNGRY, AND THEY DON'T WANT THEM ON THEIR HANDS.

SO HE SAYS, SEND THEM HOME.

I DON'T KNOW WHERE THEY WERE GOING TO GO, OR IF THEY COULD FEED 5,000 PEOPLE.

BUT JESUS SAYS TO THEM, YOU GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO EAT.

AND INSTEAD OF THINKING ABOUT WHAT THEY HAVE, WHAT DID THEY THINK ABOUT?

WHAT THEY DIDN'T HAVE.

AMEN.

IF ONLY -- IT WOULD TAKE SIX MONTHS OF WAGES -- DO WE REALLY WANT TO COMMIT THAT AMOUNT OF RESOURCES TO GIVING THESE PEOPLE JUST SOMETHING TO EAT TODAY?

AND JESUS SAYS TO THEM, HOW MUCH BREAD DO YOU HAVE?

WELL, I DON'T KNOW.

I DON'T KNOW.

HE GOES, GO AND SEE.

AND SO HE GOES BACK, AND SOME LITTLE BOY HAS FIVE LOAVES OF BREAD, AND HIS MOM PROBABLY PACKED HIS LUNCH, AND HE HAS THESE TWO LITTLE SARDINES, TWO LITTLE FISH, AND THEY BRING IT TO JESUS.

AND JESUS OFFERS A PRAYER.

AND THAT'S THE SECOND THING.

THE FIRST THING IS: USE WHAT GOD HAS GIVEN US.

BECAUSE HOW IS GOD GOING TO GIVE YOU MORE WHEN YOU HAVEN'T USED WHAT HE GAVE YOU ALREADY?

THINK ABOUT IT.

USE WHAT GOD HAS GIVEN YOU.

AND GOD HAS BLESSED YOU IMMENSELY.

THE SECOND THING IS TO COMMIT WHAT YOU HAVE TO GOD'S GLORY.

THE PRAYER THAT JESUS SAID WAS PROBABLY A STANDARD JEWISH PRAYER THAT WENT SOMETHING LIKE THIS: BLESSED ART THOU, O LORD, WHO GIVES FOOD TO THE HUNGRY.

NOW, IN THIS PRAYER, WHAT IS JESUS ASKING TO BE BLESSED, THE GIFT OR THE GIVER OF THE GIFT?

WHAT IS IT,

THE GIVER OF THE GIFT OR THE GIFT?

BLESSED ARE YOU LORD -- HE'S ASKING THAT GOD BE BLESSED.

HOW DO OUR TABLE PRAYERS GO?

NOW, I WAS BROUGHT UP IN THE STANDARD LUTHERAN PRAYER: "COME, LORD JESUS, BE OUR GUEST AND LET THESE GIFTS TO US BE BLESSED."

SO WHAT ARE WE ASKING FOR IN THAT PRAYER TO BE BLESSED?

NOT THE GIVER OF THE GIFTS BUT THE GIFT ITSELF?

IS THAT WRONG?

AM I GOING TO START CHANGING IT?

HERE IS ANOTHER ONE: "GOD IS GREAT, GOD IS GOOD, LET US THANK HIM FOR THE FOOD."

WHO'S BEING BLESSED IN THAT PRAYER?

THE GIVER OF THE GIFT.

NOW, IS THIS JUST SOME THEOLOGICAL HAIR-SPLITTING THAT I'M DOING WITH YOU TO FILL UP THE TIME IN MY SERMON TO YOU?

NO.

NO.

IT IS REALLY ABOUT UNDERSTANDING THE PERFECTION OF GOD'S PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE.

BECAUSE IF WE START TALKING ABOUT THE GIFTS THAT WE GET FROM HIM, WE MIGHT NOT ALWAYS GET WHAT WE THINK WE SHOULD.

AMEN?

HOW MANY OF US HAVE PRAYED FOR SOMETHING AND GOT SOMETHING TOTALLY DIFFERENT?

AND IT SEEMED LIKE IT WAS GOING TO DEVASTATE US.

BUT, GUESS WHAT?

WE GOT THROUGH IT.

AND WHEN WE WERE ON THE OTHER SIDE, WE LOOKED BACK AND SAW THAT GOD HAS HIS HAND IN THIS THING THE WHOLE TIME.

AND THAT I LEARNED SOME THINGS.

PAUL SAID, "I REJOICE IN TRIBULATION."

GOT ANY PEOPLE OUT THERE THAT SPIRITUAL? I REJOICE IN TRIBULATION BECAUSE TRIBULATION PRODUCES PERSEVERANCE, PERSEVERANCE CHARACTER, CHARACTER HOPE, AND HOPE DOES NOT DISAPPOINT US.

YOU SEE, GOD IS BUILDING US AS HIS PEOPLE THROUGH ALL THINGS.

SO INSTEAD OF BLESSING THE GIFTS THAT GOD HAS GIVEN US -- BECAUSE, LET'S FACE IT, SOME ARE GOING TO HAVE MORE THAN OTHERS.

IT IS JUST THE WAY IT IS ALWAYS GOING TO WORK.

SOME PEOPLE'S HOUSES BURNED DOWN IN A FIRE, SOME PEOPLE'S HOUSES WERE SPARED.

IS ONE CURSED AND ONE BLESSED?

NO.

IT IS JUST THE WAY THE WIND BLEW THE SPARKS.

IT IS JUST THE WAY IT HAPPENED.

SO WE GIVE THANKS TO THE GIVER OF ALL GOOD THINGS.

SO, FIRST OF ALL, WE USE WHAT GOD HAS GIVEN US.

SECONDLY, WE COMMIT TO GOD, TO HIS GLORY.

AND THE LAST THING IS TO EXPECT GREAT THINGS.

YOU KNOW, SOMETIMES WE SELL OURSELVES SO SHORT.

OKAY, I'M GOING TO -- WE'RE GOING TO THINK ABOUT -- I DON'T THINK IT IS REALLY GOING TO HAPPEN.

JESUS SAID THIS --

JESUS SAID: "ASK" -- AND WHAT?

YOU SHALL RECEIVE.

SEEK --

>> Parish: AND YOU SHALL FIND.

>> Pastor Dave: KNOCK --

>> AND THE DOOR WILL BE OPENED.

>> Pastor Dave: THOSE ARE PROMISES.

SEEK AND YOU WILL FIND.

KNOCK AND THE DOOR WILL BE OPENED.

JAMES WROTE THAT YOU HAVE NOT BECAUSE YOU ASK NOT.

WE'VE GOT TO ASK WITH THIS EXPECTATION THAT GOD IS GOING TO DO SOMETHING THAT IS GOOD FOR US.

IT MIGHT NOT BE THE THING THAT YOU WANT, BUT IT IS THE THING THAT GOD WANTS FOR YOU.

AND GUESS WHAT?

GOD HAS YOUR BEST INTENTION IN MIND ALL OF THE TIME.

SO GOD DOESN'T ALWAYS ANSWER THE WAY THAT WE WANT OR EXPECT.

BUT WE HAVE A GOOD, GRACIOUS, AND COMPASSIONATE GOD IN JESUS CHRIST.

AND NO MATTER WHAT YOU'RE GOING THROUGH RIGHT NOW, NO MATTER WHAT YOU MIGHT BE STRUGGLING WITH RIGHT NOW, JESUS SENDS THIS INVITATION.

HE SAYS: "COME TO ME, ALL OF YOU WHO ARE WEARY AND HEAVY-LADEN, AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST."

OUR COMPASSIONATE JESUS STILL TEACHES US OF HIS GREAT LOVE IN THE BOOK, THE HOLY BIBLE.

AND GOD STILL MEETS US RIGHT WHERE WE ARE AT.

AND MAY THE PEACE OF GOD THAT SURPASSES ALL HUMAN UNDERSTANDING GUARD YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD.

AMEN.