

Crossroads Community Church

Sunday July 13th, 2014

Our hearts were eager to hear the Lord's word this morning, and we weren't disappointed. Worship was lively and refreshing as we praised God. Pastor Don shared announcements and prayer needs for our community. Before sharing God's message He prayed, "We thank you God for the wonderful Library in which we meet every Sunday, we are truly blessed to come here to worship and hear your word, open our hearts and ears to receive and understand, help us cultivate an attitude of gratitude in Jesus name Amen." Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 5:18. How should we interpret this verse, does it mean we are supposed to be thankful for bad things that happen? I don't believe so, I think it means that despite times when evil strikes we are to thank God for His ever present help through our times of need. When we complain to others about circumstances things get worse and we fail to see any solution or help God sends our way hence we don't count our blessings. Instead calling out to the Lord and knowing that He listens will bring joy and peace making situations more bearable, (Psalm 1:1-2.) Through Jesus we have a great relationship with God, our families, friends, and the world around us and we have the hope of a better future because He promises it. It is important to stop and notice the simple things we are given each day, God has enabled the human heart to live, laugh and love, those are immeasurable gifts and incomparable to any material thing and for us to demonstrate our gratitude we ought to use those gifts to help others in their time of need consequently serve God, (Haggai 1:3-4). Look at all the people in the Bible God has called and blessed when they trusted Him. He called Abraham, made promises of guidance, provision, posterity and it all came to pass as the Lord said, (Genesis 12:1-3). God also promised greatness to Joseph as ruler of Egypt, King David to be successor of Saul to name a few more, but God always had specific instructions and didn't give every detail right away but revealed them along their journey and although they were imperfect men and had their share of failures, when they trusted God, He turned things around for them, (Genesis 41, 1 Samuel 16). So why are we so discontent if God has given us so much? Perhaps it is because we focus our attention and actions on striving to get what we need in our own strength and the result is a neglected relationship with God and everyone around us. The more peaceful less stressful way of being fulfilled is to humbly seek God and draw close to Him, taking time to listen to His word, spending time in prayer to hear His voice which leads to right living, (James 4:7-8). If we know this, why is it that we still don't feel grateful or hopeful through life's ups and downs? Procrastination, we put off spending time with God and learning from Him so we miss the blessings He sends our way and we remain discouraged because our expectations are not met, (James 1:22,25). The disciples sometimes felt this way; after all they had high expectations of being delivered from Roman oppression and had their own idea of how Jesus would do it. Then when Jesus was predicting His arrest many disciples were quick to pledge loyalty to Him but they soon failed and became discouraged, (Matthew 26:33,75). If God allowed us to get all we wanted the way we think we should we would miss out on His perfect timing, His perfect plans and fail to witness His countless miracles. If Jesus wasn't betrayed, arrested, and crucified we would have forfeited His plan of salvation and forgiveness, no one would have witnessed the miracle of resurrection and we would all still be lost in our old ways with no purpose or hope for a future with Him. Doing things our way in our own effort will lead to exhaustion and inevitably sin. Look at the Apostle Paul, he persecuted the early church, (Acts 22:4) he thought that his way of thinking was the right way, He became arrogant and killed many unjustly until Jesus appeared to Him and changed His life. Once Paul surrendered to the Lord and repented of His ways God used him to proclaim the gospel to the world and write many books of the Bible. When we trust our own judgement without seeking God we miss out on a purposeful life; we don't get to see God in all His splendour. Beloved, evil does not come from God, it comes from the enemy of our souls the devil, and he strikes without warning however thank God who is always ready to answer our cries for help. He longs to hear from us because He loves us and already has the very best plans for us if only we would seek Him first, (Matthew 6:33. When our focus is zeroed in on our problems we become spiritually out of focus, we don't clearly see where Jesus is in our circumstances but when we pray and shift our energy on drawing near to Him the burden will become light as He carries it with us and leads us back to joy, peace and a grateful heart. Now let us give all praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ, Asherey Shalom! To Learn more visit www.shelburnecrossroadschurch.ca