

Easter Message from Pastor Rich...



I Believe, Help My Unbelief!

As you and I contemplate this season of Lent the road of suffering and pain Jesus went down on His way to the cross, we need to understand what the cost was for God the Father leading up to the cross.

God the Father knows that His one and only Son, Jesus Christ, will be ridiculed, hated, suffer emotional anguish, physical needs, and eventually die because of the love He has for His Father, however, even being obedient to His death Jesus came to deliver us from the bonds of the devil, the world, and sin in order to inherit the only thing that will matter for us and that is eternal life. A life spent together with our Lord Jesus Christ – forever!

How often do we think about this promise from Jesus in our daily lives? There is a story in the gospel of Mark which we all should become familiar with. In chapter 9 of Mark's gospel a man brings his son to the disciples to get rid of a spirit that had taken hold of the boy. Jesus had just experienced His Transfiguration upon a mountain and runs into this situation.

The disciples were unable to help the boy and the father was in a desperate place. Something was terribly wrong with his child and he was powerless to do anything about. Mark Matzke in a sermon on this text identifies the very things that we as Christians struggle with on a daily basis. "The father of the possessed boy speaks up and reaches out to Jesus. He's heard the miracle stories; he fumbles for words as he formulates his request: "If you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." Jesus replies: "If you can? All things are possible for one who believes." And in that moment the boy's father, desperately battling his own doubts and fears, says just about the most honest thing a human being ever says in the Bible; he says: "I believe; help my unbelief." There was something Jesus responded to in that wrestling, awkward, transparent request—and he honors it. He does what his disciples could not—he extracts the demon from the boy; he gives the boy and his family a new life to live. Through Jesus, God is putting His broken creation together again one person and one family at a time. "I believe; help my unbelief." What a simple way to describe the war that goes on in our hearts and minds. It is a classic Christian paradox. We believe and we disbelieve. We trust and we trust no one. We build on the Rock and we build on sand. That's us. And it's not necessarily bad news. Well, unbelief is bad, but a spiritual struggle—an inner tension—is proof that faith is fighting for life. Faith that is gasping for breath is still faith; the thing we ought to really fear is no struggle—the fool's gold of disbelief and the ethic of service to myself as the highest good. In other words, to have faith in Jesus is to experience spiritual turbulence, because faith that trusts in God goes to war with the sinful self, and the sinful self doesn't appreciate being fought against. It hates being exorcised. Only Jesus can cast out our sinful nature and fill us with something far better. And as I said, spiritual turbulence is better than no spiritual turbulence. Spiritual turbulence means that faith, which the Holy Spirit gave me through the gospel of Jesus and baptism, is alive and is beating down my sinful impulses. A complete lack of spiritual turbulence means I'm spiritually dead. It means I'm foolishly confident in myself, or I just don't care about the things of God at all. Both those ways lead to destruction and finally separation from God."

If you find yourself struggling with your faith praise God for this because it means the Holy Spirit is working to strengthen and renew your faith, but, if you find yourself not struggling at all and that there isn't a care in the world for you think about this story as the man struggles with both his belief and his unbelief and realizes that only Jesus can help him in his unbelief. Just as Christ is the only answer for any of us regarding our faith. God's blessings to you all.

In Christ's Service and Love,

Last Supper Pageant 2017

Chester Auditorium in Chester, NE
Sunday, April 9 - 3:00 & 6:00 PM
Wednesday, April 12 - 7:00 PM

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