

SUPPLEMENTAL SERMON NOTES:

Date: August 29th, 2010

Focus: Experiencing a Closer Walk With God Essential # IV: *God Invites You to Join Him.*

Text: Exodus: 3:1-5.

Message: ***Don't Miss Your Burning Bush!***

Review: Thus far we have learned the following essentials to Experiencing a Closer walk with God:

1. God is always at work
2. God pursues a relationship with us characterized by love and obedience
3. God takes the initiative
4. God invites us to join Him in what He is doing

As a supplement to Sunday's Sermon (August 29th); the following suggestions - from the book "Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God" – written by Henry Blackaby and Clause King, are several practical ways we can join God in what He (God) is doing.

Exercising Spiritual Disciplines:

I firmly believe that it is the daily exercise of basic spiritual disciplines that enable us to engage in a closer walk with God. Spiritual disciplines, when practiced regularly draws us closer to God and opens us up to what God is saying to us. Spiritual disciplines deepen our understanding of who God is, and help make us into the men and women He desires us to become. Exercising spiritual disciplines help to keep our relationship with God in good working order, and even help us develop and sustain a closer walk with God.

The list of spiritual disciplines is varied and inexact. For our purposes, I have emphasized six: prayer; bible study, meditation; worship; serving (God by serving others) and sharing.

Joining God in What He (God) is Doing:

One of the keys to joining God in what He is doing is being able to identify the activity around us – as the "work of God". Well where do we begin? We begin by understanding that there are some things that only God can do and when we can identify these things, then when something happens around us – it may be a strong indication that it is "of God".

Things that only God can do:

1. Draw people to Himself – John 6:44-45,65
2. Cause people to seek after Him – Philippians 2:13
3. Reveal Spiritual Truth – I Corinthians 2:9-15
4. Convict the world of guilt regarding sin, righteousness and judgment – John 16:8

Based on the above, several ways we can know for certain that God is at work when: a) someone receives Christ; b) someone begins asking about spiritual matters; c) someone comes to understand spiritual truth; d) someone experiences spiritual conviction of sin.

Steps we can take:

1. **Pray.** God knows what He wants done and how He wants it done and who He wants involved in getting it done. To seek His plan, we must pray – specifically asking God to reveal His will, plan and purpose for our lives. Our prayer must be one of “availability” – wherein we make ourselves available to be used by God in any way He chooses.
2. The second thing we need to do is **Connect.** After you pray, begin watching for what happens next. Watch to see what people are saying to you when they come to you. Try to connect what happens around you to what you have prayed.

Illustration: Back in April and May, we begin to hear people express concerns about marriages and the stress many marriages were under. Our WOW focused on relationships. Yet, there were those who felt we needed more emphasis. At about that same time; the prayer ministry began to express a need for the congregation to elevate the climate of prayer in the church. Since that time; several things have happened: The Red Tent – where women could connect and share their experiences and find support within the fellowship; another group of women came together and begin to study the Power of a Praying wife – both classes should have concluded by now, but they continue to go and grow each Wednesday evening. This series of messages on Experiencing a Closer Walk with God – stresses exercising Spiritual Disciplines – such as daily prayer. And as if that were not enough, we received our new FH literature and discovered our next unit of study focuses on – of all things: PRAYER. Is God trying to tell us something or what! Daily prayer helps connect us to what God is doing and where He is at Work.

3. The next thing is we need to **Ask Questions.** We've got to take initiative to talk to God about what He is doing. God says in His word if we seek Him, we will find Him.

This past Sunday's message reminded us that God hears, sees, is concerned about and responds to the needs of people. And His primary response to the needs of His people is to invite others to join Him in responding to needs. Because God channels so much of His work/activity through His body (the Church), asking church leaders where they see God at work and about ministry needs and opportunities to serve/help others will certainly point you in the direction of where God is at work. Another way to discern where God is at work is by asking questions of people who cross your path to find out what God is doing in their lives. Examples of questions to ask:

- What do you see as the greatest challenge in your life?
- What is the most significant thing happening in your life right now?
- What is God doing in your life right now?
- What burden has God placed in your heart?
- What can I pray for you?

4. And then we need to **Listen**. We need to listen to what God is saying. We need to “learn to listen to our “circumstances” and what God may be saying to us through our circumstances. Just because things are difficult doesn't mean we are on the wrong track. In the case of Moses, his life was going to get a lot more challenging and the lives of the Israelites was to get worse before it would get better.

We also need to listen to godly people – those individuals who demonstrate the fruits of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness and self-control).

Summary:

- A sensitive, willing heart will be ready to respond to (join) God at the slightest prompting. Exercising spiritual disciplines can help keep us ready to say yes to God
- Pray and watch to see what God does next
- Make the connection by asking probing questions – then listen
- Remember that God always speaks when He is about to accomplish His purposes
- Know that what God initiates, He completes.