



September 18, 2020

Starting to Read the Bible

On Rally Day, we gave Bibles to second graders, and I know that you want to help them get started reading. You may also want to get in the habit of reading the Bible too, but don't know where to start.

I myself have attempted, and failed, to do the very same thing over the years, until I settled on going to seminary and have been inundated with the Bible ever since. So, to get your and/or your children to read the bible, go to seminary. Problem solved!

Wait...what?

The Holy Spirit called you to the vocation you are currently fulfilling and if you went to seminary, like Jonah running away from God a metaphorical, or perhaps literal, Great Fish will swallow you and puke you back up where you are now. Huh?

Okay. New plan. I'll give you a brief introduction to the Bible to help you get started.

**Confirmation
Students and
Families:
Check this out!**



The Bible is a unified story that points to Jesus.

Beginning with Genesis and the story of creation, you can read about how human rejected God, but how God chose a particular family of humans to be an example for the world. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings are the main books of this story where you will encounter familiar faces: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, and Solomon. You will see how God draws ever closer to us through promises called covenants, how these people fell away from God, and how God continues to pursue them.

If you want to jump straight to Jesus, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John will tell the story of his life and ministry. You will see how Jesus called the disciples, taught with power and authority, challenged preconceived notions of God, suffered, died, and rose again. Then the book of Acts will tell you what the apostles did after Jesus ascended into heaven.

For those unburdened by linear thought, who speak in imagery, and who delight in metaphor, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job are wonderful places to start. The poetic pairs and framing style of ancient Hebrew may seem strange, but for those who see it, God is revealed in wonder, awe, and beauty that opens our eyes to the reality of God.

The prophets, Isaiah through Malachi, take this poetry and ground it in the people's religious and social consciousness (or lack thereof). Their poetic words and their symbolic actions draw upon imagery and themes in the Old Testament narrative to highlight God's saving action in Israel's past, and help them open their eyes to where God is present and active among them in the present day. These are prophetic poems for God's wayward people, ever calling them to lives that embody God's promises.

Beyond story, after the rush of artistic inspiration fades, when it comes time to look at practical matters of faith and life, the prose of the Bible stands out. These great speeches of history encapsulate the hopes and dreams of a people and lay out the practical realities to attain goals greater than we could achieve alone. Deuteronomy is one of those, where Moses lays out the entirety of God's law for the people and how it will shape their lives as they enter in to the realization of God's Promised Land.

Paul's prose is no less impressive; but rather than a single epic speech, Paul provides many letters. Each letter addresses a specific community with the Good News of Jesus' death and resurrection and what practical impact it has on their lives together. While the struggles that they faced seem to be different, there is a universality in the underlying conflict that keeps Paul's words modern and applicable.

This is the best I could do short of sending you to seminary. Hopefully, there is enough to get you started on reading the Bible.

Two final things:

Read it out loud. This will help slow you down to better digest what you are reading. You may even find Jesus, the love and salvation of God, popping up in unexpected places in scripture.

Ask questions. Everything in the Bible was placed there intentionally and purposefully to reveal something about God to us, but it isn't always clear. So just ask; I always do.

Pastor Justin Smoot (he/him)

Worship

Thank you to all who attended worship this last Sunday in the Saint Andrew parking lot. To worship in community again was truly a blessing as there were about 210 people in attendance! The church council is currently in discussion about the next opportunity to worship in person again. Watch the Wave for further details and until then please tune in to the livestream worship on the SALC Facebook page. Communion will be shared again the next two Sundays, September 20 & 27. All are welcome to stop by the church to pick up communion any weekday or on Saturday from **10 am – 2 pm**.



A Time to Give Thanks

At a time when many are struggling with financial difficulties due to the pandemic, Saint Andrew feels it is important to express gratitude for all the members of Saint Andrew who have been able to continue their giving and to all those who continue to share their time and talents to support the ministry of Saint Andrew. Thank you for the generous gifts of your time, talents and treasures as we navigate these difficult times.

Finding Solace in Salvation

It's 2020. We are in the middle of a pandemic. Many of us have not left our towns in months, let alone our homes. We have had no contact with our friends, family, coworkers, and neighbors in much too long. When unable to go out and do activities we love, express ourselves, and take some ways to clear our minds, we can become our own biggest critics. Within this comes the questioning of identity, which includes faith, and salvation.

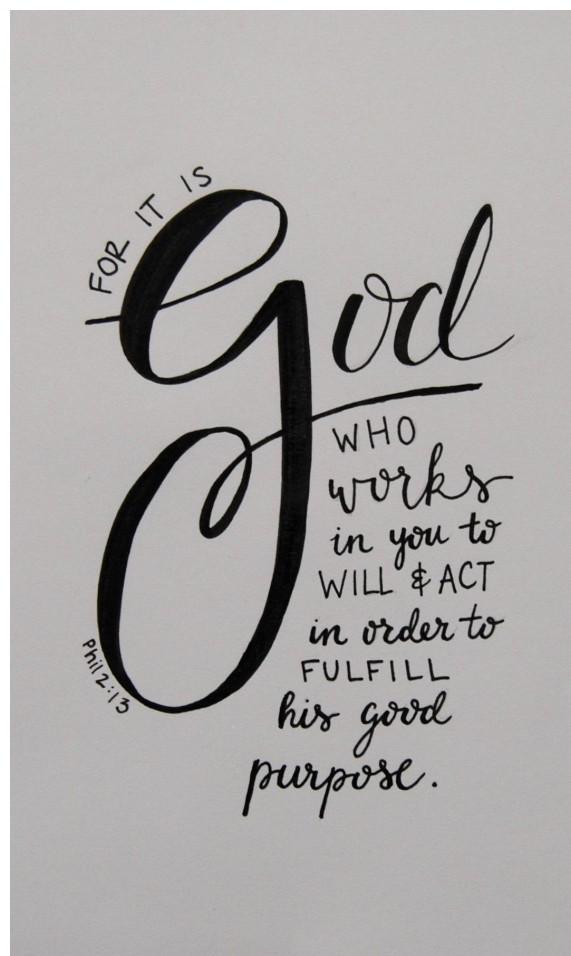
My salvation is deeply my own. Your salvation is deeply your own. So why then is there a consistent chase to who is "the most saved"? Why must salvation, an all-encompassing thing, become a point of comparison?

I find myself falling victim to feeling less-than on more occasions than I can count. I look around me and see my peers doing so well, strong in their convictions, relationships, and their faith. Why do I feel as though my place in this world is not pleasing to God?

Today, as the raindrops slide down my window, I think of the way the last couple of weeks have felt incredibly clouded. This part of my life has been filled with trials and hardships. These along with working, starting a budget, and renting a home have made life rushed and frantic. This consistent state of stress and a packed schedule has led to feelings of inadequacy within me. Why do I feel frustrated in a time that I have been so blessed? Shouldn't I be joyful, solely because I am a child of God?

I found myself needing to take some intentional time to go back to the source. In many busy days and sleepless nights, a job cluttered with social media posts that I look at and compare my own to, and some parts of life as simple as forgetting to take out the garbage, it was necessary for me to experience some spiritual restoration.

Weirdly enough, when opening my Bible lately, the Holy Spirit has led me to scriptures that I have deeply needed to read. On a cold September morning, I read Paul's letter to the Philippians and was faced with many questions. Paul himself had a long route to salvation that was not all butterflies and rainbows yet became one of Christ's most loyal followers; he truly owned every part of his salvation story. Even in his worst moments, Paul was being led to God, with the eventual gift of being an instrument for



Christ. During his imprisonment, he wrote to the Philippians, and gave testimony to his own journey:

“Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work within you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.” Philippians 2:12-13

Here, God is speaking through Paul, letting us know that struggle and fear are a normal part of our experience. We are given the right to be fearful and angry and feel the tough feelings. To struggle, and fight, and be tearful. Because even in these moments, God prevails. God works through us when we feel sad, angry, and stagnant, just as much as our moments of joy and abundance. No matter what we do, God is within us, keeping us standing tall, protecting us with infinite grace. In this, I find comfort. In this, I find peace. To know that God is holding me up, keeping me safe even when my feet fail. In this, my hope is renewed.

I pray you find peace in the fear and trembling, and solace in your own salvation today and always.

Michelle she/her

An Update from Crossways Camping Ministries

Here is a message from Crossways Camping Ministries:

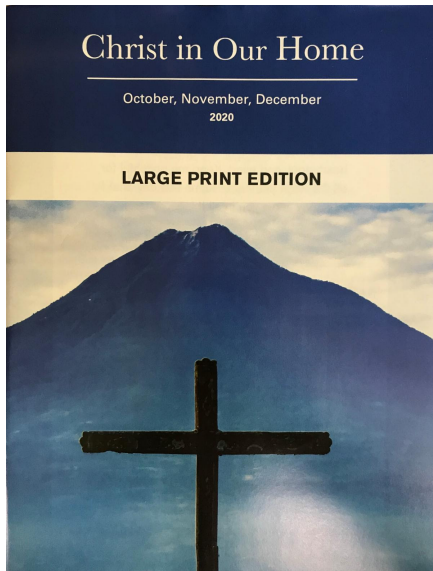
Will you accept our challenge? We're inviting you to commit to 20 Hours Outside in the month of October. Join this challenge to receive a 20 Hour sticker to show off, encouragement and ideas, a time tracker and certificate of completion! Check off some of your outdoor hours at a Fall Color Hike event on Saturday, October 10th from 10am-3pm at Pine Lake Camp. Enjoy a trail that fits you and your family's adventure level, and soak up the crisp Fall air. Please register in advance so we can stagger the timing of our guests. Visit CrosswaysCamps.org or contact Robyn Koehler at robyn@crosswayscamps.org for more information.

From Waypost Camp:

Come enjoy the spectacular colors of fall and the masterpiece of seasons changing at Waypost's Fall Color Hikes Event on **Saturday, October 3rd from 10am-3pm**. With several trail options to fit you and your family's adventure level, you can enjoy the beauty of camp and kick off the fall season.

Please register in advance so we can stagger the timing of our guests. This event is free with donations accepted. Contact Ben Koehler at ben@crosswayscamps.org

for more information.



Christ in Our Home Devotional-4th Quarter Now Available

Christ in Our Home quarterly devotional resource encourages readers to live out their faith daily. Each reflective reading is accompanied by a daily scripture reference and prayer for the day that follows the Revised Common Lectionary. ***The fourth quarter devotional (October-November-December) is now available at church in a plastic bin outside the north (Chapel) entrance. Please feel free to stop by and pick up a copy.***

Plan to Gather Weekly Update: 9/16/2020

For now, Saint Andrew remains in Phase One of the Plan to Gather. As soon as there is a consistent downward trend, we will move forward to Phase Two.

SALC COVID-19 UPDATE

As of 9/16/2020

Date	Burden #	Trajectory	SALC Status
8/26	59	No change	Phase One
9/2	53	No change	Phase One
9/9	63.1	No change	Phase One
9/16	101.7	Increasing	Phase One

Current Burden Status: High

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Saint Andrew Lutheran Church

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