

Sunday, April 26, 2020
Third Sunday of Easter
Grace Lutheran Church
Somers Point, NJ
Interim Pastor: Rev. Kevin Hilgendorf

Sermon The living and enduring word of God!

Psalm 119:107 one of my favorite bible verses because I can sing it and this helps me to remember. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. This scripture comforts me and strengthens my relationship with God like the 23rd Psalm.

I remember reading somewhere the Communist revolution in China forced Christian's to destroy their bibles by burning them and remove all Christian practices. The believers in some places memorized pages of scripture. When they hid from the authorities to worship they took turns in sharing the scriptures. The church survived and resurfaced when the government relaxed the laws prohibiting the practice of Christianity. Similar stories reported those arrested and detained came together and shared their memorized portions of worship services. 1Peter 1:23,25 Peter writes, "You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God...the word of the Lord endures forever. That word is the good news that was announced to you."

On the road to Emmaus Jesus walks alongside two downcast disciples who do not recognize him. They were grieving on their hopes being dashed that Jesus would be, "the one to redeem Israel." Only through Jesus' interpretation of the scriptures and the breaking of the Bread do they come to know him and have their faith rekindled. The disciples describe their experience with Jesus on the road to Emmaus as one in which "our hearts (were) burning within us." This spurs the disciples into action. Returning at night on the 7 mile journey to Jerusalem. The urgency of the Good News they have to share will not let them wait.

1 Peter 1:21 Peter reminds the believers "through him (Jesus) you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God. It is my daily practice to read scriptures and prayers besides other materials like C.S. Lewis readings, and one year readings of the psalms. During my walks I recite the 23rd Psalm, the Te Deum the praise of God Song, Mary's Song, and others. I also give thanks to God by counting my blessings.

As we remain safe in the COVID-19 pandemic, let us continue to read our bibles, pray, and sing or listen to inspirational songs. My Aunt Dottie loved the religious Christmas songs and not just during the season. She loved to listen and sing those Christmas Hymns throughout the year especially when she was vacuuming. Why? Because she said "I experience JOY!" We are not alone in our walks, in our homes, and in our devotions. God is our living and enduring word!