

## From Our Pastor –September 2018

Dear Church Family,

I long to find the peace of God amidst the turmoil that life sometimes dishes out. I long to know the hope of Christ even amidst the discouragement that sometimes comes my way. I long to find the strength of Christ when my stamina is depleted. I long to take hold of the forgiveness of Christ when my soul is weighted down with resentment. And I long to know the love of God when I feel hurt or lonely.

But how do we find these spiritual treasures amidst the struggles of daily life? How do we find these things when they are not natural to us?

Stephen Macchia offers a helpful perspective. He writes,

We must tune our ears to hear God's voice. It's like the child who was told by his mother during a symphony orchestra concert, "Listen for the flutes in this song. Don't they sound beautiful?" The child, unable to distinguish the flutes, looks up at his mother with a puzzled look, "What flutes, Mother?"

The child first needs to learn what flutes sound like on their own, separate from the whole orchestra, before he is able to hear them in a symphony. So it is with us as children of God. Unless we take the time to hear His voice in the quiet moments of life, we will not be able to hear Him in the symphony sounds of life.

If I want to find the peace of God, the hope of Christ, the strength of Christ, the forgiveness of Christ, or the love of God amidst the struggles of daily life, I need to practice tuning into these treasures during quiet moments of each day.

One way I do this is by taking some time each day to read a bit of God's Word and by taking some time each day to pray. If you are not already doing so, I encourage you to begin this practice. Here are a couple of ideas: Open up your Bible to one of the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke or John) and read a short section, focusing simply on getting to know Jesus better, or read a Psalm a day, letting your soul breathe out the prayer with the psalmist, or pick up a daily devotional and read along with that.

Another way I practice tuning into the peace and hope and strength and forgiveness and love of God is by reciting at different times each day certain verses of Scripture that refocus my soul on the peace of God, on the heart of God, on the presence of Christ, on the resources of God, and on the character of Christ. The verses I recite each day include Philippians 4:8, Colossians 3:1, Psalm 37:4, Psalm 23, Lamentations 3:22-24, Matthew 11:28-30, Habakkuk 3:19, Zephaniah 3:17, Jeremiah 29:11, Psalm 105:4, 2 Corinthians 4:7, John 14:27, 2 Timothy 1:7, Psalm 86:5, Romans 8:38-39, 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, Micah 6:8, and Psalm 4.

To comment briefly on two of these: John 14:27 reminds me of Christ's peace coming from

above despite the turmoil that may come my way, and Micah 6:8 calls me back to the heart of what faithful Christian living is all about. I invite you to find a verse or two that speaks to your heart that you might get in the habit of bringing to mind each day.

Seeking, with you, to find Christ's treasures in our daily lives,

***-Pastor Tom***

*To learn more about Pastor Tom's vision of ministry—and for a preview of his next sermon—visit his blog at: <https://tomtrippblog.wordpress.com/>*