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WHERE WE MEET

1883 Old US 24
Huntington, IN 46750

Worship Services

9 and 11 AM

Sunday Mornings

Thoughts from our Senior Pastor **Spiritually Strong People. The 5 Things They Avoid**

At the end of 2013, I started a two week series entitled, ***Spiritually Strong People: The 5 Things They Avoid***. On January 5, I was set to deliver Pt. 2 and we closed due to weather. I then went on a mission trip to Nicaragua for 11 days planning to deliver Pt. 2 upon my return. As you may have noticed, we were forced to cancel again due to weather on the 26th. Apparently this message was never meant to be delivered. However, I think it may make a decent Newsletter article. If you are not familiar with items 1-4, please go on our website and listen to the podcast of part one which was shared on December 29, 2013.

Finally, here is #5.

#5 Allowing "Moralism" to substitute for Spiritual Transformation.

Moralism is the idea that we are able to earn favor with God and justify ourselves before God by virtue of our behavior. I believe that moralism has developed because it is much easier to "follow the rules" than to actively pursue the heart of God and His will for your life. Life as a devoted follower of Christ is not exclusively about what we do and don't do, life in Christ delves into the heart of *why* we do and don't do certain things.

The Bible is very clear that the point of the gospel is that none of us can do enough on our own to be right with God. We all need help. We can try and try and try, and work hard at being good and better and better, but in the end, no matter how hard we try, we



cannot earn the level of holiness that it takes to get to the Father.

Realizing this, I ask God for forgiveness and he places all of my sin on Jesus Christ and He becomes the "good enough" that I could never be on my own. Most people who would be labeled sinners in the world are not out killing people, or robbing banks or driving below the speed limit in the fast lane. Most sinners are good people who are working very hard in life, being honorable citizens and all the while telling God, "Don't worry. I got this on my own."

What makes this so offensive is that it communicates to God, "I don't care that you came to earth as a man, died a horrific death on a cross for my sins. You didn't need to do that. I got this on my own. While most of these people would never be labeled as arrogant, you can see the arrogance in this thinking.

But here is the clincher. Trying to earn your way into God's good graces is not something that is limited to those outside the church. **Moralism as a substitution for spiritual transformation has been a problem for God's people for as long as there has been a God's people.**

Continued on next page...

Spiritually Strong continued

The prophet Isaiah addressed it when he spoke on behalf of God saying:

The Lord says: "These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is based on merely human rules they have been taught. Isaiah 29:13

God is not talking to that sinner who lives down the street. He is talking to the sinner who lives in your heart. God wants us to love him with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength and we just want to love him with our behavior when it is convenient or is helpful for our situation.

One of the most difficult things for people to understand when it comes to loving God is that when we love God, we will naturally obey him. Moralists turn that around and life becomes an endless cycle of wondering if we are doing a good enough job. Obedience to God's standards does not necessarily lead to love for God. On the other hand, true love for God almost always leads to obedience.

For a moralist, the root issues of sin are not the most important things, appearance is. The Moralist is far more interested in dealing with external actions because by dealing with external issues, sin can still be accommodated in the heart. As

long as bad behavior is not visible, then the moralist will assume that he/she is OK.

Understandably there are a lot of do's and don'ts in scripture. And we must fearlessly declare God's position on them while remembering at the heart of Grace lays the cross of Jesus Christ forever declaring that it has already been done. So rather than guilt-tripping people into doing this and not doing that for the sake of religion, God's people need to be in the regular habit of pleading with the Holy Spirit to transform people's hearts and lives.

Senior Pastor
Josh Kesler

Youth

The Well Youth still managed to have some fun during January despite the Polar Vortex. A scavenger hunt and some sledding definitely were enough to help get rid of some of that "cabin fever!" Watch our new bulletin board on the wall outside The Middle meeting room for a monthly calendar and updates about upcoming events, as well as photos of all we've been up to! **We will be changing the programming slightly starting this month. All grades 6-12 will meet together on Sunday nights from 6-7:30 pm.**

Here's a look ahead at this month's schedule:

February 2- No youth group meeting

February 9- Regular Youth Meeting 6-7:30pm

February 16- Building Dedication Service- No regular youth meeting- All youth and their families are encouraged to join in this celebration and dedication of our new building. Stay tuned to church communications regarding the details of this event.

February 23- Regular Youth Meeting 6-7:30pm



Worship

Over the past few of newsletters I have been revisiting the message on worship that I shared during this past summer. There are four important aspects of our worship as it is related to discipleship. This month, I am sharing the final part 4:

4. Worship is – A Discipline to be Learned and PRACTICED

Jesus instructed us:

‘YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.’ Matthew 4:10 (NASB)

To worship the Lord our God throughout our lifetime requires discipline. Without discipline, our worship of God will be inconsistent at best. The book of Hebrews has already told us that we are to consistently “assemble together” so that we can “stimulate one another to love and good deeds”. Forming “Holy Habits” takes consistency – which takes discipline.

Remember, worship is focusing and responding to God. My footprints can lead me to the habit of worship, but my heartbeats must lead me to a relationship with God.

Worship of God is an end in itself.

There is no higher goal than to focus on God and respond to God. To reach that goal is to reach for Godliness. The more truly we worship God, the more we become like Him.

Godliness without the worship of God is **IMPOSSIBLE**.

It’s a true statement. People become what they focus on. We emulate what we think about. Paul said it this way in Romans 12:1-2:

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” Romans 12:1-2 (NIV)

Focusing on the world more than on the God makes me more worldly than Godly. But if I would be more Godly, I must focus on God. Godliness requires focused thinking. I must “be transformed by the renewing of my mind”. I must, “Discipline myself for the purpose of godliness.”

So, how can we apply this to our our worship, or even change our bad worship habits? It really comes down to discipline and commitment. We must commit to worshipping Him daily, in all we do, in our relationships, how we speak to one another, in our actions, are we honoring God in all we do and say, do we find it easier to complain than to worship?

Kyle Idelman has this to say in his book, *gods at war*: “What we complain about reveals what really matters to us. Whining shows what has power over us. Whining, in many ways, is the opposite of worshipping the Lord. Worship is when we glorify God for who he is and acknowledge what He has done for us, but whining is ignoring who God is and forgetting what he has done for us.”

We need to take an inventory of what really matters to us. Do we find that God is at the top of that list? Are we worshipping Him by keeping Him priority number one?

Our worship should be in some ways like the object of our worship - *great praise for a great God*. There is no part of God’s greatness which is not worthy of great praise.

C.S. Lewis says, “We praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses, but completes the enjoyment. It is not out of compliment that lovers keep on telling one another how beautiful they are; the delight is incomplete till it is expressed.”

Worship and Communications Pastor
Marvin McNew



If you would like to hear the message in its entirety, including songs and prayer, go to: <http://goo.gl/f0617q>



Missed Opportunities

We have all experienced opportunities where we could have done more. Some have resulted in the reaction of shrugging your shoulders and moving on, but some may have actually been very costly and possibly life altering. The reasons we miss opportunities are too numerous to list. However, the need doesn't go away. We need to consider how we can be mindful so that we don't miss these priceless opportunities.

God calls each one of us to come alongside others for love and support. Prayer is an example of how we can show this love for others. One goal we have at The Well is to teach people to be disciples. What does this mean? As disciples, we want to do more than just be there on Sunday mornings. We want to take the message from each Sunday and then apply it directly to our own lives. This also means helping those outside of the churches in Huntington to understand what it means to be a follower of Christ. Building a strong prayer time can be the starting point for becoming a disciple of God.

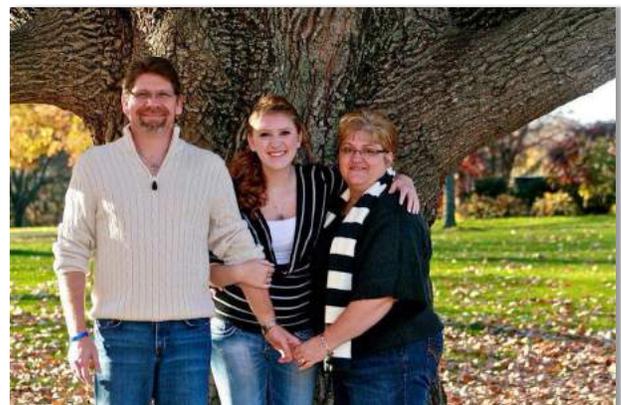
I fully understand how intimidating it can be to pray for others. I remember how scared I was to pray out loud with others listening for the first several times. I was worried that my prayers wouldn't sound like the prayers of other pastors. What was I to pray for and how should a prayer sound? I plan to have a short meeting in the near future, to invite people to come and discuss what prayer time can look like for someone that is new to praying or maybe just uncomfortable praying aloud with others. I would like to build a pool of people who are feeling the call from God to come alongside others, to pray for and support them.

Philippians 4:6 says that we should not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, we are to present our requests to God.

We have opportunities to pray in every moment of every day. This includes during our Sunday morning worship services. Prayer during church on Sunday morning doesn't have to be an isolated experience, either! If you see someone who is struggling, whether they're sitting next to you, or perhaps have come to the front of the church, feel free to support that person with a prayer, or even just a comforting hand on the shoulder. As Christians, we are in church for the community. We should never have to suffer or bear our burdens alone. When we see a brother or sister going through something difficult, we should always feel free to support, encourage, and be there next to them. These opportunities are always present if we have our eyes opened to see them.

Jim Hippensteel

Pastor of Community Care



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Be Informed

Be sure to like our Facebook page:
www.facebook.com/thewellathuntington
Check out our website:
www.thewellhuntington.org
Follow us on Twitter:
@the_wellchurch

We Want You to Have a Bible

If you are in need of a Bible, The Well has one for you. See Pastor Josh on Sunday morning.

Parking and Seating on Sunday Mornings

If you are able, please park in the lower, south lot to allow closer parking for those who need it. Also, please take advantage of the open seating in the front of the sanctuary so others can easily find seating as they arrive.

Serving Opportunities

Some of you may be wondering how you can serve at The Well. We currently have opportunities in our Children's Ministry, Worship Ministry, First Impressions Team, with more opportunities coming! If you want to get plugged into The Well, contact any of the pastors and they will help you get connected.

Getting the Newsletter?

If you know someone who isn't getting the newsletter, for whatever reason, let us know. Send us an email at office@thewellathuntington.org.

Well Moms Group

Any mom is invited to join other Well Moms on Mondays, 10:30 – 12:30. Children are welcome. We will meet in the children's area. Questions? Contact Amber Degitz at amberdegitz@gmail.com.

Women's Grow Group

If you are interested in joining a women's grow group contact Kris Chafin at kchafin@huntington.edu.

Building Dedication Service

We will be having a special service to dedicate our building for the service of the Lord. United Brethren Bishop Phil Whipple will be join us to give a special blessing. Please plan on joining us on **February 16th at 7 PM.**

Building Work Day

We are having a work day on **February 1st** from 8 AM - 3 PM. We have a number of small jobs that need completed. There is something available for all skill sets.

Snow Days

We are always looking for folks willing to shovel prior to our 9 AM worship service on Sunday mornings. If you see we are to get snow over a weekend, please let us know if you'd be willing to serve in this area. office@thewellathuntington.org

Men's Prayer Group

Meets on Mondays at the church, 7 PM.

