

Pastor Aker's Page – August 1, 2018

I was recently given a book to read that I've come to love. The book is entitled "Built on the Rock" and is written by Ted Kober. The reason I love it so much is that he presents nothing earthshattering or groundbreaking. Instead, he simply returns us to the staples of the Christian Faith: the Word of Christ and the Gospel.

Mr. Kober has spent many years in conflicted congregations. He is a consultant with Ambassadors of Reconciliation and has truly seen the worst of the worst within LCMS congregations. Interestingly he finds that the congregations that are experiencing the most conflict (not necessarily the most challenges) are those with very few members who attend Bible Study on a regular basis. On the flip side, if a congregation averages a mere 20% of their weekly worshipers attending a regular Bible Study, they are able to weather their challenges without breaking apart!

It comes down to spiritual maturity, a theme both Paul and Peter address in Scripture when talking about feeding the people milk verses feeding them meat (1 Peter 2:2, Hebrews 5:12, & 1 Corinthians 4:3). As babies, we all started with milk. So new Christians also start with a much simpler way of learning and understanding, a Sunday School experience geared toward speaking to our children where they are. As we grow in our Christianity, however, we move away from childish ways of understanding and gladly take the mantle of adulthood (1 Corinthians 13:11).

Just like any of us need regular food (personally, I like to eat three meals a day) in order to grow and thrive, so it is with our faith! We need to have regular meals. We need to be fed with the Word of God regularly. One of the best ways we offer this

opportunity for growth in your faith is through the various Bible Studies we offer each week.

Do you regularly attend (in my mind, *regular* means weekly) and actively participate in a Bible Study? If so, have you recognized growth in your own spiritual maturity? In what ways have you grown? How has this impacted your life? How has your regular Bible Study participation effected your faith?

If you do not attend regular Bible Study, why not? Do you think this is a good reason? Is it possible for you to participate in weekly Bible Study? If not, how can we help? How would you rate your own spiritual maturity? In what ways has not attending Bible Studies effected your life? How has it effected your faith?

Please don't misunderstand me. I'm not trying to come down on anyone or call anybody out. We're all at different places in our own spiritual maturity. I'm bringing this up because I genuinely care about you. Better than that, Jesus very much cares about you and works to strengthen and grow you through regular conversation with Him – we pray, He answers through His Word (conveniently found in Holy Scriptures!).

I told you this was nothing earthshattering or groundbreaking. "Built on the Rock" simply says that Christ's Christians should probably be studying His Word and that by doing so, will certainly grow in our faith and spiritual maturity. In fact, it's really only through a regular and healthy diet and exercise regimen that we grow. Pray the Lord helps you make and keep weekly worship and Bible Study a part of your diet!

In Christ,
Pastor Corey Aker