

Pastor's Note (March 2008)

Greetings in Christ,

We are deep in the blessed season of lent. If you have been reading your daily devotions, then you have had additional reinforcement in your time of prayer and reflection helping you to gain more appreciation of just how much Christ paid for our salvation. The Lamb of God pure and Holy, Who on the cross did suffer is a part of our struggle as we wade through the challenges of our daily lives. As we look over all the opportunities we have for worship and fellowship in the coming months, we must all make the best use of the time God gives us and seek His will as we set up our weekly schedules. God has called us all to many roles in life; parents, children, employees, employers, teachers, students, wives, husbands, parishioners, community members. All of these positions carry with them responsibilities that we must balance in a way that does not give short shrift to any of them. We must not get our priorities out of whack like the Pharisees when Jesus told them; ***Matt 15:5 But you say that if a man says to his father or mother, 'Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is a gift devoted to God,'*** God does not want us to give time, talents, or treasures to Him that He calls us to use for other purposes. We must seek a God pleasing balance in the setting of our priorities. Too much of anything is bad for us even too much church if it causes us to neglect other responsibilities we have. Too much water will drown you but not enough is equally as dangerous. If we do not have water for 72 hours most of us will either be dead or on the verge of death. How long has it been since you have refreshed your spirit with prayer, scripture reading or worship? So as you look over your schedule please make sure you have ample time for worship and prayer and reflection. We must also set times for ourselves to rest and rejuvenate, these are not my words that are the words of Christ; ***Mark 6:31 "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."*** A God pleasing schedule does not just happen..... We must be purposeful about scheduling our time for all of the important God pleasing things. If we do not, we will fill our time with work when we should rest, play when we should work, and never make time for God because our sinful nature is not interested in our spiritual growth.

Speaking of growth, if you do not recognize someone in church it is because over one third of our membership, became members in the past 2 years. So the next time you see a new face take a moment to introduce yourself and get to know them. While we can rejoice in our recent numerical growth, we must not equate this trend with a blessing for doing things right. Here are two good reasons for not making that connection;

1. Doing things right, that is correctly preaching the Word and administering the sacraments in accordance with God's will, can cause a numerical decline in a world that sees the cross a foolishness. While the gates of hell will not prevail against God's church the author of confusion will always seek to divide and destroy the church, especially churches that are snatching up the lost from his clutches.

2. If you equate numerical growth to as a blessing for doing things right, you must then conclude that the Mormons Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists are doing the right thing as well because they are all experiencing numerical growth. Not to mention those who fill stadiums because they preach prosperity which is what itching ears want to hear.

Let us all guard against false and self pride and focus on God's will, with enthusiasm and excitement for every lost soul we are blessed to have the opportunity to share the Gospel with. ***Isaiah 55:11 so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.***

In His name

Pastor Portier