

“Come and Dine”
Sunday, August 16, 2009
By Pastor Pete Paine

Pastor Paine started by asking each of us some questions to get us thinking about where we are in our lives.

How is your relationship with God?

Pastor Paine asked each of us to honestly evaluate how we are doing in our relationship with God. As we go through life, it is easy to find ourselves drifting closer to or farther from God, and knowing where we are in our relationship with Him is the first step in moving forward (no matter where we are or want to get).

If we have trouble defining where we are in our relationship with God, the easiest way to find out is to simply ask Him. Ask God how he is doing with you. Ask Him if there is anything He wants you to hear that you may have been too busy to listen to. Then, take the time and listen to his answer. It is healthy to be open and honest with God when we go to him to ask how our relationship is going, but we have to accept when God is just as honest in his reply as we are in our question. Then, we have to respond with action to what he shows us.

Sometimes in natural relationships we find ourselves meeting others more than half way. Have you ever felt like you were giving 120% and the other person in the relationship (whether it was a parent, sibling, coworker, or significant other) was only giving 80%? Probably so. When we find ourselves in this situation with our relationship with God, it's alright, but we need to take that to Him. Pastor Paine suggested that we pray this way:

“God, I’m getting tired. I’m doing all that I know how to do, but I still don’t feel like I’m making progress. I’m getting worn out and this isn’t working. Is there something I’m missing from you?”

God does not brush us off, and the Bible teaches us that he hears and cares for us. But it is not enough to just pray the prayer above and then go on with our normal routine. We have to go the Bible for instruction and spend time with God. He will answer, but we have to make sure we are listening! That is what happened to Paul when he had the thorn in the flesh in II Corinthians.

II Corinthians 12:7–10

7. And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.
8. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

9. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

10. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

Paul had tried going to God three times on this one issue. Imagine how frustrating it must have been to keep praying and praying, and thinking that God wasn't answering. It actually turns out that Paul wasn't listening close enough! The same might be true as we evaluate our relationship with God. The pain Paul was experiencing kept him in balance with his perspective on who he was in light of who God wanted him to be. God will answer us and give us balance and help us become the Christians we need to be.

Are you clear on the direction for your life?

We may not always know the exact next step in our lives. God wants us to walk by faith, and to do that, we can't know every detail of what will happen. That would eliminate the need for trust!

We don't always know exactly *how* we will get to the next step in our spiritual journey, but we do need to know with certainty *where* we are going.

Pastor Paine used the analogy of someone going through a minefield while receiving step by step instructions from someone who has the map to get them out of there safely. The person in the mine field may not know what their next step will be, but they know *exactly* where they want to get at the end of that walk.

Are you at peace?

In a sermon a few weeks ago, Pastor Paine taught on the wonderful life we can have by "Declaring our Dependence". In Psalms 23, David describes the still waters that God leads his children by. It is easy to find ourselves in turmoil in the world around us and lose sight of the fact that living a life for God brings amazing peace even in the middle of stress and turmoil.

Is there a plan for you?

The answer to this question is already determined. Whether or not we know or acknowledge it, there is a plan for us in our lives. God as our Creator has made it.

Jeremiah 29:11

11. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

Knowing the answers to the questions above will help each of us find the truth in these points about the scripture text for this sermon.

1. The Lord is with us even when we don't know it.

It is one thing to know that God is with us, and it is another thing to feel that God is with us. We cannot live our spiritual lives by feelings alone. God promises in the Bible that he will never leave us, no matter how lonely we may feel.

Footprints

By Mary Stevenson

*One night I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord.
Many scenes from my life flashed across the sky.
In each scene I noticed footprints in the sand.
Sometimes there were two sets of footprints,
Other times there were one set of footprints.*

*This bothered me because I noticed
That during the low periods of my life,
When I was suffering from anguish, sorrow, or defeat
I could see only one set of footprints.*

*So I said to the Lord,
"You promised me that if I followed you,
You would walk with me always.
But I have noticed that during
The most trying periods of my life
There have been one set of footprints in the sand.
Why, when I needed you the most,
you have not been there for me?"*

*The Lord replied,
"The times when you have
Seen only one set of footprints in the sand,
Is when I carried you."*

2. God offers us peace.

Isaiah 9:6

6. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

When we find that we are lacking peace in our lives, it is a sign that we are too far from God.

3. The Lord will address our hurts, doubts, and fears.

Matthew 8:23-27

23. And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him.
24. And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep.
25. And his disciples came to [him], and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish.
26. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.
27. But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!

Jesus can calm anything that is raging in our lives. The disciples did the right thing here. They got scared and went straight to Jesus with their fear, and he addressed their hurts, doubts, and fears and brought them peace.

4. When we go astray, we lead others the wrong way. Also, when we go the right way, we lead others there.

Proverbs 3:5-7

5. Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.
6. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.
7. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.

God will lead us home when we stray off the path.

Knowing that others will follow our example, we have a responsibility to lead others to Christ.

Matthew 5:16

16. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

The Text:

As we read this, consider the answers to the questions and point above.

John 20:11–John 21:17

11. But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, [and looked] into the sepulchre,
12. And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.
13. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.
14. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.
15. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have

borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

16. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

17. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and [to] my God, and your God.

18. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and [that] he had spoken these things unto her.

19. Then the same day at evening, being the first [day] of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace [be] unto you.

20. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them [his] hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

21. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace [be] unto you: as [my] Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

22. And when he had said this, he breathed on [them], and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:

23. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; [and] whose soever [sins] ye retain, they are retained.

24. But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

25. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

26. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: [then] came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace [be] unto you.

27. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust [it] into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

28. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

29. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed [are] they that have not seen, and [yet] have believed.

30. And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

31. But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

Chapter 21

1. After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he [himself].
2. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the [sons] of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.
3. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.
4. But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.

5. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No.
6. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.
7. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt [his] fisher's coat [unto him], (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.
8. And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes.
9. As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.
10. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.
11. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.
12. Jesus saith unto them, Come [and] dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.
13. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.
14. This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.
15. So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, [son] of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.
16. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, [son] of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.
17. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, [son] of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.