

Mount Olive Wednesday Night Bible Study and Prayer Meeting

August 26, 2020

John 5: 32 - 35

32 There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. 33 Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. 34 But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. 35 He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

To begin tonight, Pastor Tom discussed serious conversations we need to have with people. They are not something he enjoys doing. One example would be ...when did we stop calling sin, sin.

Verse 32 and 33

“There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. 33 Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth.”

*Last week we ended with verse 31, concerning Jesus and His witness. If He talks about himself, the witness is not true (pure or honest or upright). But now in verse 32, Jesus is talking about John the Baptist and how his witness is true (pure, honest, upright). In his Bible, Pastor Tom had written, “John the Baptist was sent for “MY salvation, making his witness very personal.”

*Just as the OT points to Jesus, do we believe that God is so big that all the stuff in the OT that points to Jesus was part of God’s plan to save us (me)?

*So many people don’t even have the faintest idea of that plan and have no idea about moral guidelines (returning to the original question...when did we stop calling sin, sin?)

* Pastor Tom then asked us this question: Who was a witness to you?

Several answers shared included sister, neighbor, friends, church people.

*God gave all of us a 2nd chance, so we need to help others to have a 2nd chance as well by sharing Jesus' forgiveness and salvation.

Pastor Tom then asked - What did that witness do for you?

Shared answers included - made Jesus real to me, an offering to "be there", meals brought in - seeing Jesus in others' kindness and now we want to pay it forward,

*Side note about Soup Mission: To find someone to visit and share Jesus with, remembering that the soup is not only physical soup but also spiritual soup.

*So Jesus sets the standard here in verses 32 and 33:

John the Baptist witnessed about Jesus and bore fruit (us!)

Now we witness Jesus to others and God will show the increase.

This does not mean it must always be done by elegant, fancy words. There are many quiet ways to witness to others as well as big ways too.

Verse 34

"But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved."

*Jesus doesn't need our approval! Or to tell Him what His job is or when He is right or wrong! Jesus is the Son of God; He has the ultimate say in things.

*Maybe you have felt Satan tug on your sleeve to say, "That action is a sin for 'them' but not you. So go ahead...."

Pastor Tom cited a math teacher that both he and Sherri had in school. This man told both of them (at different times) that they could do this, instilling confidence to affect the rest of their lives. We each have the opportunity to do this for someone else.

Pastor Jon added some thoughts: He referred to a book by Karl Meninger, who has a PhD in Theology, called "What Ever Became of Sin?". The premise of the book was that sin is still sin but society calls it by different names through rationalization. Other schools of thought that move us away from calling sin, sin include:

Transactional Analysis - The I'm OK, You're OK idea that relieved us of accountability in our choices.

Situational Ethics - where right and wrong are determined by whatever situation you are in. (Alternative lifestyles for example)

*UMC issues with same-sex marriages and homosexuals in leadership positions have been put on hold but God's rules still say sin is sin. We need to take a stand to tell others this NOW. There is an urgency to get this word out because time could be short. Remembering when we witness to people, we are not responsible for their decisions. We are only responsible for telling them about Jesus.

Several folks recalled how life was growing up, before the 'slow fade' away from God has occurred.

Verse 35

"He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light."

*Here Jesus is describing John the Baptist as being a bright light to whom people gravitated.... For awhile, a season.

*Some of our seasons are shorter than others but everyone has a season. Like kids who grow up so fast.

*Since Sunday's baptism and new members being brought into church, many calls have been received about how the Spirit was really evident in the service. But will the 'sprinkling' idea get 'old' after 3 Sundays? (Pastor Tom will repeat the sprinkling 3 Sundays in a row because people are being brought into the church or being baptized on 3 different Sundays) Or will the Holy Spirit continue to work in remarkable ways all 3 weeks and afterwards?

Now, coming back to being a witness, Pastor Tom asked -

How do we as a church witness, especially during the pandemic?

Thoughts shared:

Because we are not inside the church building, people driving by can see us worshipping outdoors.

Numbers should not influence us to give up church.

The harvest is up to God, not us!

*May the Lord watch between me and thee,
While we are absent one from the other.*
