

Sunday, September 30, 2018

First Baptist Church Smiths Falls

Scripture Reading: Psalm 4 (NIV)

1 Answer me when I call to you, my righteous God. Give me relief from my distress; have mercy on me and hear my prayer. 2 How long will you people turn my glory into shame? How long will you love delusions and seek false gods? 3 Know that the Lord has set apart his faithful servant for himself; the Lord hears when I call to him. 4 Tremble and do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent. 5 Offer the sacrifices of the righteous and trust in the Lord. 6 Many, Lord, are asking, "Who will bring us prosperity?" Let the light of your face shine on us. 7 Fill my heart with joy when their grain and new wine abound. 8 In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety.

Prayer of Illumination:

May the words of my mouth, and the meditation of all our minds, be pleasing to you, O Lord, our rock and our redeemer.

Congregational Prayer: "Our Father"

Our Father, Which Art In Heaven, Hallowed Be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom Come. Thy Will Be Done, On Earth As It Is In Heaven. Give Us This Day, Our Daily Bread, And Forgive Us Our Trespases, As We Forgive Those Who Trespass Against Us. And Lead Us Not Into Temptation, But Deliver Us From Evil. For Thine Is The Kingdom, The Power And The Glory. Forever And Ever. Amen

Message: "We are Set Apart For His Honour,... For His Glory"

Introduction:

- Walt Disney's MGM Studio in Florida features a stunt show out based on the movie "Indiana Jones." Apparently volunteers from the audience help with the show. One observer wrote of how the

stage was set, and one by one the volunteers were put through their paces as the stunt show developed. In the finale was the final volunteer, and he was told to act as if he was in a fight. But when the first punch was thrown, it was convincing to say the least - the man really seemed to get hit - then kicked, and then beaten. As the fight ends, there is silence, and the man laid still. Suddenly, he grins, and jumps up. It became very obvious that he was a plant - sent into the audience. An actor. He was a specially trained person, gifted and set apart for doing the things which the average person cannot.

- Jesus was also set apart, even more than that stunt man. Jesus came to earth to perform duties which others could not. He loved in a manner that others cannot. He defeated death when others could not even try. And did you know that while Jesus was set apart, that we too are set apart by God, and God alone (Psalm 4:3).
- But what does it mean to be set apart? And what are we set apart for?

Part 1: What does it mean to be set apart:

- Let me start to answer that question by reading Romans 13:12-14:
"...let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of light. 13 Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. 14 Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature."
- Many of us claim to have special status - we have the highest Nintendo Score - we get better marks at school - we out-work others in our jobs- we are the best gardener around - we can out-shoot someone else in Basketball. Others are set apart because of the organizations to which they belong - A baseball team, a social club, a special concern group. Not everyone can claim to be a Boy Scout, or a Rotarian, or a town council member.
- Whether you are set apart because of your hobbies, your name, your political beliefs, the car that you drive, or the lifestyle you live - there is one thing which I want to make very clear to you - there is one claim which is exclusive. And yet it can also be shared

by everyone, but it must be said by you. Simply it is this - YOU ARE SPECIAL, AND YOU ARE SET APART by God. Psalm 4:3 says this: *"Know that the Lord has set apart his faithful servant for himself; the Lord hears when I call to him."*

- I want you to notice that you are not set apart because of your birth. You are not set apart because of your name, You are not set apart because of something you have become, or a club you have joined. This Psalm repeats the truth in the Bible that you are set apart because of one thing only: because you are God's faithful servant.
- What does that mean? It means that you honour God with your life. It means that you have repented of your sins to God who can and will forgive them from you. It means that you have walked away from self to be in the light of righteousness, when you have accepted the free gift of grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. It means that you are God's faithful servant. And as God's faithful servant, you are set apart. You are special. You can claim the heritage intended for you by God.
- Let's take a quick aside: Does that mean that we are to be islands onto ourselves - that we are set apart to be on our own? Not at all. We are to then come together in the name of Christ Jesus. Matthew 18:20 records

Jesus saying, *"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am also."* We are set apart to be in union together.

- Let's go back to our reading from Romans 13 to talk about what being set apart means. Romans 13:12 says that being set apart means that we have walked away from darkness. Being set apart means that we put on the armour of God's light. Being set apart means that our behaviour follows our allegiance to our God and our King (v. 13). We are to act as those who have the Good News. We are to talk as those who have the Good News. We are to live as those who have received the wonderful Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Good News of salvation, the life-giving hope and peace of God, for today and for eternity. We, as Romans 13:14 concludes, are to: *"clothe ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ."*
- Let me ask you this: what would it mean to you if you truly clothed yourself in the Lord Jesus Christ? What would it mean to those at school with you? To those at work with you? If you walked down the main street of Smiths Falls clothed in the Lord Jesus Christ would others see a grumpy, joyless, hopeless, mean, selfish person, or would they see life and hope and peace and joy and a desire to show Christ to a hurting and needy world?

- We come here today because we are set apart. Around the world, on this special day which God has made, there are many people who have chosen to do as you have done, and have gathered together to raise their voice in praise to Jesus on the Sabbath. We are set apart. When you are the only believer in your school classroom, you are set apart. When you are the only one who knows the truth of Jesus Christ at your workplace, you are set apart. When there is trouble and dissension and you are the only one with the truth of Christ in your heart, you are set apart. When others feel aches and pain and displeasure with life, you are the one set apart with Christ as your guide, sustainer and friend. When you have hope and peace for today and for eternity, you are the one who is set apart. You are called by God to have His joy, His peace, His hope, His life and to take that with you into the dark and lonely places of this world.

Part 2: Set apart for What:

- Let me remind you of the story from the book of Exodus of the Jewish People. The Hebrews had troubles. They were enslaved in Egypt. They were not free, and they were being treated in a manner in which the Ancient Near east rarely treated their slaves - they were terribly abused.

- To them was the special status - they were the select of God - those who were set apart by God - they were God's Chosen People.
- God heard their cry, God sent Moses, and then God demonstrated His power in a way that even Indian Jones would not have been able to withstand.
- And the result was something incredible - being set apart meant that the world saw God's power - being set apart meant that God's protection was for the Hebrews who were obedient to God only. Being set apart may mean doing something very obvious as a sign that you are set apart - like the Hebrews and the blood on the door posts, or, to relate this to us today, being set apart today could mean standing up for Jesus in a crowd - but the rewards are tremendous.
- The marvellous Gospel Group from my youth, THE SECOND CHAPTER OF ACTS, recorded a song whose lyrics went like this: "We are set apart for His Glory, We are set apart for His honour, We must set our hearts on His glory, For the One who is set apart."
- Being a believer in Jesus Christ, giving your heart to Jesus, living your life for His glory, and choosing to walk with Christ in all things, in all ways, and at all times, being set apart by God for His glory, for His

honour, is the greatest thing you can ever do.

- What are you set apart to do: great things in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord and King.

Part 3: Now what?

- So what should our reaction be? I remember growing up in Kitchener and running outside every recess - it was a foot race to get to on your snow boots and parka first, and make for the biggest pile of snow in the school yard. The first one on top was the king of the hill. Everyone else tried to push the king off of the throne, but everyone knew that the one there first was truly the king.
- Is that what being set apart by Jesus is all about? Being better than others? Are we believers in Jesus Christ only to be able to stand on top of the pile and lord your elevated position over others? Some do. Some believers think that being set apart means being superior. Some think they can do anything or say anything they want because they are set apart. The Bible makes it clear that the answer is no.
- Being set apart means caring for others. It means looking out for the needs of others. It means that others come first in your life, and you are the one holding the door, you are the one who looks for those in need,

and you are the one who is caring and loving toward the vulnerable and the needy. Being set apart means that we accept the burdens of being in love with our neighbour and our school mates, and our co-workers - even the nasty and the rude ones. Having Christ as your example, being set apart by the One who gave His life as an atoning sacrifice that ALL may live, means that we too have the needs of others in mind before we have our own needs. We (Romans 12:15)“,, *Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.*” We are set apart to serve, to love and to care.

- Let’s take a deeper bite into this passage from Romans 12, starting at verse 9; *"Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. 10 Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honour giving preference to one another; 11 not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; 12 rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; 13 distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality. 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. 16 Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the*

humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. 17 Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. 18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.”

- Now that is being set apart for Jesus Christ.

Conclusion:

- We are to be doing for Christ because we are set apart. We are to be acting as those who are set apart. We are to be believing Christians who perform acts of faith, living our lives as a gift back to Jesus who died to give us our lives.
- Let’s give our hearts, our souls to Jesus, resigning ourselves completely to His control, to His love, to His hope for our lives. Let’s dare to be set apart by God alone. And then let’s take our Christ purified hearts out into the world with us and put God’s Word into action as only those who are set apart can.