

The Lakeview Lamp

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." – Psalm 119:105

Jan 3

2010

Choosing the Good Part

Rusty Miller

The crush and rush of the holidays is over, but before I settle into a more laid back routine, I am beset by a thousand responsibilities. There are deadlines at work and deadlines with the bulletin. There are appointments to keep and birthdays to buy for. There are mailings to get out, we have a gospel meeting coming up, and I must begin to read my Bible through. There are school functions and school projects to help with; and before long the boys will be back in baseball, and that will mean three nights a week shot to pieces. And we need to start having more people over to the house and...

And in the midst of all of this, the faint cry of the Lord calls to me from Luke's gospel, chapter 10, verses 41-42: *"Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only a few are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."*

When I slow down long enough to look seriously at my own life, I fear there is far too much Martha in me, and not enough Mary. None of the things which have me so hurried are wrong, but neither was Martha's goal of caring for her guest. The problem is in the neglect of something so important for things which, in the distance of hindsight, are so trivial. The day was coming for Martha when her guest would no longer be there to speak to her, and what would her memory of that day be? Of cleaning and cooking and scurrying about?

I wonder too, what my memories of these days will be?

It is about this time that everyone is caught up in the making of resolutions which, for the most part, only add to the problems of time. Now we must fit in time to exercise and prepare food for a better diet. Or we must complete some project which has gone uncompleted because we ran out of time.

This year, instead of making a series of resolutions destined for failure, make only one: This year, I am determined to choose the good part, which shall not be taken away. That is, I am going to sit and listen to what the Lord has to say. This year, I am going to let a few more things go in order to discover more about what God wants from my life.

Perhaps you have already determined where this is going, for I am not talking about something miraculous. God is not going to speak directly to me or to you, but everything He would have me know about Him and His plan for me is in the scriptures. *"God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world"* (Heb. 1:1-2).

If we are ever to determine God's will for us, then we must study His word. For some of you, this may mean reading the Bible through this year, and we have provided a chart to assist you in doing so. Still others may need less conventional means and methods, and it is for you that this is written. Here are just a few suggestions to draw you closer to "the good part."

1) Choose one book of the Bible and make it your own. First, write down what you think you know about the book. Then, find out everything you possibly can about it, from who wrote it and to whom, to what particular problems it addresses or what particular story it tells. Find out why it would have appealed to its original readers, and ask what changes it might have wrought in their lives. Do word studies on any word which continually occurs in the text (i.e. joy and rejoicing in **Philippians**). When possible, take words that are especially difficult and return to the Greek to see if the original term is clearer than what has been translated.

Break the book down into paragraphs in order to see a more seamless flow than in our usual chapter and verse delineations (for instance, **Isaiah 52:13-15** actually belongs to the first paragraph of chapter 53, giving us a more complete view of the suffering Messiah). When you think you understand it, do two things: Go back and look at your original assessment of the book, then try to write a commentary about the book as you understand it now. No one but you need ever see it, but it will be one more thing which will help you to own the book.

2) Read the **Psalms**. It is David whom God called "*a man after My heart*" (**I Sam. 13:14; Acts 13:22**), and it is David who teaches us what it truly means to praise God. Nowhere else can we go to find the mind of God better revealed for us than in the **Psalms**. If we are to "choose the good part," we must grasp this wonderful book. The **Psalms** teach us true, heartbreaking, knee-wearing repentance (**Ps. 38; 51**) and real, heart-thrilling joy (**Ps. 146-150**). Read the **Psalms**, and read them everyday, and then see if you have not developed a stronger, more tender affection for the things of God. See if you are not inspired to study further in His word. Read the **Psalms** and see if you are not more aware of your dependence upon God for spiritual sustenance and for salvation. Read them and return to them for guidance, for encouragement, for strength.

Remember that David wrote these at his highest spiritual heights and at his most devastating spiritual lows, so that no one is left alone in the **Psalms**. Through them all is the thread of utter and total reliance upon God. Read the **Psalms**.

3) Choose a passage (or group of passages) to memorize. Perhaps you are thinking that maybe you are too old for memory verses, but think of the many things you memorize each day: Phone numbers. Addresses. Social Security numbers. Song lyrics (How many of us who say we cannot memorize anymore can sing dozens of songs on the radio? How did we learn them? Repetition). The memorization of the teachings of God are far more worthy than any of these things.

Pick something important to you. Maybe the beautiful poetry of **Isaiah 40**, which foretells that Israel would not be deserted by God, even in captivity. Maybe Jesus' admonition about riches from the Sermon on the Mount (**Matt. 6:19-34**). Maybe the travails of the apostle Paul (**2 Cor. 11:22-33**) to remind us that it is

News and Notes

Members:

- * Vickie Berry had a tough time with her surgery but is now in the healing process. She is getting her strength back and walking around now.
- * Margie Frizzell has been fitted for a back brace and expects to get it within a week.
- * Thelbert Frizzell continues to have blood pressure problems, though adjustments to his medicine have helped some.
- * Estelle Hayes has improved and hopes to be with us soon.
- * Fran Pickens is having a rough time right now; her condition remains about the same.
- * Connie Cobern is suffering with flu symptoms.
- * Cotton Read is improving and returning to a normal routine.

Friends and Family:

- * Bruce Diamond, friend of John Moore undergoing chemotherapy and radiation treatments.
- * Margaret Gurley, sister of Virginia Bryant passed away Friday. The funeral is to be Monday in Memphis.

Absent: Nicholson family (GA), Pat Richards (Gatlinburg), Chris Gertsch (Dresden), Virginia Bryant (Memphis)

possible to serve God despite manifold trials.

Repeat it until it is second nature to you, so that its application begins to sink into your life as well. The goal here is not memorization for its own sake, but memorization which gives us strength to fight the fight against Satan for another day.

None of these things will automatically make you or me a better Christian, but maybe they will help us to grow closer to our Lord and Savior, and that will make us better. Maybe, when life seems to be spinning out of control, they will cause us to remember “the good part.”



“I shall delight in Your commandments, which I love. And I shall lift up my hands to Your commandments, which I love; and I will meditate on Your statutes.” – Psalm 119:47-48