

## A Good Work

Scripture: Old Testament – Psalm 85:8 – 13

New Testament – Philippians 1:1 – 6 and Jude 17 - 25

6/12/22

If you were to describe your personal experience of God, what words would you use? Some of you might speak of God's holiness because you have seen God do miracles in your life that are beyond all comprehension. Some of you might speak of God's love because no matter what you have been through in your life, you have never felt God has left you. And some of you might describe God's judgment because rarely are you separated from guilt when you make less than perfect decisions. So, how would you describe your personal experiences with God?

I wonder how I would describe my personal experience with God. I grew up in the Catholic Church and I heard a lot more about God's judgment than I ever did about God's love. My teachers were nuns who said that God had many rules and if you did not follow God's rules, you were not as good as those who did. What pressure and anxiety this produced. Every Sunday I stared at a painting of God and his angels all around him. God was an old man sitting on a throne with a lightning bolt in one hand and a sword in the other hand. My dad would often say to his boys – if you do not act right, God will punish you!

As we know it – Anxiety is not a state of peace! I found myself buried in guilt. I found myself always being judged! Anxiety is not a state of peace! I found myself buried in guilt and judgment. Do you find yourself buried in guilt and judgment today? If so let us look at this passage from the book of Psalm 85:8 – 13 which invites us to re-see!

The passage invites us to see God through the lens of love, not just for ourselves, but for our neighbors and the entire created world too. The Lord, we are told, longs to give us what is good. God wants us not only to work for peace, but to be at peace and anxiety is not a state of peace!

I believe one of the main purposes of our worship service is to help us deal with our guilt and to see our God through the lens of love. With this in mind, I am going to borrow a line from the song entitled *'The Future's So Bright, I Gotta Wear Shades'*. But I first must get into the right frame of mind, so let me put on some shades. (Put on shades) The line from the song with a little alteration – *God's love for us is so bright, I gotta wear shades.*

Let me take off these shades because if I do not, I will not be able to see the message!

Our New Testament reading is from Philippians 1:1 – 6. My son Jake now has his real estate license and he is working at Fisk real estate in PA. So I have been looking at the ‘Home for Sale’ section in the newspaper to see if I could find his picture there. I found this ad in the ‘Home for Sale’ section of the newspaper; it read – *Has some nice features but needs work!*

At first, I thought was this an ad for a home or for me? I often feel like the house described in that ad. I have trying days when I feel I have some nice features but I need some work. In fact, I have days when I need a lot of work! How about you? Do you have trying days when you feel you have some nice features but you need some work?

Like the house in the ad, we have some nice features living a Christian life, but we need some work. We sin, we make mistakes, and we fall short of living the way we should. But we must thank God that he continues to work in us. God continues correcting us and guiding us through his Holy Spirit and his Word. And so we can be confident that God will not give up on us, even though we need work. God will work at completing his life changing work of conforming us into his image!

We all need some work. We all have fallen short of living the way we should. But we must thank God that he continues to work in us and through his teaching. God continues to correct and guiding us through his Holy Spirit and his Word. And so we can be confident that God will not give up on us, even though we all need work. God will work at completing his life changing work of conforming all of us into his image!

So how do we build something that will last?

When we build a home, we begin with its foundation to make sure our home can stand through anything. Then we add the structure which holds everything together, and finally we complete our home with insulation to make our house suitable for living.

In our scripture passage from the Book of Jude, he gives us a blueprint for a Christian community.

Our foundation is faith! Faith is the essential foundation on which our community is built. Faith gives us the confidence to stand together in God through any of the storms we encounter.

Our structure is prayer! Prayer is the frame that holds us together. Prayer allows us to be connected to each other through the God of our faith. Even when we are not together, prayer is what unites us.

Our insulation is God's love! God's love sustains us, shelters us, and saves us. As a community, we provide the insulation of God's love to the communities surrounding us and helping others in their time of need.

We must depend on Christ to be the foundation on which we can build a home for the Spirit of God to dwell.

Let us pray:

Loving God, you long for our bodies, our families, and our neighbors to be at peace. You long for us to see you rightly, as the giver of all good gifts. Surround us with a new vision for our lives because we want to see you as you are.

Loving God, thank you that you never give up on us and that you continue to forgive us; guide us and work through us. Help us all to become more like your Son, in whose name we pray.

Lord, continue to build us as a community in our faith in you. Sustain us through our prayers and wrap us in your love.

AMEN.