

Greetings to all the Saints at Manatee Life,

SCRIPTURE:

Isaiah 53:6 (MSG) – Larger reading: Isaiah 53:4-12

“Seek God while he's here to be found, pray to him while he's close at hand.”

STORY:

The caller telephoned a home. A small child answers with a whisper, “Hello.” The caller asked, “Is your mom or dad home?” The child whispers, “Yes.” “May I speak with one of them please?” “No.” “Why?” “Because they’re busy.” “Is there someone else there?” the caller inquired. “Yes, my grandpa and grandma, but they’re busy too.” the child whispered. “Well, is there anyone else there that I might speak with?” “A policeman and fireman are here, but they are busy too.” “Hmmm, what are all these people busy doing?” “They’re looking for me.”

OBSERVATION:

And so it goes with our relationship with God. It would appear that we really do want to be found, but we are too busy hiding from God. We want a relationship, but God has to do all the heavy lifting. We want a daily walk with God, but we aren’t really ready to do anything meaningful to make it happen.

As Max Lucado states in, And The Angels Were Silent, pages 15, 78: *“Simplify your faith by seeking God for yourself.... You got a Bible? You can study. You got a heart? You can pray. You got a mind? You can think.”* The tools for faith development are in our possession ... now we have to use them.

Scripture directs us to seek God. Go out of our way to find him. Let nothing stand in our way. The resources are all available so use them. And still we hide as if the spiritual walk is a game of hide-n-seek ... we hide and God has to find us.

A gentleman complained that he doesn’t get a lot out of coming to church. He expressed that he got very little from the sermons. He often shared of his desire to grow a deeper faith. And besides the people at church hardly ever spoke to him. Out of curiosity I checked his attendance record. He came about once every 8 weeks. Not a good start. Then I asked if he had a Bible. “Yes, but I don’t read it because it is too hard to understand.” Nor did he attend Sunday school. In essence he was hiding from God. He wanted to be found, but he wasn’t doing anything to make it real.

If we want to learn how to swim we’ve got to get in the pool and get wet. Not once or twice or even three times, but constantly. Every day. All the time. In the pool, kicking those legs, working the arms. The same is true with a relationship with God.

Another way to look at it is that it is like our relationship with our spouse. When we decided that we wanted to have a deeper and more meaningful relationship with her or him ... maybe even marriage ... we went out of our way to be in their presence. We

dated constantly. We went wherever they wanted us to go. We expressed ourselves. We bought them flowers or a box of candy or a piece of jewelry. We worked at the relationship until we both fell in love.

And so it is with our relationship with God. God did find us in Jesus Christ. Now it is up to us. He came. He continues to come. He seeks. He desires. But we have to come out of hiding. We at least have to want to be found. We cannot leave it to the preacher or our spouse or a teacher or some other significant spiritual leader in our life to take us by the hand and pull us out of hiding.

It doesn't make sense? Like any subject we learned at school. Initially if we didn't understand math either or English sentence structure or history or science ... until the teachers kept exposing us to the subject. Evidentially it began to make sense. It isn't any difference with God ... it really isn't!

QUOTE:

“One of the most challenging aspects for those who are seeking to find the God of their understanding for the first time is His formlessness. It can be difficult to believe in, and connect with, something that cannot be seen. Perhaps this is because although God is in all things He is felt and experienced on levels that relate directly to the condition of our own hearts.” – Marta Mrotek

PRAYER:

God, help us to come out of hiding and stop playing games with our relationship with you. Help us to grow as we seek you out. Open our eyes, our ears, our heart to your reality. And, by the way, thank you for not giving up on us.

And the faith journey continues, Pastor Jim
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