

Greetings in the name of the living Savior,

SCRIPTURE:

James 2:26 (CEB) – Larger reading: James 2:14-26

As the lifeless body is dead, so faith without actions is dead.

STORY:

A man, on bended knee, pleaded his desperate financial situation before God asking to win the lottery. His cries were deep, emotions ran wild and the tears were real, but come the next day nothing ... he did not win. So now more desperate, he went back to God asking to win the lottery. His financial angst this time was deeper and his plea was more emotional, but come the next day still nothing ... he did not win. And, so, the third time he took his horrible situation before God and in mid-prayer God spoke, “Son, work with me here, at least buy a ticket!”

OBSERVATION:

And so it goes for most of us ... through prayer and meditation we lay before the Almighty our life and its needs – emotional, mental and physical ... and then sit back and wait for THE answer, only to be disappointed that no answer is forth coming. We fail to understand that after we pray we must get to work. At least 50%, if not 90%, of any solution to our emotional, mental and physical state is found in the sweat equity that comes from us.

And before anyone says it, let me state up front that the old adage: “God helps those who help themselves.” Is not biblical. That simply comes out of our Protestant Work Ethic mindset. Actually, I’m working on a sermon series called “Half-truths” ... they generally accepted phrases that sound like they are scriptural, but in reality are not. Or, as I’ve been told on more than one occasion ... “Well, preacher, if it ain’t biblical it should be” – as a way of dismissing my input to their thinking.

We teach this to our children, don’t we? They come to us with their requests and in helping them we enlist them in finding the solution (*or at least we should enlist them instead of doing it for them*). Anything that requires something from us is more appreciated than something that is simply handed to us. If it comes too easily it can be discarded without much thought, but if we have to work at it, struggle for it, make plans to achieve it and wait for its coming then when it arrives we can celebrate and feel satisfied ... a deep, long lasting satisfaction ... it is the “*at least buy a ticket*” syndrome or as I have shared (*and will share again*) the story of Miss Hattie who, even though she had painful crippling arthritis, still walked the mile plus to church regardless of the weather. She’d be there Sunday morning, Sunday evening and Wednesday night rain or shine and even refusing to be “rescued” from the elements stating: “Getting there is half the joy.”

If we expect God to do everything for us then we just might find ourselves still wandering in the desert years later without ever experiencing the joy of coming into the Promised Land.

QUOTE: by Ophelia Adams

*Unanswered yet? Nay, do not say ungranted;
Perhaps your part is not yet wholly done;
The work began when first your prayer was uttered,
And God will finish what He has begun.
Though years have passed since then, do not despair;
His glory you shall see, sometime, somewhere.*

PRAYER:

Gracious God, we confess that we have two feet and two hands that too often sit idle. Please Lord, put us to doing. Allow our prayers result in action.

And the faith journey continues, Pastor Jim
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Have a great Saturday and I'll "see" you tomorrow in worship via Facebook (Manatee United Methodist Church).

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