

March 23 Worship
3rd Sunday In lent
Greeters- Linda Stacy,
Readers- Wayne Stacy

Announcements/Joys-

Time Of Quiet Meditation- *“The fear of the Lord is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate.”* Proverbs 8:13

Opening Scripture- Isaiah 55:1-9(page 635)

Opening Chorus- 363- There Is A Balm In Gilead

Responsive Call To Worship-

Leader: Your steadfast love, O Lord, is better than life.

People: Therefore our lips will praise you.

Leader: We will bless you as long as we live.

People: We will lift up our hands and call on your name.

Leader: For you have been our help.

People: In your presence we sing for joy.

Hymn- 551- Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah

Unison Prayer- We gather today, O Lord of Life, seeking fullness. Not the fullness our world offers, but fullness that comes from You. We spend so much of our lives on things that do not count, things that promise much and give little. Help us now, today, to find fulfillment in Your love. May we discover all You have to give, and seek You while we yet have the gift of days. Lift us O God, to a higher plane of living, as we lift our hearts and minds and souls into Your Holy presence. Make it so Lord, as we pray in the way You taught, saying...*Lord's Prayer*....

Gloria Patri- Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,

World without end. Amen, Amen.

Old Testament Scripture- Psalm 63:1-8(page 498)

Special Music-

Gospel Scripture- Luke 13:1-9(page 906)

Children's Time/Echo Prayer/Passing of the Peace

Hymn- 507- Rock Of Ages

New Testament Scripture- 1 Corinthians 10:1-13(page 997)

Message

"I Got This, I Think"

How many times have we taken on a job and just about the time we think we are accomplishing something, it goes wrong. Some minor detail gets in the way and we find ourselves stuck. Perhaps it is not a minor detail, it is a major one, and our project seems doomed for failure. I can't speak for you but my first thought is usually; "I got this. I can handle it," as whatever it is I am doing slowly falls apart. Usually, there is someone around who could have helped me avoid the failure but I didn't ask for their help. Why? What is it about us that resists asking for help? Perhaps it is our ego, or the fact that we are too stubborn to admit we can't do it all alone. There may be an element of shame in having to ask for help, although we should all be comfortable enough with someone who would gladly assist us. Whatever the reason, we want to do it ourselves.

Physical tasks are not the only thing that we may need help with from time to time. Everyday decisions can often times require us to seek assistance from someone with a bit more expertise than we have. As smart as we think we are, we don't have all the answers, even when we think we do. There are times that we must let go and ask for help, knowing that we may have to take a bit of grief for doing so. Maybe that is one of the reasons we resist asking, knowing that we may have to hear; I told you so, once in a while.

In our day to day lives, there are many times that we find ourselves needing assistance and we don't know where to turn. We tend to overlook the one being who can help us the most, God. In Paul's letter to the Romans, chapter 3 verse 11, he says this; "There is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God." These words were taken by Paul from the Psalms of David and are a sweeping declaration about how we perceive God. Can it be true that there is no one who looks to God, no one who understands God? Is it possible that all of humanity has overlooked who or what God truly is? Do we lack an honest understanding of God. I would bet that at some time or another, we have all cried out to God for help. The question is; are we asking a god (small g) or are we asking the true God? There is a difference.

If we take a good hard look at our world today, we will discover that our perceptions of God tend to be all over the place. How we relate to God is like looking through a poor set of glasses, at different angles our vision may be blurred. It is not easy to see God clearly when we are searching for God with a fog of misunderstanding all around us. It is only when the brightness of God burns through the fog that we can begin to see the truth. Most of the time, we have a hard time getting a clear look at God because our minds are saturated with misconceptions and deceit about who God is. The only way to clearly see God and have a relationship with Him is to communicate with Him through prayer, study and worship.

Seeking God is not always an easy thing to do. For most people, myself included, the time I spend seeking God the most is when I find myself in need of help. If we really want God to assist us in our lives, we need to ask God to reveal Himself to us so that we can interact with Him in a way that shows we truly want Him, not just for the moment, but forever. If we only turn to God when we need help, don't be surprised if God doesn't show up. We have this idea that God is there only when we require help. The truth is that God desires for us to need Him always, not just now and then. How do you feel when someone only comes around when they need something from you? How do you think God feels when the only time He hears from us is

when we are in trouble? How about when the trouble is over and we find a way to take credit by saying; I knew I could handle this myself. Why can't we give God the credit?

There are events in our lives when it seems as if God is not there when we need Him most. Perhaps we feel that we have a relationship with God but, for some reason, He is not there. Have you ever asked; where is God anyway? Why am I having such a hard time finding God? Just because we feel that God is far from us doesn't mean that He is. God has told us time and again that "I will never fail you or forsake you." God is always near us. We become so caught up in trying to fix it ourselves sometimes, that we refuse to see or hear God when He is right there beside us. It may just be possible that God is attempting to show us the answer to our problem but we aren't listening. Do we, sometimes, reject God's advice?

What happens to us when we reject God's advice or guidance? There are those who say that if we don't do what God tells us to do, we are condemned to failure. I am not so sure that is correct. God gives us the freedom to make up our own minds on almost everything. We each have the absolute right to do things our own way. Don't you think, however, that it might be in our best interest to try it God's way now and then. If I take on a project, knowing little to nothing about what I'm doing, wouldn't it be wise for me to take the advice of someone who is an expert? If I ask God for help and then turn around and do it my way, knowing that God said do it this way, what results should I expect? God is not going to punish me for ignoring His help, I am going to punish myself for being stubborn. Rejecting God's help and advice is one thing, don't make the mistake of rejecting God.

I have heard the question asked; why can't I live just fine without God in my life? Contrary to the claims of atheists and agnostics through the centuries, mankind cannot live without God. Yes, mankind can have a mortal existence without acknowledging God, but not without the fact of God. Remember that no matter what you want to call Him, God is real. Something or someone, created everything, sustains everything and provides everything. I cannot and will not believe that all we are and all that is around us just happened. It is in our best interest to believe in and follow God. Look around your world and tell me that there is not a power that put us here. Tell me that we, us, mortal humans, have all the answers.

We need and want God in our lives, even if we don't admit it. We are capable of great things in our lives. With God helping us, we are capable of much greater things than we can imagine. Stop trying to do it all by yourself. You may think you got this, guess again. Praise Be to God. Amen.

Prayers of People/Prayer- We do rejoice in you, God our God We rejoice in your steadfast love and faithfulness, a rich feast for our souls. We rejoice that you shelter us in the shadow of your wings, strong protection against the storms. We rejoice that you are more powerful than the troubles that trouble us. We rejoice that, when we wander far from You, losing our way, you do not leave us on our own. You come to us in Jesus, your Word made flesh. dwelling among us, full of your grace and your truth. O God who has drawn near, you know us as we are: the songs of praise tell only part of the story. We have wandered down many paths, seeking happiness or glory, we have trusted in lesser gods, looking for safe haven from the dangers that threaten. But the deep hungers are not satisfied; the fears and anxieties still haunt us. And now we know: our souls thirst for you, the living God. Show us your power and your glory. Take our weariness and send your Holy Spirit to renew our hope. Take our fears and grow new courage in

us. Take our resignation to the way things are and pull us into your passionate love. Lord Jesus, you meet us in the wilderness of our days, and fill us with the bread of life. You meet us in the desert of our loneliness and streams of living water start to flow. We drink deeply of the gift of your presence, and we rejoice, for you have made us glad. In Jesus name, Amen.

Closing Hymn- 511- Lead Me Lord

Benediction- As you go from this place, may the blessings of the God of life, the Christ of love, and the Spirit of grace be upon you this day and forevermore. Amen.