

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye over you . . . Psalm 32:8

BACK TO SCHOOL!

This weekend we will wrap up our two week mini-series 'Back to School.' Pastor Jason spoke on this last weekend, now it's 'my turn!'

What images do the words 'Back to School' conjure up in your mind?

For some of us, heading back to school stretches our minds and memories out over many lonnnngggg years!



For me, it's been 41 years since I graduated from the Maine-Endwell Senior high school! (How did that happen?)

For others reading this, perhaps going back to school was not so long ago. Or perhaps you are still in school and have just gone back to school (Chambersburg started school two weeks ago today!)

When I went back to school, it was not until after Labor Day. And that is still the case in upstate NY. They attend school till nearly the end of June, but don't start up again until after Labor Day. (I suspect they have many more 'snow days' built into the schedule up there than we have down here!)

Back to school memories for me:

- The sadness of leaving another summer behind; summers of making money, swimming, exploring new freedoms, going on a beach vacation.
- The excitement of meeting friends I had not seen for ten weeks!
- The fear of meeting teachers who would be difficult, and of taking classes that could over-tax my scholastic ability! (OK, fear of flunking out!)

Well, in the current context - what I'm thinking about today - at Salem we are headed back to another season of 'Christian Education.' Can we ever really be done with our education, our training as disciples of Jesus Christ? I think not! I believe that following Christ, learning the mind of Christ, becoming obedient to the Word of Christ . . . these things are a lifelong endeavor. We don't ever finish learning - or finish the school of discipleship - until the Lord calls us home! Even when we are bound up in a nursing home, and have a rather small and confined life, we can still learn lessons about our attitudes during times of suffering, about humility, about sharing the joy of Christ despite our pain.

As Christians, we are to be lifelong learners. Have you ever met a lifelong learner? These are people who are always seeking to learn new and wonderful things! They are alive and engaged in the business of life, and eager to grow in knowledge and wisdom, even at an advanced age. Here in Chambersburg, at Wilson College, there is a forum for retired people, the IRP: 'Institute for Retired Persons' (or something like that).



Retirees come and listen to lectures about all kinds of interesting things weekly, sometimes twice a week, and they also go on bus trips to learn more about our local and national history. Lifelong learning - it's great!

One great way to learn something, is to have the responsibility of teaching that 'something' to others. Some of our most wise and spiritually mature people have gotten to that point in life because someone, along the way, asked them to teach Sunday School. Preparing lessons for Sunday School really gives you a close encounter with God's Word.

It forces you to really dig for understanding, to really grapple with what God's Word means for us today!

So, a few things to think about today:

- **KEEP GROWING!** At Salem, we are blessed to have many venues in which to be lifelong learners - students of Jesus! Of course there are the sermons. But beyond that, great Sunday School classes. And our Family Night (Wednesday) program is starting real soon - September 13th. We also have a men's Bible Study that meets monthly, led by Chester Mott. And we have ladies mentoring groups, which have been organized by Linda Taylor. Small groups like these are where we can really connect with others, talk on a more personal level, be inspired by the real life stories of others, and also - we can be held more accountable for our own walk with Jesus!
- **HELP WANTED!** We also have many opportunities to GROW by teaching, and serving! Right now, we are trying to strengthen how we minister to children, in our Children's Ministry department. We could sure use more teachers and helpers! Also, did you realize that teaching church children about Jesus actually begins in the nursery, with the consistent loving care children receive there! We are always in need of more nursery workers. We also have youth groups on Wednesday nights, fall, winter and spring for little kids and grade school kids, our intermediate and junior youth groups. We also offer 'Kid Zone' to pull the younger kids (age 4 - 2nd grade) out of the adult 11 AM service to receive a kid-friendly instruction during the sermon time. Annually, we offer Vacation Bible School, but it takes some effort and planning throughout the whole year. And for our older kids, our youth, we have the One Way Youth Ministry ably directed by our youth pastor, Slugg Kissinger. Would the Lord cause you to grow if you were to serve along with others in some of these serving places? Sure he would! Here's who to contact:
 - Children's Ministry, Child Youth Groups, & Kid Zone: Amy Elliot (717) 530-3649
 - Nursery Ministry: Jessi Nicholson (717) 372-4916
 - Vacation Bible School: Mindy Kissinger (717) 267-2631
 - Senior High Ministry - Daryl 'Slugg' Kissinger (717) 263-4123

The message on Sunday is aimed to encourage us to 'GO BACK TO SCHOOL' by either committing to continue learning (through study, through participation in a study group) or by TEACHING, or HELPING, particularly in some of our child-focused ministries, which we are working hard to revitalize just now.

Will we be faithful in growing, learning, and teaching? You will discover, should you attend worship this Sunday, September 3rd, that we are ALL commissioned by Jesus to teach others - as we make disciples. May the Lord bless you as you seek to be faithful to His calling in your life!

HURRICANE HARVEY RELIEF SPECIAL OFFERING

One of our members, Frank Gaugler, recently suggested we have a love offering for Samaritan's Purse, a strong Christian disaster relief organization led by Franklin Graham. They are already on the scene in Houston, Texas, helping families to mop up and recover from Hurricane Harvey. They are desperate for two things: Volunteers, and funds!

We can help with funds near - immediately. This weekend, we will have an opportunity to give a special offering for Hurricane Harvey relief. You can put a check made out to Salem UB Church or cash in your regular envelope or a special envelope, and put it in the offering this Sunday. Just make sure you mark it as designated for 'Harvey Relief.'

Our Missions Ministry team, directed by Steve and Sally Mearkle, will add to the amount we have given in the love offering through the mission funds they manage, and a check will be sent out to Samaritan's Purse shortly.

One thing I really like about Samaritan's Purse, is that beyond just helping people to recover from physical losses, they also address their spiritual needs by sharing the love of Christ with each family they serve. Many have come to a saving knowledge of Jesus through this wonderful ministry.

In addition to giving financial help, I would love to see some men from Salem (or ladies!) bring about a relief team that could travel down to Texas for a short term relief effort. Samaritan's Purse provides everything; tools, lodging, meals, we just need to get there. So, pray about that! One of my first experiences at Salem was traveling down to the Gulf Coast for Hurricane Katrina relief with a multi-church team led by Tim Wilmot. It was a very positive and uplifting experience!



LOST SOMEONE YOU LOVE? GRIEVING? WE CARE!

Several of our ministries are teaming up to offer some comfort to the many families who have lost loved ones in recent years. And there have been so MANY who have departed the land of the living, hopefully for greener shores. Parents. Wives. Husbands. Children. Even some grandchildren have passed on - much too soon, by our standards. So much grief, and pain.

Therefore, we are holding a '**corporate memorial service**' for all who would want to come, on **Sunday, September 10th**. Here's how it will work.



At **6:00 PM** we will all gather in the Community Center for a fellowship meal, put on for us by church volunteers. You don't have to bring anything, just yourselves. We can eat, and share, and just be surrounded by the comfort and love of other folks who are part of the Salem family. At **7:00 PM**, we will move up to the Sanctuary. Aldean Saufley will lead us in some comforting hymns of the faith, and we will have times of prayer, and scripture readings, and we will name those who have been lost to us from this life.

We are hoping for a good turnout of folks to remember, to pray, and to be comforted by the Lord during this special service.

Then, as Family Night begins on September 13, there will be a special 'Grief Share Group' hosted by Sally Wadel, who has been trained as a grief counselor. It will be a video-based study, with people who have loved and lost giving testimony about what they have been through. Their sharing can open doors to our own sharing of our own painful experiences of death within our families. And if you don't want to share, you don't have to. Just being with others, and knowing you are not alone in your journey of grief can be very helpful.

So, those two opportunities are before us:

✝ ***Sunday, September 10; Corporate Memorial Service and Fellowship Meal***

✝ ***Wednesday, September 13, Beginning of 'Grief Share Group' to run throughout the Fall season.***

SALEM PRAYER CORNER . . . Please be in prayer for

✝ Ministry Needs:

- Potential Salem relocation to North Pointe
- Leading new Grief Share group: Sally Wadel
- Pastor Lascase, ministry in Haiti
- Renewal of Children's Ministry area
- Teachers and Helpers for Children's Ministry

✝ Our Nation

- Response to Hurricane Harvey
- Renewal of national purpose
- Healing of racial divisions
- Collaboration of political parties

✝ Hospital, or recovery

- Judy Lindley, bad infection
- Gladys Bennett, Cardio-Conversion

- Becky Weaver, recovery from hysterectomy
- Jen Ross, recovering from bad fall
- Margaretta Young, October hernia surgery
- Doris Guyer, heart failure, weakness
- Lisa Sattazahn, Knee Surgery recovery
- Jerry Paisley's grandchild, Tori
- Marcy Wolford, PTSD

✝ Suffering from pain, discomfort, illness, treatment

- Essie Knouse, recent stroke
- Trey Mummert, broken wrist
- Julianna Shubert, ongoing disorder
- Bob Paxton - compression fracture spine
- Ray Bricker, Parkinsons

LAST WORDS: COMMITMENT

A bit of humor:

A journalist was assigned to the Jerusalem bureau of his newspaper. He gets an apartment overlooking the Wailing Wall. After several weeks he realizes that whenever he looks at the wall he sees an old Jewish man praying vigorously.

The journalist wondered whether there was a publishable story here. He goes down to the wall, introduces himself and says: "You come every day to the wall. What are you praying for?"

The old man replies: "What am I praying for? In the morning I pray for world peace, then I pray for the brotherhood of man. I go home, have a glass of tea, and I come back to the wall to pray for the eradication of illness and disease from the earth."

The journalist is taken by the old man's sincerity and persistence. "You mean you have been coming to the wall to pray every day for these things?"

The old man nods.

"How long have you been coming to the wall to pray for these things?"

The old man becomes reflective and then replies: "How long? Maybe twenty, twenty-five years."

The amazed journalist finally asks: "How does it feel to come and pray every day for over 20 years for these things?"

"How does it feel?" the old man replies. "It feels like I'm talking to a wall."

Well, that man was truly committed - to pray every day, even if it felt like he was talking to a wall!

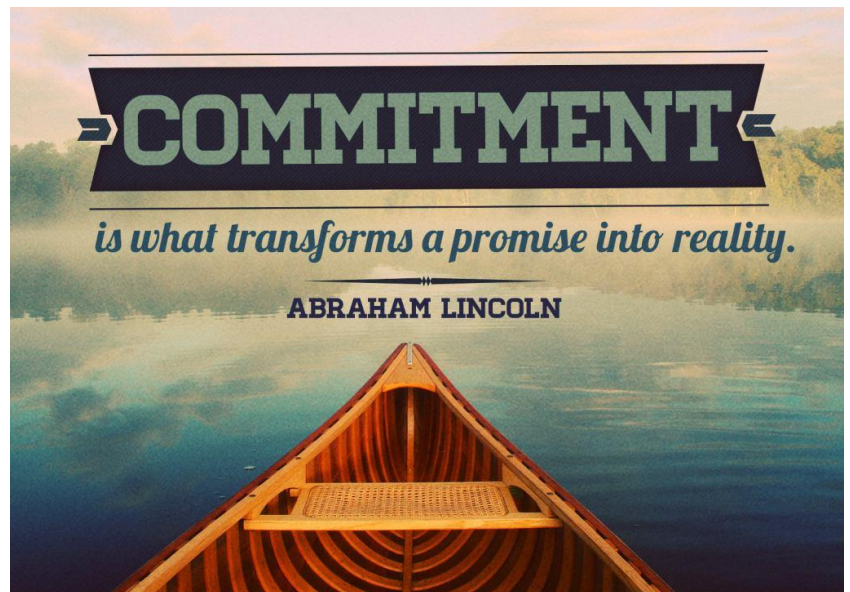
I suspect a lot of pastors, when preaching, feel like they are 'talking to a wall.' Is anyone really listening? Or responding?

One of the things I have become concerned about in our times, in our nation, and in our church, is that we seem to be having a 'crisis of commitment.'

People are so inwardly focused on themselves (me, myself and I) that they do not have time to demonstrate much commitment, if any, to the bigger, deeper issues of our day. In particular, in churches, many who used to be committed to serving Christ in various ways in the church, no longer are willing to serve. They expect it's someone else's turn, and perhaps rightly so. And those who have never served, are completely 'tapped out' with their own obligations, so they don't serve either. And thus, we have a crisis - not enough people to serve to make the church function as it should or could.

This is particularly evident in children's ministry. Yes, teaching children in Sunday School or on Wednesday nights is a big commitment. It takes some time, some energy. It requires prioritizing other things in your life, and pushing some things further down the list. It requires us to have an attitude of 'I am serving' rather than 'who is serving me?'

I think a well known idea in Christianity is the idea of tithing our finances (whether we do it or not, we understand, it is 10% that is specified by God's Word).



But what about our time? What portion of our time are we willing to commit to God's Work, and God's Worship? If we devote three hours per week to 'go to church' (and that includes our travel time), that represents less than 2% of our time. And that's if we come every week. If we come every other week, that represents less than 1% of our time.

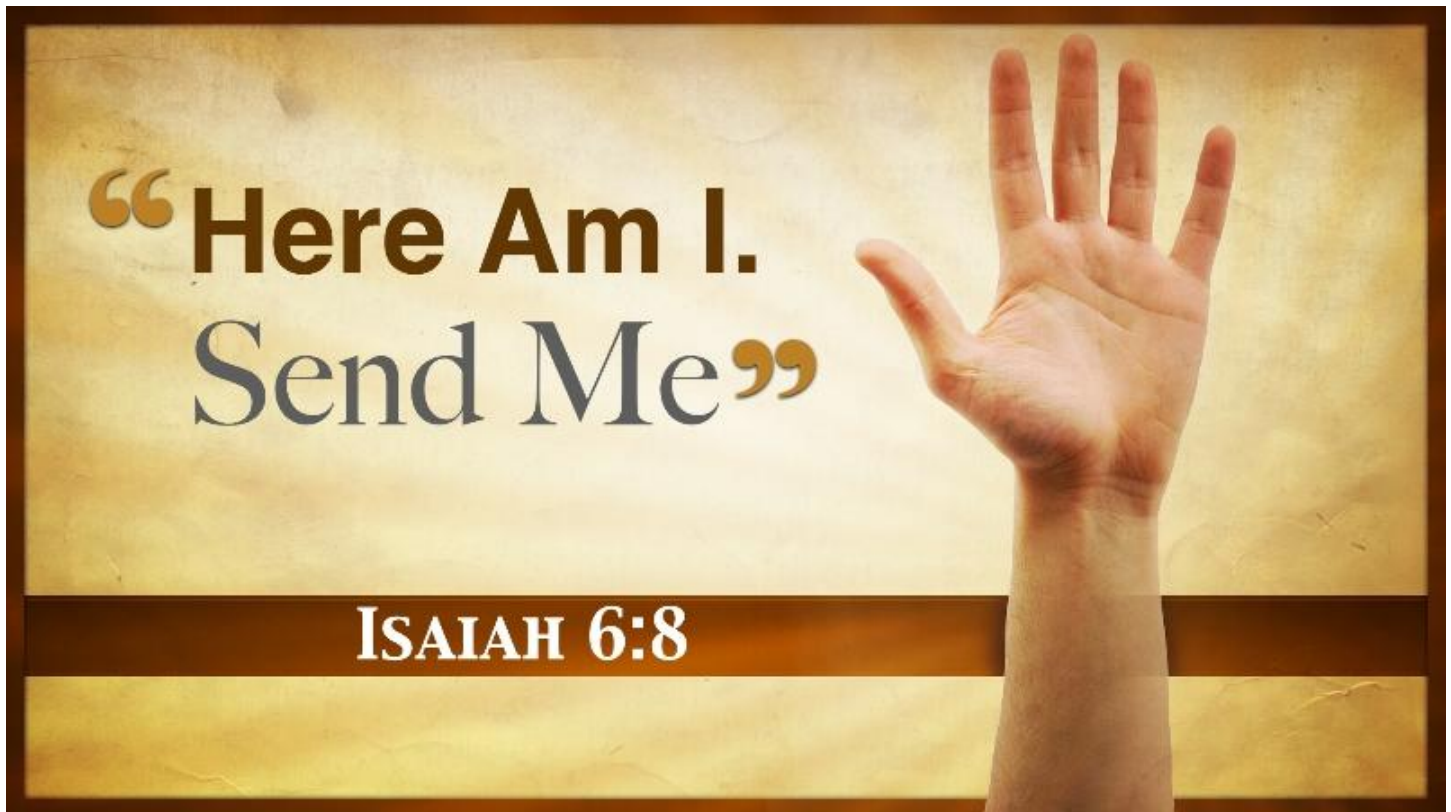
How much time should we commit to the Lord, to advance HIS agenda (including the agenda of teaching our children to obey everything Jesus has commanded, ref. Matthew 28:18-20)?

Well, it's a good question. When the Lord got hold of me way back when, he led me into reformatting my entire life to serving him - and that includes caring for the children we now have.

My goal is for the Lord to have 100% of my heart, and for me to direct my thoughts to him during all my waking hours. I am still far from the mark on that, but that's my goal.

What's yours? What portion of your time do you feel would represent being faithful, were you to devote that to serving the Lord? Would you pray over helping out with children's ministry? We at Salem are committed to building the next generation for Christ . . . and we need **YOUR** help!

In Christ; Pastor Art



Isaiah 6:8: *Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”*