

St. Paul's Herald

October 2025

LETTER FROM PASTOR

You've probably heard it said, and maybe are even tired of hearing it, – *change is a part of life*. The changing leaves here in the Endless mountains remind us that Fall has come. But the change of the seasons and weather is certainly not the only changes that come in life. Whether it is ringing in of a new calendar year, a new school or job, new family or life situations; there are changes that we know are coming but are still necessary to deal with. Then there are changes that take place that we do not expect like losing a job, serious health issues, or a loved one moving away or dying. No matter what the change is, anticipated or not, a response on our part is required. Oftentimes our response is to turn to people and things we know. Such people or things allow us to cope with change because they are comfortable. During a time of change, something that is familiar and comfortable is what God designed for us to use to process what we are experiencing. If what we know and turn to is constructive, like a trusted friend or favorite hobby, the stress of change can be managed. However, if what we know and turn to is destructive, like alcohol or violent behaviors, the realities of change will only be exacerbated. What we know and are familiar with in life matters a great deal when it comes to change.

What or who do you know? What/who do you turn to when change comes? When speaking to the church in Corinth about what/who is most important to know, St. Paul writes “For I decided

to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified (2 Cor. 2:3).” The Corinthian Christians had a problem, division in the church. The reason, because too many Corinthians sought to ‘know’ anyone and anything besides Christ. Paul’s solution to them was that knowing Jesus Christ was the only way to deal with their division. Christ was the one who could bring them unity.

While it may not be division you are facing, whatever you are facing comes with change. And just like the Corinthians, what/who you know matters for your response to that change. The best way to face change, or anything in life, is to know Jesus and Him Crucified. To know Jesus and His will for your life, you need to be in Holy Scripture. St. Paul tells us in 2 Timothy 3:16 that “all scripture is breathed out by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness.” The more time you spend in scripture the more you know Jesus. Make a point of spending time in God’s Word and prayer each day. (I know for myself that doing so helps reorient my entire outlook on whatever is going on in my life.) This will help you know Jesus more so that you will be more likely to turn to Him when changes come. Change is inevitable, so know Jesus through scripture - by doing so you will have the best tools God has given you to deal with whatever comes your way.

In Christ,

Pastor Josh

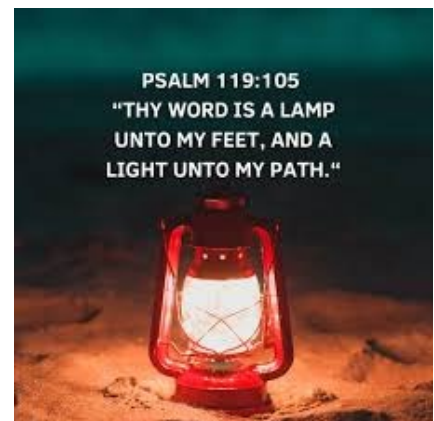
CONNECTING TO GRACE

You are likely to have heard this somewhere recently - "so and so (person) *said* blank". The problem is you are not sure if that is really true. We live in a culture and time where words are becoming more scrutinized because of varying ideologies and the unique ability to view people's thoughts in real time on social media. Once upon a time, a person would have to talk to someone to know what they had to say. Now vast amounts of unsolicited thoughts are posted for viewing, by complete strangers, who might barely know the name of the person who said them. A person's words can be full of hate and disdain for others (as is common on social media) or full of love and encouragement. Even people we want to trust, like doctors, might say things that contradict conventional medical practice. We not only have to be aware of who is saying certain things, but also cognizant of what they are saying to determine if it is believable. Unfortunately, this is not so easy in the digital world of competing voices.

Did you know that the most common word verb in the Bible is 'say/said'? This is actually not a surprise. In English, we use 'say/said' to express the words of someone else. All languages have at least one, usually more, words to report the thoughts or opinions of another person. The Bible is the same. The word 'say/said' is used to report thoughts of various speakers. Not all speakers and their words in the Bible are the same. Just as people today use their words to tear down, so too did some in the Bible. In the midst of stories of other people's thoughts and actions comes the words of God himself and His story of everything. God's words, however, are different from anyone else in the created universe. The Words God speaks are not just personal thoughts that can be quoted to make a stronger point or assert moral authority. God speaks so that we might not only exist but also know Him and His sustaining love for us.

The very first verb of the Bible is 'created' from Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." It is in verse 3 though that we learn how He did it; "and God said, 'Let there be...'" And when God said it, it happened at His Word, just as He had spoken. When God says something, we can believe it because when God speaks fantastic things happen. God's Word creates and sustains life. God showed His love and grace for His creation through the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, who died for us while we were still sinners (Rom. 5:8). This Word of grace is far greater than any words or actions of any other preacher, teacher, writer or speaker who has ever lived. God's Word is not just sage and timeless advice, but "living and active, [and] sharper than any two-edged sword...(Heb. 4:12)." God's Word is just what a world full of sin, malice, and hate needs, both to understand right from wrong, and to have hope that comes only through grace found in scripture and in the person of Jesus Christ!

There is no denying that there are lots of words being said and thoughts being expressed in our world today. Amid all the chaos, God's Word stands as a beacon of light. What God says is always true and can be believed. His Word can light the way in a sin darkened world. Why not use God's own words that He has given through the writers of Holy Scripture, to be uplifted, strengthened, and guided in your own life. Read them, pray them, allow them to flow through your mind and heart. Don't know who or what to believe. Believe God and His Word(s) of grace - it's the best place to start!



The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. John 1:14a