



2nd Sunday of Lent
February 28, 2010

Message: Life Beyond the Credit Cards - Preparation

Couple hunters get six elk in Northern Canada, but the pilot says plane can't handle weight.
They protest, got six last year and pilot agreed to take all six, so he relents.

But they crash and the one hunter asks the other if he knows their location.

He says that it is about the same place they crashed last year.

Making mistakes is not a bad thing, it can even be good when we learn from mistakes.

The real problem is that human nature seems to keep making the same mistakes.

We just don't seem to learn from history – humanity's or our own.

We move into the first phase of our Life Beyond the Credit Cards – Do Something series.

Life is hard – raising kids, finding a good job, making ends meet, etc.

So what does God have to say to such? Am I left all to my own to struggle?

It doesn't have to be that way.

God has come before you and given you all the preparation you need to live life well.

Think about that – God knows what you will need before you need it.

And God has provided all the resources you need.

We often think we don't have enough money – just need \$10,000 more.

We often think that we aren't good enough – others are more suited.

We often think we don't have time – maybe after kids/too old, done my part.

So what are the resources God has given us?

God has given us the Holy Spirit so that you are never alone.

Last week we heard about Jesus being tempted, but he wasn't alone.

He was actually driven into the circumstance by the guiding of the Spirit.

That may not always feel good, but it is meaningful.

Think of your own difficult journeys, what if God is leading you there/is present there?

Might that not give you more confidence and joy?

What if the important phases of our lives were actually the most difficult?

Be confident that God is there with you through His Spirit.

God also prepared the way for us with the Bible to give you hope and guidance.

The Bible is full of ways in which God has blessed other people's lives.

If God did that for others, why wouldn't he do that for you?

The Bible is real – family, sexuality, money, success, violence.

You don't have an issue the Bible doesn't speak to.

Last week, even Jesus used the Bible to get out of a jam.

You should give it a try.

God has given you community in order to find support and encouragement, that is the church.

We often think of the church as a building and worship, but church is people.

As with anything, gifts can be used wisely or abused.

Look at how God yearns to be in relationship with you and others.

Jesus becomes emotional when he sees how people have rejected him.

And he knows that these people will reject him to the point of death soon.

“Oh that you would have come to me as a hen gathers her chicks under her wing.”

Isn't that a powerful and wonderful image for God?

We often have this image for God as a tough guy judge/big beard and scowl.

This is only a loving image of how God wants to bring us together and protect us.

That is what the church should look like.

God's people didn't look like that then, and we often fail now as well.

We cannot allow that reality to go unchallenged.

God blesses you with the gift of prayer so that you have constant contact to God Himself.

This is better than text messaging.

No matter where you are, whatever you are doing – you can pray/God will answer.

What better preparation and resource might there be than the person of God?

The Bible answers questions of long ago, prayer interprets those answers for today.

God calls for us to be in constant prayer.

That used to practically scare me – how can I pray all the time?

It simply means to always have the communication lines open with God.

I now love to pray – I pray all the time.

And I trust that God gives me the answers I need.

Again, Jesus himself often prayed.

If Jesus took advantage of the resource God prepares in prayer, shouldn't we?

God gave us faith in order that we would have the courage to do something important.

Jesus prayed to God that he might not have to die, but he embraced it if it was God's will.

What a powerful prayer – you should pray like that.

Faith allows me to say I don't have to gain worldly success.

God's plans and eternal life go far beyond what we can currently see.

So I am fine with trusting that God is doing His job.

My constant prayer is to be faithful in every circumstance of life.

Faith itself is a gift, God has given it to you.

It is all a part of His preparing you for the journey of life.

God provides opportunity to use your resources to do something important.

Debbie and I watched the movie 1776 this past week.

It focused on the unswerving passion of John Adams for American independence.

Adams faced constant rejection, regarded as obnoxious, far from perfect.

But this was his opportunity to do something great for posterity.

I believe that God goes before us each day to prepare situations for us to do great things.

I also believe that we probably miss the vast majority of them.

Either we just don't notice/fear gets in the way/our personal goals take over.

Today, can you trust that God goes before you and prepares the way with all you need?

Think of the resources: God's own Spirit goes with you, the Bible informs you.

Community supports you, prayer connects you, faith leads you.

Today, God prepares you for opportunities – so go do something.

Life Beyond the Credit Cards

Crying Kids? Career Crisis? Credit Crunch?

If so, then *Do Something!*

Week 2: Preparation

God has given you all the PREPARATION you need to live life well.

God has given us the HOLY SPIRIT so that you are never alone.

God prepared the way with the BIBLE to give you hope and guidance.

God has given you COMMUNITY in order to find support and encouragement.

God blesses you with PRAYER so that you have constant contact with Him.

God gave us FAITH that we would have courage to do something important.

God provides OPPORTUNITIES to use your resources to do something important.