

PathLights

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path"
Psalm 119:104*

November 11, 2018

God's Word Is Calling

by Frank Himmel

The Apostle Paul once noted that God's will is not far removed from us.

But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows: "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down), or 'Who will descend into the abyss?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)." But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your heart and in your mouth"—that is, the word which we are preaching (Romans 10:6-8).

The fact is, God's word is shouting to us.

Wisdom shouts in the street, she lifts up her voice in the square; at the head of the noisy streets she cries out; at the entrance of the gates in the city she utters her sayings (Proverbs 1:20-21).

City streets are noisy. There is talking, traffic, music from passing vehicles, an occasional siren, and often construction. In Bossier City a B-52 may well be flying overhead, too! God's word, God's wisdom, is pictured as trying to yell over all the noise for us to listen. We might think of that from several perspectives.

First, God wants us to take time to listen to Him. Our days are filled with communication flying at us from all directions: personal conversations, radios, television,

social media, computers, tablets, cell phones, billboards, books and magazines, snail mail, email, and on and on. We're processing a lot of information. Some of it is by our own choice and some of it not. All of it consumes our time and attention spans. Will we heed the plea to set aside some time to listen to God?



Second, God wants us to pay attention. Hearing and listening are not necessarily the same thing. Hearing is physical, listening is mental. If we read a section of Scripture without making the effort to focus and reflect, it won't sink in; and if it doesn't sink in, the effort is profitless.

Third, God wants us to accept His word. Much of what we hear is different than His wisdom; in fact, it is contradictory to it. Human philosophies, societal priorities, scientific theories, trendy notions, the testimony of "experts," and even a great deal of preaching—much of it is just noise, nonsensical noise.

Divine wisdom says by listening to it, "So you will find favor and good repute in the sight of God and man" (Proverbs 3:4). "It will be healing to your body and refreshment to your bones" (v. 8).

God's word is calling. Are you listening? ■

A Missing Member

by Frank Himmel

A number of years ago I read the following story.

A 73-year-old man was pinned beneath his farm tractor for four days and nights in a driving rain and freezing temperatures. Concerned friends finally went to see about him, apparently just in time. The man survived the ordeal although he lost a leg below the knee.

Although the report centered upon the amazing fact that after being pinned beneath a tractor for four days and nights he survived, a more amazing fact is what caused his friends to go see about him. What caused these people to do so? He had missed “prayer meeting.” That’s all. He missed one service.

There are two possible suppositions we could make about this incident.

First, we could suppose this man was so regular in his attendance that everyone knew if he was not there something had to be seriously wrong. A question: what if you had been the one pinned under the tractor? Would your absence have been noticed? Or, are you so irregular in attendance that people might well assume you decided to sleep in or go to a ball game? How many services have you missed in the last three months? Could you honestly classify yourself as a faithful, regular worshiper of God?

The other possibility is this: we could assume that the people in this man’s congregation had such a concern for souls that when anyone, no matter how regular or irregular, missed a service, they went to see about him.

That reminds me of a comment from the 19th century preacher J. W. McGarvey in his excellent little book *The Eldership*. Reflecting on Jesus’ illustration of a shepherd leaving ninety-nine sheep to go in search of a lost one, brother McGarvey wondered:

If a congregation were assembled on the Lord’s day for worship, and the Elders, upon looking over their faces, were to miss one, and ascertain that he was absent in some gay company, or at home in an ill humor, or about to start out for the day on a pleasure excursion, would they be pressing the teaching of this parable too far, should one of them immediately leave the house of God, and go to bring in that person? How much joy it would create among the saints on earth, and among the angels in heaven, if such a thing were done successfully and often! Should anyone, however, be unwilling to press the analogy to this extent, he must still admit that the nearest possible approach to this degree of vigilance can alone meet fully the demands of the shepherd’s duty (pp. 34-35). ■



Service Leaders for the Week

	Sunday	Wednesday
GREETER	Greg Winget	John Baucom
SONG LEADER	Sam Walters	Greg Winget
OPENING PRAYER	Brian Wilson	
LORD’S SUPPER		
BREAD	Bruce Hollander	
CUP	Adam Gibson	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	Adam Wilson	
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	John Baucom
CLOSING PRAYER	David Gray	Adam Gibson