

Sermon Notes – June 28, 2015, Pastor Alan Smith

“Counting on God”

Last Sunday taught me something important. I don't know how many people know this but, one of my biggest worries is to get sick on a Sunday morning before, or even after, I come to church. Many questions go through my mind! Who will preach? Who will operate the computer for the PowerPoint? All these questions are legitimate. The worry that goes with them isn't? At least not for the Christian.

Last week I had this great sermon on facing our giants. I had a video clip from the movie “Facing the Giants.” I had it all planned out and it was ready to go by Thursday morning. I was psyched about last week's sermon! I went from the mountain top of expectation to the valley of despair in a matter of less than 12 hours.

I realized last week that this was only the third time since I have been the pastor here that I had to call in sick at the last minute. Once was when I had Bell's palsy with vertigo, then my heart surgery, and now a stomach bug. I started to rely on my own ability to power through most illnesses to do my duty. Sounds like I was getting very proud of my own abilities. My lesson learned is that God is in control and I need to count on Him.

Our scripture today is a song that would be sung as the worshipers were coming to the temple.

The Psalmist came to a point in his life that he realized his situation. It sounds like he got to the end of his strength and ability. Listen to the first verse of Psalm 130. **¹From the depths of despair, O LORD, I call for your help.**

When have we come to that point in our lives? Have you gotten to a point in your life when you cry from the depths of despair? When have we come across something much bigger than ourselves and we immediately fell into despair? Cancer? Surgery? Poverty? Addiction? Something that no matter how many good natured people you have in your life, they can't help you get out of the situation you are in. A place that may be the lowest you have been. You turn to God and cry out hear me, pay attention God!!! Our sin can bring us to that point. When we realize how much sin has crept into our lives and taken control. It is these times of desperation that we turn to God. Our lives are out of control and nothing we have tried can get us out of the pit.

Where is our hope?

5 I am counting on the LORD; yes, I am counting on him. I have put my hope in his word.

Depending on God and His word is the secret to getting through the desperate times.

Psalm 40:1–2

1 I waited patiently for the LORD to help me, and he turned to me and heard my cry.

2 He lifted me out of the pit of despair, out of the mud and the mire. He set my feet on solid ground and steadied me as I walked along.

See how the Psalmist waited patiently. His situation was like trying to walk through mud. When walking through mud you either get stuck because your feet have sunk into deep mud or you are slipping on the mud. Either way, your life is not on solid ground. See how it is God that lifted him out of the mud and put him on solid ground. It is God that steadied him as he walked along. It wasn't a friend or family member. It wasn't a doctor and it wasn't a government entity. No, it was God!

Last week Joni can tell you that after I got sick, she asked me who is going to take my place. I said there isn't anyone. I have to go. Well, God had another plan. You see, the sin in my heart told me that I was the only one. I'm the one that has to take care of it. I wasn't thinking that God is in control and I can count on Him to take care of it. I'm sure when Scott and Mike woke up last Sunday morning that they had no idea what was going to be asked of them. God calls up people to meet a need at the moment. God called these two men to bring a word to you from their hearts. God also used this simple stomach bug to reveal something to me. A defect in my thinking. I need to trust God more and me less. We need to count on Him.

What does that level of trust look like?

It looks like a little shepherd boy going against a giant. David trusted God in the battle against Goliath. David with one smooth stone knocked out the giant or was it David? God guided that stone to the right spot on Goliath's body.

Great things happen when we count on God!

I think of the stories in the book of **Acts 5:17-20** **17 The high priest and his officials, who were Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. 18 They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. 19 But an angel of the Lord came at night, opened the gates of the jail, and brought them out. Then he told them, 20 "Go to the Temple and give the people this message of life!"**

Acts 16:23–26 (NLT)

23 They were severely beaten, and then they were thrown into prison. The jailer was ordered to make sure they didn't escape. **24** So the jailer put them into the inner dungeon and clamped their feet in the stocks.

25 Around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening. **26** Suddenly, there was a massive earthquake, and the prison was shaken to its foundations. All the doors immediately flew open, and the chains of every prisoner fell off!

Acts 12:5–10 (NLT)

5 But while Peter was in prison, the church prayed very earnestly for him.

6 The night before Peter was to be placed on trial, he was asleep, fastened with two chains between two soldiers. Others stood guard at the prison gate. **7** Suddenly, there was a bright light in the cell, and an angel of the Lord stood before Peter. The angel struck him on the side to awaken him and said, "Quick! Get up!" And the chains fell off his wrists. **8** Then the angel told him, "Get dressed and put on your sandals." And he did. "Now put on your coat and follow me," the angel ordered.

9 So Peter left the cell, following the angel. But all the time he thought it was a vision. He didn't realize it was actually happening. **10** They passed the first and second guard posts and came to the iron gate leading to the city, and this opened for them all by itself. So they passed through and started walking down the street, and then the angel suddenly left him.

Three examples of how great He is! Three examples of how we need to count on God when life seems so desperate.

I know one thing, that I am going to count on Him! Are you?