

## **How do you present yourself to the Lord?**

**August 20, 2017**

**Sermon by Pastor Diana J. Perkins**

**This morning I want to share with you some thoughts concerning the Holiness of God. My daughter, Sonja, is very creative and she has been involved in quite a few weddings where she works diligently with the bride planning, sewing, creating flower arrangements, decorating the church and the hall and even planning the reception menus.**

**I have watched her as she spends hours making beautiful dresses and bouquets of flowers as well as making sure the church and reception hall looks attractive and becoming.**

**I have officiated at weddings and I have never seen a bride come down the aisle wearing anything but the finest white dress she could afford and carrying a bouquet that complimented her. Brides are beautiful and they spend much time and money in order to look their best for their husbands on their wedding day.**

**The church is the bride of Christ. Jesus Christ is coming for a bride that has made herself ready for his arrival. In the story of the 10 virgins found in Matthew 25:1-4, all of the virgins believed they were going to be the bride of Christ. The difference between the wise and the foolish was in their thought processes. The wise had saving faith and made preparations taking oil with them and the foolish took their lamps but didn't have the oil needed to keep the flame of faith burning.**

**“The kingdom of heaven is likened unto ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.”**

**Jesus Christ divides people into two groups, the saved and the lost. There is nothing in between. He labels them wise and foolish. The builders were divided in two groups, some who build their lives on the solid rock and those who build their lives on sand. The same storms come to both groups and the distinction is made from the outcome. There are those whose faith holds them up and they become stronger with tribulation and then there are those who crumble and give up when their faith is tested.**

**True conversion comes to people who are genuinely concerned about their soul and final destiny. They desire salvation and are willing to do whatever it takes to make it into the kingdom of God. Concern for your soul is a sign of wisdom because what happens to your soul is an “eternal” decision. Proverbs 9:10 says that the “fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” Daniel 12:3 says the wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament.**

**Neglecting your salvation is a sign of great foolishness. Psalms 14:1 says this: “A fool has said in his heart ‘there is no God’.” Most people who attend evangelical churches would be offended if someone called them a fool. They would declare that they believe in God. Yet many live their lives as if God is unaware or unable to see the motivation that rules their character and actions. Matthew 7:22 illustrates this truth. “Not every person who**

**calls me ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter into the Kingdom of heaven, but only those who do what my Father in heaven wants them to do. When that Day comes, many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord! In your name we told God’s message, by your name we drove out many demons and performed many miracles!’ Then I will say to them, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evil doers!’” Then Jesus proceeded to share the parable of the wise man who built his house on the rock and the foolish one who built his house on the sand. When he got done saying these things, people marveled at the way he taught for he wasn’t like their teachers of the Law; instead he spoke with authority! Calling Jesus “Lord” is a title given to a master by a slave. Do you call Jesus “Lord”? Do you obey what he commands you to do? Look at Luke 6:46. Here Jesus asks the question, “Why do you call me , ‘Lord, Lord’ and don’t do what I tell you” He goes on to say that everyone who listens to his words and obeys them is like the man who built his house on the rock. When the river flooded over and hit the house, it continued standing because the house was well built. The foolish man’s house built on sand crumbled when the storm hit; it had no solid foundation.**

**True servants of God have a strong commitment to the cause of Christ. They are concerned about the things that God is concerned about. 2 Timothy 2:15 commands us to study to win God’s full approval as a worker who is not ashamed of his work, and one who correctly teaches the message of God’s truth. We are to stay away from godless and foolish discussions which only drive people further away from truth. In Matthew 28:19, Jesus commanded his disciples to “go to all people everywhere and make disciples. Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember! I will be with you always, to the end of the age.” The Bible states that “He that wins souls is wise!” Proverbs 11:30.**

**In Psalms 51, David wrote concerning his sin of adultery with Bathsheba and the sin of murder that he committed to cover up his original transgression. In this Psalm, he recognized God as being kind and merciful and he asked the Lord to wipe away his sins and remove the guilt that bore down on his soul. He admitted that he knew he had sinned against the Lord and he couldn’t get his evil deeds out of his mind. He admitted that he had done wrong and deserved to be corrected and punished. He understood the character of God and the fact that God demands complete honesty from the lips of a repentant heart. He asked the Lord to create pure thoughts in him and make him to be a faithful servant again. He asked God not to take the Holy Spirit away from him. He asked the Lord to return the joy of salvation to him and to give him the desire to be obedient to God’s word. He promised to then teach sinners God’s Law and they would return to him.”**

**This Psalm is one that I have read many times and have used as a pattern for my own prayers when I have gone down a wrong path. I encourage those who are serious about following Jesus Christ to read it and use it for your own conversation with God.**

**A true believer is willing to give up the world. The Bible tells us plainly that if we love the world and the things of the world, the love of the Father is not in us. 1 John 2:15 continues by saying that our foolish pride comes from the world and so do our selfish desires to have everything we see. None of this comes from the Father. Be aware that this world and all the desires it causes will disappear, but those who love God will live forever. Those who desire and seek friendship from the world are enemies of God. Look at James 4:4. The question is why people fight and argue with each other. It is because they are full of selfish desires that fight to control the body. They want something they can't have and they will do whatever it takes to get it even murder. We are instructed to pray for what we need. Verse 6 says that God opposes everyone who is proud, but he is kind to everyone who is humble. Surrender to God! Resist the devil and he will flee from you! Come near to God and he will come near to you. Clean up your lives, you sinners. Purify your hearts, you people who can't make up your mind. For further reading concerning godly living, read the entire book (5 chapters) of James. James was the brother of our Lord Jesus Christ and his counsel on godly living is a mirror for those who are seeking to be holy. We are not to conform to the world, but we are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds that we might be able to discern everything that is good and pleasing to him. Romans 12 shows how Christ brings new life and gives us rules for Christian living.**

**The Bible tells us that those who say "I know Him" and keep not his commandments are liars and the truth is not in them. 1 John 2:3. Those who know Jesus Christ follow his example and they truly know him. Light and darkness cannot co-exist. If you love others and are supportive of them, that is light; if you hate anyone and cause trouble for others, you are walking in darkness. You will not be able to discern where you are heading because you can't see in the dark.**

**True Christianity produce the fruit of the Spirit within a life; love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithful and self-control, See Galatians 5:22.**

**The foolish virgins took no oil in their lamps. The oil represents the Holy Spirit. They had not experienced genuine conversion. Romans 8:9 tells us that if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. True conversion brings a change in a person's life whose faith works by love that purifies the heart whereby we overcome the world.**

**One reason that there are many who profess to be converted without the evidence of a changed life is due to bad examples. Some believe for a while and when temptation comes to them they fall away. Luke 8:13. Others fall away when the cares of this life choke out the word of God. Luke 8:14. When people's faith is in people rather than on Jesus Christ who gave his life for our redemption, they will fall away. Our faith must be saving faith and that comes by believing that God is and that he rewards those who diligently seek him. Prayer and reading the Bible with a determination to find truth will keep you from falling to Satan's snares that steal your confidence and creates doubts. Some people have the notion that "everyone sins every day" so all they have to do is ask God for forgiveness and then they can continue on without worrying about their habits or lifestyles.**

**Repentance means to change directions. The Holy Spirit renews the minds so we can rightly discern truth from error.**

**If you are travelling down Route 66 and suddenly it dawns on you that you are heading in the wrong direction, it makes no sense to know that you are going in wrong direction without taking appropriate action to get headed in one that will take you to your desired destination. You must make a U-Turn and correct your thinking and actions. God will help you overcome your weaknesses if you ask, knock and seek him. See Matthew 7:7-12. It tells you to ask and you will receive, seek and you will find, knock and it shall be opened unto you. “ Everyone who asks will receive; everyone who searches will find and the door will be opened for everyone who knocks.” It continues by saying that God is more willing to give good things to those who ask, than our earthly imperfect parents who know how to give good gifts to their children. Treat others as you want to be treated. This is what the Law and the Prophets are all about.**

**The wise virgins took oil with them. Wise people considers the condition of their hearts and takes care to look in the mirror of God’s word to see where they stand in the light of Scripture. They present their bodies as living sacrifices holy and acceptable to God which is their reasonable service. Romans 12:1. They seek God’s plan for their lives and line up their priorities with God’s purpose for them. They are thankful for the changes that God has made in their lives. They overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. Revelation 12:11. They strive to use their lives to honor God. They were willing for God’s light to search their hearts and to discern the sins that need to be weeded out and they are thankful for the convicting power of the Holy Spirit that help them overcome the sins that so easily become attached to them. Foolish people are prone to hide their sins, be self-righteous and take care to “look the part” rather than to possess God’s Spirit, When confronted of sin, they often get offended and defensive and often place blame on others or accuse people of judging or lying about them. They avoid the pain of self-examination and confession that bring about authentic conversion and they continue to travel life’s journey without any grace being applied to their hearts for they don’t sense the need for the Spirit of God. Proverbs 23:23. “Invest in truth and wisdom, discipline and good sense and don’t part with them. Make your father truly happy by living right and showing sound judgment.”**

**In 2 Corinthians 13:5 and 1 Corinthians 11:28, the apostle Paul speaks about examining yourselves to make sure that you are in the faith. Are you in the Faith? How do you know that you are an authentic follower of Christ? What is your faith rooted and grounded in? These questions will help us to determine if we need to change directions or if we need to continue on the path that we are walking on in our daily lives. The definition of sin is when a person knows what he should be doing and he doesn’t do it, to him it is sin. James 4:17. Let us pray one for another!**