

Gaines Congregational United Church of Christ

August 13, 2017

Old Testament Reading; 1st Kings 19: 9-18

Responsive Reading Psalm 85: 8-13

Epistle Reading; Romans 10: 5-15

Gospel Reading; Matthew 14: 22-33

Sermon Title: **IT'S THAT EASY**

Summery; Sometimes it is counterproductive to over think things.

The last time I preached I went to see Wanda in rehab and read her my sermon. She complemented me on it and said, "By the way, the title of your next sermon will be it's that easy." She went on to tell me that it seemed that God had told her to tell me that. She did not know why or what the texts would be but it was very real to her that she had been so instructed by God to tell me that.

I did not doubt her because I have had this happen to me from time to time so I looked up the texts to see how they fit.

OK I will let you judge.

The Old Testament lesson is one of my favorites.

Elijah has just called down fire to light up the offering and proved that God was God and not Baal.

Unfortunately Queen Jezebel liked Baal and the 450 prophets that were slain and told Elijah that he was next.

Elijah panics, sticks his tail between his legs and runs away and hides in a cave. God reveals himself to Elijah in a “soft whisper of a voice” other translations say “a still small voice”. Either way it is sort of like how Wanda came up with this title.

God tells Elijah to get back to work. This is going to be simple. Elijah is to anoint Hazael king of Syria, anoint Jehu king of Israel, and Elisha as a prophet to succeed Elijah. This will eliminate the threat of the enemies of God’ people because any that escapes Hazael will be killed by Jehu and if any escape Hazael and Jehu then they will get zapped by Elisha. Then God says, “Oh by the way, you think you are the only one left, well I got news for you, I have 7000 faithful that have not bowed the knee to Baal or kissed his idol. Get your butt in gear I got this covered.” It’s that easy.

The Psalm in our responsive reading says, “ Just listen to God and don’t get stupid, AGAIN, and God will come through for us. Human loyalty will reach up from earth and God’s righteousness will look down from heaven. Righteousness will go before the Lord and prepare the path for man.”

It's that easy.

Paul says in Romans that we are not stuck trying to figure out the complicated Law of Moses. All we have to do is let God do the work. We do not have to go to heaven to find Jesus or go into the bowels of the earth to find Jesus. All we have to do is open our hearts and let him in. "God's message is near to you, it is on your lips and in your heart." If you don't fight it is right there. "If you confess that Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised him from death you are saved. For it is by our faith that we are put right with God; it is by our confession that we are saved."

Notice that here confession does not mean, "Oh forgive me Lord for I have sinned," Here confession simply means Do not be afraid to say what you believe. If someone asks you how you can get through all the troubles you are facing and you believe that God is giving you the strength than say it. They may need that little bit of assurance to help them try it and then God will get a chance to help them too. Every great preacher was inspired by someone that did not think they were all that special. You can be that special person for God by just telling the truth about your belief and or experiences.

I love how Paul says, "But how can they call to him for help if they have not believed? And how can they believe if they have not heard the message? And how can they hear if the

message is not proclaimed? And how can the message be proclaimed if messengers are not sent out?"

It is that easy. If you believe it say it. Another place in scripture it says that if you are not ashamed to profess God before man then Jesus will not be ashamed to profess you before God. Between you and Jesus you got this thing covered.

I should take a break here to point out that many preachers would say that I am not encouraging discipline in the endeavor to know God. My reaction is that once you get close to God you just cannot get close enough or learn enough about this soul mate of yours. Discipline ceases to be discipline and becomes a hunger.

Now back to my message.

The gospel lesson is the familiar Jesus walking on the water bit. I think the point here is that if you have faith and Jesus calls you to walk on the water you like Peter can do it. It is that easy. Well sort of. We are all like Peter and we doubt from time to time but notice what happens to Peter. When Peter freaks out over the conditions of wind and waves and starts to sink he calls out, "Jesus save me!" Jesus does not miss a beat. Jesus reaches out and saves Peter and Jesus will reach out and save us too.

Even when we fall short Jesus never does. It is that easy. Jesus will save us.

King David slipped up several times and some of those were serious mess ups. Do you like the way I got that G rated?

Mess ups. Anywho, David messed up big time but David always had a heart for God and if we always have a heart for God then the ~~medical~~^{mercies} and love just fall on us from heaven above and like a powerful drug we get more addicted with every dose.

So, it's that easy. Believe with your heart and confess with your mouth you will be saved and you will live life abundantly and God will be closer to you than your own skin in all the good times and in all the bad. Hey you got to have the bad times or no one is going to put any credence on what you confess with your lips.

God is good all the time. Hallelujah and Amen!