

SERMON: "Jesus in the midst!"

TEXT: Daniel 3:25—Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego were accompanied by a fourth in the fiery furnace; one *"like the Son of God."* Many believe the fourth was Jesus, if so, He was in the midst of the fiery furnace with them; He was literally with them in the worst of their trial. Jesus has promised us the same (i.e., in our midst). Cf. Matt. 28:20; Heb. 13:5.

Introduction: The word "midst" comes from the word "middle." It is vital that Jesus is in the midst of our life, not on the outside or the left or right, but the focus, center or nucleus.

Scriptures: Read—Exodus 8:22; Deuteronomy 23:14; Jeremiah 14:9; Daniel 3:25; Matthew 18:20; John 19:18 and John 20:26.

Proposition: What can we learn & how can we be comforted when "Jesus is in the midst"?

1. Jesus was in the midst of the Doctors & Lawyers (Luke 2:46): **Hearing.** Jesus was 12 years old and all were astonished at His understanding and answers.
2. Jesus was in the midst of the Disciples (John 20:19-29): **Comforting.** The resurrected Savior appeared to the disciples confirming His promises and teaching.
3. Jesus was in the midst of the Assembly (Matthew 18:20): **Gathering.** Jesus' presence provides confidence and confirms accountability.
4. Jesus was in the midst of the Churches (Revelation 1:13): **Judging.** If we want to be a Christ centered Church, we must live Christ centered lives.
5. Jesus was in the midst of the Church (Hebrews 2:12): **Singing.** The Lord deserves all the praise, honor and glory we can give. Consider how much the Lord has done for us!
6. Jesus was in the midst of those Crucified (John 19:18): **Suffering.** Jesus died a death He did not deserve; He paid a price He did not owe. Jesus Paid it All.
7. Jesus is in the midst of the Throne (Rev. 5:6): **Reigning.** He is the Head of the Church (Eph. 5:23), King of the Kingdom (Jhn 18:36) & Lord of all (Phil. 2:11).

Conclusion: "Jesus in the midst" will effect every area of your life. Jesus will make you accountable, dutiful, hopeful and responsible. *Is Jesus in the midst of your life?*

- Mark N. Posey
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SERMON: Cross Bearers! **TEXT:** Luke 9:23.

Intro: We love to sing about "The Old Rugged Cross," but do we love to bear it?

1. We become **PARTAKERS** in the suffering of Christ (1 Pet. 4:13).
 2. We become **PARTNERS** in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (Romans 6:3-4).
 3. We become **PARTICIPANTS** in the cause of Christ (Luke 9:23). Christ died so we may live (Gal. 2:20).
- Con:** It's a privileged to bear the cross with Jesus!

Pulpit Preview is sent for the purpose of sharing sermon ideas & useful illustrations. It is sent via email on a bi-weekly bases. Editor: Mark N. Posey D.D., preaching minister for the Austinville Church of Christ (2833 Danville Rd. SW Decatur, AL 35603) since 1994. Please send all comments to—pulpitpreview@austinvillecoc.org or address above. **Thanks, MNP.**



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Why We Should Fear God!

Ecclesiastes is a book about outlook. The plot of *"the Preacher"* reveals the depression that inevitably results from seeking happiness in worldly possessions. This book gives Christians a chance to see the world through the eyes of a person who, though very wise, was trying to find meaning in impermanent, human things. Most every form of worldly desire is explored by the Preacher and none of it gave him a sense of meaning. In 3:14, the Preacher focuses on God and the reason man should revere [*"fear"*] Him. Fearing God *"under the sun"* includes...

1. **GOD'S ACTIONS ARE PERMANENT** (*"it shall be forever"*). Things that are done by God are final. The granite peak that is being carved into a monument to Crazy Horse, the famous Sioux Indian chief, can never be undone. The dynamite blasts that carve away rock cannot never be replaced. It is final; it is forever. God, according to Malachi 3:6, is permanent: *"For I am the Lord, I do not change."* James identifies the consistency and stability of God in 1:17, His giving of good and perfect gifts will never vary or change.
2. **GOD'S ACTIONS ARE EFFECTIVE AND COMPLETE** (*"nothing can be added to it"*). God's word penetrates the heart and molds the soul. He chose us before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before Him (Eph. 1:4). His Holy character provides the prime example for transformation and change. Those in fellowship with the Father are blessed with His illuminating light and Jesus' cleansing blood. Neither will ascend in greatest because both embody perfection.
3. **GOD'S ACTIONS ARE TOTALLY SECURE** (*"nothing taken from it"*). God possesses all good qualities and does not lack any, nor does He have any qualities that are not good (Ps. 18:30; Matt. 5:48). He is independent, unchangeable, eternal and omnipresent. He exists as a spiritual being, having no form or dimensions, and is omniscient, wise, truthful, faithful, good, loving, merciful, graceful, patient, holy, at peace, righteous and just, jealous for His own honor, wrathful towards sin, perfect in every way, beautiful beyond comprehension, and is glorified through the revelation of Himself. He lacks nothing and from Him nothing can or will be subtracted.

Conclusion: True wisdom comes only from understanding who God is and that He is holy, just, and righteous. Solomon said, *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge"* (Proverbs 1:7).

-Mark N. Posey

SERMON: Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound!

TEXT: Titus 2:11-14

- **G**stands for Gift, the principle of grace.
- **R**stands for Redemption, the purpose of grace.
- **A**stands for Access, the privilege of grace.
- **C**stands for Character, the product of grace.
- **E**stands for Eternal Life, the prospect of grace.

Con: To avoid disgrace, grow in grace!

SERMON: Blessings of Faithful Living

TEXT: Hebrews 10:19-25

- Let us draw near in the fullness of faith.
- Let us hold fast the profession of our hope.
- Let us consider one another to provoke unto love.
- Let us not forsake the assembling together.

Con: Revelation 2:10

SERMON: The Facts of Life!

TEXT: James 4:14

1. Life is short – James 4:13-17.
2. Death is sure – Heb. 9:27.
3. Sin is the cause – Rom. 3:23.
4. Christ is the cure – Luke 19:10

Faithful Attendance (Hebrews 10:25)!

- If both Mom and Dad attend church regularly, 72% of their children remain faithful in attendance.
- If only Dad attends regularly, 55% remain faithful.
- If only Mom attends regularly, 15% remain faithful.
- If neither attend regularly, only 6% remain faithful.

IMPORTANT: Faithful attendance with the saints is not only commanded, but influential.

SERMON: From Wrong to Right! **TEXT:** 1 Thess. 1:9

1. From OLD to NEW.
2. From BROKEN to WHOLE.
3. From DEAD to ALIVE.
4. From BLIND to SIGHT.
5. From LOST to FOUND.

SERMON: Grace Instructs!

TEXT: Titus 2:11-14

1. Grace teaches us to LEAVE (v.12a).
2. Grace teaches us to LIVE (v.12b).
3. Grace teaches us to LOOK (v.13).

Con: Thank God for His Amazing Grace!

SERMON: Men & Women in the Church!

TEXT: Gen. 2:24-25

1. Men and Women Are Both Subject to Christ's Marriage Law (1 Cor. 7:11).
2. Men and Women Are Dependent upon Each Other (1 Cor. 11:11).
3. Men and Women are Equal in Salvation (Gal. 3:28).
4. Men and Women maintain different roles of service in Christ's Church (1 Timothy 2:1-15).

SERMON: Opportunities Felix had to NEGLECT to Remain Lost!

TEXT: Acts 24:22-27

Intro: Felix's problem was sin; thus, his greatest need was the forgiveness of sin. Yet, he neglected God's offer. What did Felix neglect to remain lost?

1. Felix was in the right place at the right time (v.24a).
2. Felix heard the Apostle Paul preach (v.v.24b).
3. Felix heard a sermon adapted specifically to him (v.25).
4. Felix had an emotional response to the gospel message (v.25).
5. Felix had a second chance (v.26).

Con: Felix neglected so many wonderful opportunities to be saved; he neglected them to remain lost. Let that never be said of us! E.g., Hebrews 2:3.

SERMON: Practicing Pure Religion!

TEXT: James 1:27

1. **Look UP:** "before God and the Father." God is the object of ALL we think, say or do!
2. **Look OUT:** "visit the fatherless and widows." I.e., visit = *episkeptomai* (to look upon or after, to inspect, examine with the eyes).
3. **Look IN:** "keep himself unspotted from the world."

Con: Let's practice pure and undefiled religion!

SERMON: Resurrection of Jesus Christ

TEXT: Luke 18:31-33; Matthew 28:6

1. Confucius' tomb --occupied.
2. Buddha's tomb --occupied.
3. Abraham's tomb --occupied.
4. Muhammad's tomb --occupied.
5. Joseph Smith's tomb --occupied.
6. **Jesus' tomb --EMPTY**

SERMON: The Nature of God's Grace!

TEXT: Titus 2:11-12a.

1. The ORIGIN of God's Grace: *for the Grace of God.* "
2. The OUTCOME of God's Grace: *that bringeth salvation.* "
3. The OUTPOURING of God's Grace: *"hath appeared"* (i.e., John 1:17, "grace & truth came by Jesus").
4. The OUTREACH of God's Grace: *"to all men."*
5. The OPERATION of God's Grace: *"teaching us."*

Con: Thank God for His Amazing Grace!

SERMON: Alienation is Hopeless!

TEXT: Ephesians 2:11ff.

Intro: The Gentiles were hopeless and forlorn outside of Jesus Christ.

1. They were Christless— *"without Christ."*
2. They were stateless— *"aliens from the commonwealth of Israel."*
3. They were friendless— *"strangers from the covenants of promise."*
4. They were hopeless— *"having no hope."*
5. They were godless— *"without God in the world."*

Con: Our greatest problem is sin, thus, our greatest need is Jesus!

SERMON: Trust the Lord! WHY?

TEXT: Proverbs 3:5-6

1. He knows you by name—Isa. 43:1.
2. He things about you—Psalm 137:17.
3. He will fight for you—Ex. 14:14.
4. He is your refuge—Psalm 62:6-8.
5. He has a plan for you—Jer. 29:11.
6. He is always with you—Matt. 28:20.
7. He will not forsake you—Ps. 37:25.

APOSTASY IS... (Galatians)

1. Moving Away - Gal. 1:6.
2. Turning Away - Gal. 4:9.
3. Falling Away - Gal. 5:4.

- **Scott Cain, shared by Lee Snow.**

SERMON: Lord, be there!

TEXT: Psalm 3:3-4.

Intro: The background to Psalm 3 is 2 Samuel 15-18. David was terrorized by his son Absalom. He cried out to God for help. Words from a favorite and familiar song are: "Lord, be there for me when I fall. Be there for me when I call. Be there for me, dear Lord." In verses 3-4, David describes God, who helped him in the time of trouble.

1. **PROTECTION:** *"But You, O Lord, are a shield for me."*
2. **PRAISE:** *"You, O Lord...my glory."*
3. **PROVISION:** *"the One who lifts up my head."*

Con: David cried out to the Lord and he was heard and helped!

SERMON: "Take Ye Away the Stone"

SCRIPTURE: John 11:39

1. Why Did Jesus Require Them to Remove the Stone? - He could have raised Lazarus without it being taken away. There is a human side and divine side in the matter of our salvation (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8; Acts 2:40; Acts 2:38).
2. The Significance Attached to the Stone's Removal - Obstacles that had to be removed before Christ would do His work: Same with salvation - Ignorance, prejudice, self-esteem, all things not in harmony with God's will.
3. The Divine and Human Parts in the Plan of Salvation - Romans 5:6-8. Christ raised Lazarus from the dead; Lazarus could not do it! We must remove every obstacle.

CON: What obstacles need removing from our lives today? - **Russ Vickers**

FUNNY: A man went to his doctor for advice about being cured of snoring. The doctor asked, "Does your snoring disturb your wife?" The patient replied, "Does it disturb my wife? Why, it disturbs the entire congregation!" LOL