

FROM THE PASTOR'S HEART....

Many will remember the name, Rueben P. Job. This retired UMC bishop wrote the helpful little book called Three Simple Rules which condenses John Wesley's Methodism into (obviously) three simple rules: Do Good. Avoid Harm. Stay in Love With God. Circuit Rider magazine carried Job's witness about the spiritually forming effect the Bible has had on his life. The Church is a people shaped by the Word of God. It is from the scriptures that we learn who we are, who is our neighbor, and what we are supposed to be doing here.

See you in Church, APUMC (Where the Holy Scriptures are read and heard by our family).

Pastor Carl

The Life-Changing Influence of Scripture

MY FIRST MEMORY OF HEARING SCRIPTURE READ IS THAT OF

my father's voice. I was a very sick child and he was seated beside my bed where he stayed all night attempting to control my raging fever and calm my fears. I did not understand what he was reading, but I felt the strength, love, and comfort in his voice that suggested to me that all would be well. This was my first memory of the life-changing influence of Scripture.

Now in my eighth decade, there have been countless such life-changing experiences. Sometimes they came in the presence of others and sometimes in solitude. There were times when a passage was read with such feeling and understanding that I was immediately apprehended by the truth of the passage, shaping the way I thought and lived. At other times a passage was opened to my hungry mind and heart through preaching and the presence of God and the truth of the Scriptures sent me away trembling, filled and forever changed. There have been other times when I was alone with the Scriptures and the presence of God was conveyed to my listening heart, and my anxiety or fear melted or the way forward became clear and possible with God's help.

Now full of years and life experience, my disciplines of daily reading and reflecting on a passage of Scripture continue. Weekly worship, gathering at the Table where none are turned away, and the reading, teaching, and preaching of the truth of the Bible still shape and direct my life. These are the experiences that offer the invitation and assurance, "Come, follow me, you are mine." And I determine anew that with God's help and to the best of my ability I will walk the path of Jesus in a culture that does not understand or value that path.

With the demands of ministry growing exponentially, attention to daily reading and serious study of Scripture can easily be neglected, but commitment to these practices draws us closer to the One who called us to ministry and continually calls us to serve and lead others in the way of Jesus.

Never underestimate the importance of continuous, regular, and honest teaching and daily reading of the Scripture. It is our meditation on, study of, and wrestling with Scripture that keep the Word alive in us and in the world.

Reuben P. Job

Retired bishop in The United Methodist Church