

## Getting everything out of the Bible

Happy anniversary St. John! What? You mean you forgot? It was one month ago that I became the interim pastor. How could you forget such an important date? I hope you know I'm just kidding. It has been a good, eventful month though (and I do mean eventful). Together we have shared 4 worship services, 2 funerals, and a week of Vacation Bible School. And that's just the first month! It leads me to ask, what is God going to do with us in the future? Seriously, it has been a great month and I want to thank everyone for their love, prayers, and support. Now if you'll indulge me, I'd like to take the next few moments and expand on a topic I have mentioned a few times in recent sermons; Bible study.

If you'll recall, in my very first message to you I said that one of the ways growth would happen was if we committed ourselves to studying God's Word. And the next week I said that the Bible is the only true measuring stick when it comes to determining righteousness. The Bible, along with prayer, is the most important tool we have at our disposal in the Christian life. It is God's Word, and everything we need to know about living a good life can be learned from the Bible. It is also the means by which God can provide direction for our lives, and who among us couldn't use a little more direction. There are, however, some things that give us problems when studying the Holy Scriptures.

For starters, too often we open the Bible, begin to read, and quickly become bored or frustrated. While it is true that the Bible's language can be confusing at times, it is not beyond comprehension. My suggestion is that you find a good Bible commentary. Nowadays, a good commentary can be purchased inexpensively through Amazon or another site. And a good commentary can be a wonderful resource in helping us understand the difficult language of the Bible.

Secondly, too often we read what we want to and skip the parts we don't like. I personally, for years, skipped Paul's words about our bodies being God's temple because I was mistreating my body and didn't want to hear it. The Bible is the "sword of God". That is, it is used by God to convict and weed out that in our lives which is not good. If we refuse to read the parts which speak to our weaknesses, it's like unplugging the toaster. It no longer works.

The Bible is the most important piece of literature ever written. It can bring hope, encouragement, peace, joy, and salvation. It can also help make us what we were intended to be: more like the Creator. So open up your Bible. Read it, study it, live it.

In Christian love, Pastor Rob Raker