Questions of Faith A picture containing cake, birthday, indoor, object

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When I was a much younger Christian and new to the Presbyterian Church, I had two questions for my pastor. One was about baptism of infants and the other was from the Apostle’s creed: Why do Presbyterians baptize babies? Is that Biblical? And “Why does it say Jesus descended into hell’? Where is that in scripture? Thankfully my pastor was a patient man and he dutifully answered my questions. I’ve since taken classes on these topics and studied them so I could fully understand them. But that doesn’t mean all my questions have been answered!

School has just started and I hope our children are eager to learn. One of the best ways to do that is to ask questions. I pray that the teachers are just as eager to answer their questions as they are to ask them!

As adults we may not attend school anymore. Maybe we never liked school or have never been good at or liked reading. And yet, as Christians we are called to follow Jesus and read the Bible. For we believe, as scripture tell us, that God gave Jesus “all authority in heaven and on earth.”(Matt. 28:18) Therefore, Jesus “gives to the Church its faith and life, its unity and mission, it order and discipline. Scripture teaches us of Christ’s will for the Church, which is to be obeyed.” (PC(USA) Book of Order F-1.0203). Jesus said it this way, “If you love me, keep my commandments.”(John 14:15) But how can we obey Jesus’ commandments, if we don’t know what they are? Or what if we try to read scripture and we don’t understand what we read?

This Fall, I am challenging each of us to read the whole Bible-not just keep a Bible around so it can take up space or get dusty on a bookshelf! If you don’t own a Bible, talk to me and I will help you get one.

If you have never attempted to read the entire Bible, there are lots of reading plans that can be very helpful. At Bible Gateway website they offer a plan called The One Year Immersion Plan: <https://www.biblestudytools.com/bible-reading-plan/one-year-immersion-plan.html> or my favorite The Thematic Reading Plan: <https://www.biblestudytools.com/bible-reading-plan/thematic.html> . Or there is always the old fashioned way of just reading a chapter or two a day. I pray that you will talk this over with Jesus and see what reading plan is best for you. Or if you really don’t like to read for yourself, check into an audio Bible! There is an app you can download for $.99 at this website: <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/nrsv-audio-bible-for-everyone/id1235039662> or go to <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/> and listen on your computer or your smart phone. Or buy the Bible on DVD or CD or MP3 which will read to you on your DVD or CD or MP3 player.

You may be wondering, why do we need to read or listen to the Bible outside of Sunday morning? Remember Jesus said, “If you love me, keep my commandments”. Some of us may feel that we learned everything we needed to know about Jesus in those Sunday school classes we went to as children. We are adults now. And the Bible speaks to us differently today than it did yesterday or all those years ago! “Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” (Heb. 4:12 NRS) If we aren’t reading scripture in our daily life, we are missing out on what God wants to say to us, change in us, offer us and how God wants to bless us in Jesus. And we are missing out on loving Jesus! You see we can’t really love Jesus, if we don’t know him, talk to him and try to follow his commandments on a daily basis.

As you find your reading plan and begin to read, I hope like any good student or disciple you will have questions and you will write them down. I invite you to ask God to show you the answers and to pay attention as you read for those answers.

Starting in the latter part of September I would love to know your questions from scripture or the faith for my Questions Disciples of Jesus Ask sermon series. You may bring them to church, send me an email or text it to me. I will not share your name unless you give me permission to as I bring the best answer(s) to the question in our Sunday morning sermon times in the coming weeks.

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” (Col. 3:16-17 NRS)

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