

4.24.11

Walking Dusty...

teacher: Dan Crist

One of the most life-changing Bible studies I ever did was “Believing God” by Beth Moore. In it, she challenged Christians to stop only believing **IN** God, and to truly **BELIEVE GOD**. She said, “If God is who he says he is and can indeed do what he says he can do, why are so many Christians living mediocre lives?”

At first I didn’t understand what she was writing. Then, as I worked through the study, I realized I didn’t believe God when He told me I was forgiven and that He could look at me without condemnation. I was struggling with verses like Ephesians 1:4 when Paul wrote: “For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.” And “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.” (Ephesians 5:25-27) Or “Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation.” (Colossians 1:21-22)

Words like “blameless, radiant, free from accusation, and without stain” blew my mind! God knew my past and what I was struggling with, and I didn’t understand how He could ever forgive me – let alone look at me as holy. I was living as though I thought God’s promises of forgiveness didn’t apply to me. I carried around such a burden of guilt, it was as though I believed God wasn’t big enough – or powerful enough – to forgive me. And I guess I thought Jesus died for everyone else but me. Because of this weight, I had been serving and “doing” church in order to work my way back to God by being good. But these “works” would never undo the wrong that I had committed, and the guilt continued.

By the end of the study, I understood what Beth Moore was trying to get her readers to recognize: when we truly believe God, lives are changed! When we embrace God’s promises and really believe Him, it impacts our home, our relationships, and our community! Throughout the study, we had to memorize the following promises: "God is who He says He is. God can do what He says He can do. I am who God says I am. I can do all things through Christ. God's Word is alive and active in me." As the reality of truly believing God began to sink into my heart, a weight was lifted, and I began to serve in response to the deep love Christ continues to show me.

As I wrote Walking Dusty this week, I realized God is still working on me in this area. Perhaps part of the journey for a Christ-follower is to repeatedly proclaim the desire to believe God, and then watch and see how He continues to fulfill His promises. If we’re looking, I think we will be amazed!

Questions to Consider:

The Greatest Commandment is “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. And love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:37, 39) Spending time reading Scripture is one way I can show I love God. That is where I will read about who God is and what He says about me - then I can respond in love.

Mark 9:14-29 gives the account of Jesus and a young boy that’s possessed by an evil spirit. The father says, “But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us.” Jesus replied, “If you can? Everything is possible for him who believes.” The father exclaimed, “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!” Is there an area that I’m struggling with unbelief? Ask God to help point out where I’m lacking.

Do I BELIEVE GOD when He tells me that I am forgiven?

Do I BELIEVE GOD when He tells me that I am holy?

Do I BELIEVE GOD when He tells me that He can work out all things for good?

Do I BELIEVE GOD when He tells me that He can heal my heart toward my spouse?

Do I BELIEVE GOD when He tells me that He will give me the strength to get through a difficult situation?

Am I willing to let God change me for His good?

Dan described “Resurrection Living” as fully, passionately living in response to God’s forgiveness. Is that how I’m living?

Additional Verses: *Matthew 26, 27; 1 Corinthians 15:14, Luke 24:1 – 12, Ephesians 1:4, Ephesians 5:25-27, Colossians 1:21-22*

This month’s memory verse: *“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” 1 Peter 1:3*

REMINDERS:

Join us for a SIX week celebration of Easter...

| | | |
|---------------------------|----------|----------------------------|
| LIVING : sunday | April 24 | 6pm @ Dominican Hall - SHU |
| LIVING : worship | May 1 | 6pm @ Dominican Hall - SHU |
| LIVING : you | May 8 | 6pm @ Dominican Hall - SHU |
| LIVING : mission | May 15 | details TBA- see website |
| LIVING : church | May 22 | 6pm @ Dominican Hall - SHU |
| LIVING : community | May 29 | details TBA- see website |