



What's your favorite Bible passage or story?

This is a question that came from Heidi, the young girl from Ecuador that we support through Compassion, Int'l. It's not an easy question to answer considering "All Scripture is ... profitable for teaching, reproof, correcting and training in righteousness" (emphasis added). But there are always passages that stick in your mind more than others. I can't narrow it down to just one (I had a hard time narrowing it down to just ten!), so here are a few that came to mind.

In no specific order....

1. I've always liked the account of Daniel's three friends: Shadrak, Meshak and Abednego. What an example of faith in God! They trusted that God could spare them from the fiery furnace they were threatened with, but they also said (and this is the real show of faith) that even if it's not God's will to spare them from death, they wouldn't bow to any other idol. You can read about them in Daniel chapter 3. It's also a great passage showing how God stands up for you when you take a stand for Him. (You can ask Anthony & Becca about another reason that story has a special place in my heart.)

2. The account of the blind man Jesus healed in John chapter 9 has always been a favorite too. It teaches the lesson that the more we tell what Jesus has done for us, the stronger our faith gets. Read it and notice how the man's understanding of Jesus (and his conviction to follow Him) grew each time he had to tell about how Jesus healed him.

3. Jesus' appearance to Thomas has always been a favorite. All of us can relate to Thomas at some point in life - wanting to see evidence for what we've been told to believe. The fact that Jesus came back and made a special appearance just for Thomas shows that He's not "put off" by our times of questioning. In fact, it shows that He desires to reveal Himself to people who are truly seeking God. (And I also love Thomas' response: He gives the greatest, point-blank statement of faith in the Scriptures. You can read about it at the end of John chapter 20.

4. Philip gives us the best - and simplest - example of how to witness at the end of John chapter one.

5. My confirmation verse - John 15:16. The pastor who chose this verse 'hit the nail on the head' for me. "*You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last.*" At that point in my life the *last* thing I would have chosen was to be a pastor (because that's what my mom wanted me to be.) But, even if I didn't know it at the time, God *had* chosen me for that task.

6. There's a verse that really helped me get through a tough time about six years ago. My father was dying and there was a lot of turmoil in the church at the time. John 16:33 is something Jesus told his disciples just before he was going to die and they were going to experience a lot of turmoil.

7. One of my memory verses from way back when I was in confirmation class - Ephesians 2:8-10. Initially I was attracted to the first two verses that state so plainly that salvation cannot be earned - it is a gift that must be received by faith. (And lest we want to pat ourselves on the back for having faith, the verse reminds us that our faith is also a gift from God.) But over the years the last verse has become just as meaningful. It's a great reminder that "good works" *are* necessary. Not as a cause of our salvation, but rather as a result of it.

8. There's a verse that we have used as a benediction in worship, Ephesians 3:19-20. It is a great reminder of the indescribable power that God makes available to believers. A reminder that we don't ask for that power enough - or ask for enough of it.

9. John summed up his gospel in John 20:31. But in that one sentence he also summed up the purpose of both the Bible and our faith.

10. The Battle of Armageddon. All the powers of evil are mustered to come against God. We always hear about this great battle that will one day take place. But when I first read Revelation 20:7-10 I was amazed that God "vaporizes" the enemy without any battle. That verse paints for me a picture of Satan and the forces of evil thinking they are so tough and proudly marching up to defeat God. But with a mere breath God vaporizes them all without any "shots being fired." What a great reminder of the final outcome - and that it has already been decided. God wins!

I could go on and talk about examples set by many of the characters from the Bible. Folks like Joshua, Nathan, Abigail, the Centurion, Rhoda (check out Acts 12), Isaiah, Samuel, Peter (after the Resurrection), Ruth, Joseph (both of them). But space is limited. So, even though I'm sure there are many passages that will come to mind tomorrow and cause me to say, "I should have included that one..."

I'll leave it at that for now.

Thanks for asking,
Pastor David

Send your questions to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net