



What's your favorite Bible story—Part 2?

Last month I said that the answer to this question probably changes 'most every time I'm asked. I listed four that came to mind last month: The account of Queen Esther; The Birth of Jesus, Jesus' encounter with Zacchaeus, and the coming of the Wise Men. I promised to finish answering the question this month with a few more of my favorites - including the one that I told the confirmation students about.

I find a couple common themes running through these accounts:

- 1) They display some characteristic of Jesus that I need to remember
- 2) They highlight people who set some example of faithfulness, especially when it would have been easier not to!

Jesus' First Miracle: John records in chapter two of his Gospel how Jesus turns water into wine at a wedding! In this miracle Jesus reveals that He is no mere human being, He is God - in the flesh! But more than that, Jesus reveals the kind of God He is! He's a God who doesn't just care about our eternal lives. He cares deeply about our lives right here and right now. And, as I mentioned in the January 16 sermon, He's a God whose plans cannot be messed up by any of the "wrenches" we toss into the pile!

Two of Jesus' Post-Resurrection Appearances:

1) To Thomas as recorded in John 20. The previous week when Jesus appeared to the other disciples He proved that He really is who He said: God! But when He appeared to Thomas (who wasn't there for that first appearance) He showed that He's a God who is not "put off" by our doubts. In fact, He understands that there are things He does that we don't understand. So, in our times of doubting He deals with us patiently and reveals Himself again.

2) To the two disciples on the Emmaus Road. Luke records this encounter in chapter 24 of his Gospel. The obvious lesson here is that Jesus reveals Himself as risen from the dead to those who are truly seeking Him. But the thing that strikes me about this encounter is that Jesus has a 'fun side' as we read about how He pretends not to know what these disciples are so distraught about. He walks along the road with them listening to them describe His crucifixion the events that led up to it. Their response when they finally figured out that they've been talking to their Risen Lord, shows how life-changing it is to know Jesus is not dead, but alive!

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. The account of these rock-solid believers is found in Daniel chapter 3. (This was the account that I gave as an answer to the confirmation student's question.) You probably know the story. These three friends of Daniel were trusted advisors to the non-Jewish king, Nebuchadnezzar. An edict went out that everyone must bow down and worship the golden statue the king had erected (scholars believe it was a statue of the king himself). The penalty for not bowing was to be executed by being thrown into a furnace! Not only did these three stay standing when everyone else bowed down, they said gave this great statement of faith to the king when he offered them a second chance

"If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."

That's an example of faith in God that we need in our day and age!

If you know the story, you know who God came to their rescue and miraculously spared them, showing that
"When we take a stand for God - He takes a stand for us!"

Thanks for asking,
Pastor David

Send your questions to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net