

If your car starts once every three tries, is it reliable? If the mailman skipped delivery every Monday and Thursday, are they trustworthy? If you don't go to work once or twice a month, are you a reliable employee? If your fridge stops working for a day or two every now and then, do you say, "Oh well, it work most of the time."? If your water heater provides an icy cold shower every now and then, is it dependable?

If you skipped a couple of electricity bill payments do you think Duquense Light would mind? If you fail to worship God one or two Sundays a month, would you expect to be called a faithful Christian?

We expect loyalty and reliability from things and other people - isn't it reasonable then that God just might expect the same from us. Being a Christian is not about voluntary work. God has purchased our loyalty and our service with the blood of his only Son. So if we want to kick-start our faith we need to remain loyal to God.

We are going into week two of the GROW series here at the Asbury @lternative.

This week our focus moves to Who We Are as a church. Who are we? We are a Community striving to be filled with the love of God, led by Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

How do we strive to be filled with the love of God, to be led by Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit? One way is through worship. Worship directs us in the way that is Spirit led.

It is in worship where we experience the living God through the Spirit that dwells in each of us. How do we know that? Well, this week I want to share a testimony of a man who grew in his faith by attending worship more frequently.

Share the story of Mike Daly.

Once we (Janise and I) decided that as christian parents we needed to find a home for our worship, we received the church newsletter inviting us to the new contemporary "Asbury Alternative" service.

From the first service, the energy of the band, the welcoming friendship of the congregation, the spirit of the message, and the obvious abundant Love for Jesus and God that PASTORS Allan and Jeff displayed, it was clear to us we found our home. It is in this community of God loving Christians that we will raise our boys, and strengthen our faith.

Now there are two reasons we attend the asbury service regularly:

First, It is to refill our "spirit tank" to hear the message to be reminded (or taught)how to live a Christ-like life, and be part of a community. To be inspired to serve the church and God through Jesus.

Secondly To show our sons, set an example, so they understand, it is important to live a chrsitian life, to be disiplined in our worship,and to be a part of a dynamic, growing, loving, church family.

And we love the music!!

Mike and Janice opened themselves to the leading of God's Holy Spirit. In doing so, they experience the freedom that only God can give during the time of worship. When they experience it they then can do as what our purpose states: to be filled by the Love of God, led by Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

What about the rest of us? Do we truly open ourselves up to the leading of God's Spirit in worship? Today, we are going to dive into two different selections of Scripture, one from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament. Our first reading comes from Isaiah 29: 13-14, and the second reading comes from John 4:19-24.

Let's read:

Isaiah 13-14

The Master said:

*"These people make a big show of saying the right thing,
but their hearts aren't in it.
Because they act like they're worshipping me
but don't mean it,
I'm going to step in and shock them awake,
astonish them, stand them on their ears.
The wise ones who had it all figured out
will be exposed as fools.
The smart people who thought they knew everything
will turn out to know nothing."*

This is one of the main reasons, we as a church, have Worship as one of our main areas of ministry! Worship is meant to be sincere! The prophet Isaiah was prophesying words from God; words that God was displeased with their way of worship. These people were just going through the motions.

God's displeasure of their lack of sincere worship led God to bring judgement upon them. Even today, we have to be careful of falling into the routine and not giving God

Pastor Jeff St. Clair January 24, 2010 Isaiah 29:13-14, John 4:19-24
our all when we come to worship. Because when we fall into those routines, we neglect what God is doing in the present moment.

I've been guilty of this before! When dad was a pastor at Belle Vernon 1st UMC, I would sit in the back of the church with a few of my friends and a few old guys. People coming in would say, "Why don't you sit in a pew like the rest of us?" We would fold our arms and say, "That's because we are in the non-singing section." We'd laugh and think it was funny.

Wow, little did I realize how much I must of disappointed God. I gave God so little during that time of my life. I feel like I really let God down. What did it take for me to change my ways?

I think I experienced it when I went out on my own. It's when I was on my own that I realized how much I needed God in my life. No longer did mom and dad care for me. I was on my own and in realizing that, worship helped me realize how much God really meant in my life.

I desired to live as John 4:19-24 reads...

John 4:19-24 (The Message)

19-20 "Oh, so you're a prophet! Well, tell me this: Our ancestors worshiped God at this mountain, but you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place for worship, right?"

21-23 "Believe me, woman, the time is coming when you Samaritans will worship the Father neither here at this mountain nor there in Jerusalem. You worship guessing in the dark; we Jews worship in the clear light of day. God's way of salvation is made available through the Jews. But the time is coming—it has, in fact, come—when what you're called will not matter and where you go to worship will not matter.

23-24 "It's who you are and the way you live that count before God. Your worship must engage your spirit in the pursuit of truth. That's the kind of people the Father is out looking for: those who are simply and honestly themselves before him in their worship. God is sheer being itself—Spirit. Those who worship him must do it out of their very being, their spirits, their true selves, in adoration."

Here was a woman who was worried about the right location to worship, but Jesus took her to the deeper issue. It wasn't about the place where we worship, it was all about the attitude of how we worship.

What's your attitude of worship? I've heard some people say, "I can't stand traditional worship anymore! I've had some people say, "You won't catch me downstairs at that hootin' nanny service!"

Do you think God is concerned with which service we worship at? God doesn't care that we worship at 5:30 Saturday night, 8:30 a.m. Early Morning, 9:15 a.m. Asbury @lternative or even 11:00 a.m. Sanctuary Classic, all God is concerned about is giving God the glory, that is due Him! AMEN? Amen!

That's why Pastor Allan and I along with our worship team place so much emphasis on worship. That's why the Asbury @lternative band rehearses every Sunday afternoon so that God is glorified in worship! We don't want to give God half of our talent! We desire to give God 100% of ourselves!

Our worship team is committed to serving God through the gifts they have been given. In our new structure, our worship team is made up of the four worshipping communities. In our new structure I ask that you pray for the following people as they discern what God is doing in their areas of ministry:

Worship Chair:

Barbara Kerr

Pastors Allan and Jeff

Director of Music Ministries: Phil Aley

Saturday Night Worship

Lay Leader: Jim Moore Steward: Rosemarie Hanna
Communion: Mimi Colombini, Marlene Smith

Early Morning

Lay Leader: Nancy Michael Steward: Jan Whalen

Asbury @lternative

Lay Leader: Dave Pogany Communion: Danielle Hamil
Design: Wayne Hall Greeters: Dent Holden
Nursery: Katie Beardsley Cafe': Cindy Wheeler and Dee Hoffman
Set up: Ron Perallo Ushers: Kirk Ferkett
Sound and Video: John Airesman Music: Jim Lombardi
Our Asbury @lternative Band

Sanctuary Classic:

Lay Leader: Rhonda Abraham Communion: Barbara Kerr

Grow Series at the @lternative

Who We Are

Pastor Jeff St. Clair
Design: Gerry Tinder
Ushers: Ed Lawrence, III

January 24, 2010 Isaiah 29:13-14, John 4:19-24
Greeters: Linda Jopinko
Music: Phil Aley

These are the people charged with the details to give us a worship experience that will allow us to be open to the Spirit's leading so that we are filled with the Spirit when we do worship.

I challenge you this week, to slow down, rethink how you worship God. It's not the location, it's the attitude.

Let's pray:

O Lord, even in this prayer, in this moment, we ask You to draw our attention, to slow our pace, to fill us with Your Holy Spirit.

Holy Spirit, come, fill me and each one here, as we surrender our soul to Your rule. We yield our emotions, intellect, and will to You. I offer my body in worship here today as a living sacrifice. You live in me, and may I live and dwell in you in worship. May I yield myself so that we are truly one.

In that Oneness, as we celebrate the Sacrament in Communion...