

Safford Church of Christ

3888 S Hwy 191, Safford, AZ 85546

27 September 2015

Topics

A.M. Bible Class:

Being a unifying church member
(Pete Waller)

A.M. Lesson:

Righteous acts of the saints (Revelation 19:8)

P.M. Lesson:

What can I do (1 John 1:7)?

Wednesday:

James 2

Pulpit Evangelist

Ken Knowlton: 428-3494

Elders

Greg Briggs: 428-8756

John Cunningham: 428-0895

Sunday Bible Class	10:00 A.M.
Sunday Morning Worship	11:00 A.M.
Sunday Evening Worship	6:30 P.M.
Wednesday Evening Class	6:30 P.M.
Thursday Ladies Bible Class	10:00 A.M.

*Great are the works of the Lord,
studied by all who delight in them. Psalm 111:2
Please silence your cell phones and other electronic devices.*

Psalm 116

In one of my recent daily readings I encountered a surprising passage: Psalm 116:15. What the verse appeared to say, it didn't, in context, actually say. I thought it would be a good thing to share. It is a good example of how context affects how we understand a passage; and it also clears up a few misunderstandings that may be floating around in our (or our friends') minds. -ns

This psalm expresses gratitude to God for rescuing the psalmist from a deadly situation—possibly a sickness or political scandal. The psalmist had made vows and he is in motion to fulfill them.

1 I love the LORD, for he heard my voice;
he heard my cry for mercy.

Literally, "I love, for he heard my voice." We might be reminded of 1 John 4:19, "We love because he first loved us."

2 Because he turned his ear to me,
I will call on him as long as I live.

Thus, the psalmist demonstrates his love for Yahweh.

3 The cords of death entangled me,
the anguish of the grave came over me;
I was overcome by distress and sorrow.

4 Then I called on the name of the LORD:
"LORD, save me!"

5 The LORD is gracious and righteous;
our God is full of compassion.

"Full of compassion" is a good translation here. Many translations have "merciful;" but thus part of the meaning is lost. The Hebrew carries a very strong compassionate tone. God is emotional. We shall see in this psalm that God also grieves. Most denominations of a Reformist bent define God's omnipotence such that God is seen as so far removed from mortals that he just doesn't care. The technical theological word is *impassible* (meaning emotionless). The truth is, his concern for mortals is more intense than we mortals are able to fathom.

6 The LORD protects the unwary;
when I was brought low, he saved me.

Literally, "The LORD protects the simple." God watches over the little people. He helps those who cannot help themselves.

7 Return to your rest, my soul,
for the LORD has been good to you.

8 For you, LORD, have delivered me from death,
my eyes from tears,
my feet from stumbling,
9 that I may walk before the LORD
in the land of the living.

It is great to be alive!

10 I trusted in the LORD when I said,
“I am greatly afflicted”;
11 in my alarm I said,
“Everyone is a liar.”

12 What shall I return to the LORD
for all his goodness to me?

Answer: by keeping his vows (vs. 14).

13 I will lift up the cup of salvation
and call on the name of the LORD.

**Possibly a drink offering (Exodus 29:40) is
in mind.**

14 I will fulfill my vows to the LORD
in the presence of all his people.

15 Precious in the sight of the LORD
is the death of his faithful servants.

**It appears here that God *likes* the deaths of
the righteous; but that cannot be right.**

**Verse 3 describes death as the enemy. Verse
8 describes God's salvation as deliverance
from death. The psalmist is fulfilling his
righteous vows. Thus, “precious” should be
understood in its negative sense of “costly,
grievous.” Thus, God also grieves over the
deaths of the righteous. Ezekiel 18:21-32
invites Israel to repent of their sinful ways
so that they will live. Otherwise, they will
die in God's judgment; and God takes no
pleasure in executing the death sentence
upon the wicked. He prefers to grant life to
the righteous. *But if a wicked person turns
away from the sins they [sic] have committed
and keeps all my decrees and does what is
just and right, that person will surely live;
they [sic] will not die. None of the offenses
they have committed will be remembered
against them. Because of the righteous
things they have done, they will live. Do I
take pleasure in the death of the wicked?
Declares the Sovereign Lord. Rather, am I
not pleased when they turn from their ways
and live (Isaiah 18:21-23, NIV)?***

16 Truly I am your servant, LORD;
I serve you just as my mother did;
you have freed me from my chains.

17 I will sacrifice a thank offering to you
and call on the name of the LORD.

18 I will fulfill my vows to the LORD
in the presence of all his people,

**The psalmist is not very specific about the
nature of the vows he is fulfilling, especially
in verses 13 and 17. Because the
descriptions are so general, the language is
adaptable for use in the context of the
Passover meal and even in the Christian
communion (Lord's Supper) meal.**

19 in the courts of the house of the LORD—
in your midst, Jerusalem.
Praise the LORD.

News:

This evening, after services (shortly after the last
“amen”), there will be a total lunar eclipse. It will
be at its maximum at 7:45 P.M. You're invited to
stay at the church grounds this evening and enjoy
salsa and chips together while we check out the
eclipse. If you have a favorite salsa recipe, you
are invited to whip up a batch and share it with
with the group.

Jacey, Pete and Cindy Waller's granddaughter had
her surgery and is recovering at home.

Richard Tuey has cancer.

The Cunninghams are on the road.

Extended prayer list:

Robin Richards. Severe back pain.

Tatyana Knowlton—macular degeneration

Ken Cocke—back and shoulder pains. Infection

Janet Radar—nursing home

*H.L. Boling—general health and complications from
leukemia*

*Mike Cavasos—chronic pain, foot issues, sinus is-
sues*

Sandy Cavasos—degenerative disk disease

Nic and Ani Self—health and personal needs

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