

wrestle with what God is saying to each of us in and through the written Word?

Let me introduce one of the ways of the Scripture reading called LECTIO DIVINA meaning 'Holy Reading.' (Video Clip)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0QlpKXHPn0k> You may find more information on *Lectio Divina* in your insert.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer encourages and inspires us to “ponder the chosen text on the strength of the promise that it has something utterly personal to say to us for this day and for our Christian life, that it is not only God’s Word for the Church, but also for us individually. We expose ourselves to the specific word until it addresses us personally... We read God’s Word as God’s Word for us... In meditation God’s Word seeks to enter in and remain with us. It strives to stir us, to work and operate in us, so that we shall not get away from it the whole day long. Then it will do its work in us, without our being conscious of it.” (*Life Together* (New York: Harper, 1954), p. 82)

The most important thing is that we need to have more time to read the Bible. Write the Bible verses and memorize them if it is possible for you. No matter what way you read the Bible, try to find yourself in the story. Take time to listen and pay attention to the invitation to find yourself in the biblical story and then reconvene to share with one another as described in the opening story. Allow God to bring Scripture to bear on our lives in unexpected ways, as he knows we need them.

April 22, 2018

Life Together in Christ (7)

Finding Our Story in His Story

Luke 24:27

Rev. Dr. Charles Yoon

As you find in the information section of the church bulletin, we, Faith Church, offer four different Bible studies every week. Women’s Bible study is held on Wednesday morning at 10:00 in the library. Men’s breakfast Bible study is held on Saturday morning at 7:00 in the Fireside Room. Adult Bible Fellowship, which is a co-ed Bible study, is held on Sunday morning at 8:45 am in the library. We also have an off-site Bible study for men on Tuesday morning at 6:00 am at The Baked Apple restaurant on Ogden Ave. Each Bible study is unique and has different leadership and different atmospheres. But all the Bible studies give us great opportunities to nurture, equip, and help us to be close to Jesus Christ and to live as His disciples. I encourage you to join any of these Bible studies, or you may have your own Bible study group at your home or at another place.

Bible study is a spiritual exercise in which we are to invite God to show us our place in the story – in God’s time and in God’s way. As we engage in the Bible study, we are to reflect on this set of questions: “Where is the place in Scripture where we find ourselves exclaiming, ‘My story is being told here!’” “Where among the biblical characters have we found ourselves named, understood and received?” “What are the events and life circumstances that have shaped us most profoundly, and how does finding that part of our own story fit in His-story?” By reflecting and sharing those questions we are given glimpses of how we might better relate to and understand those with whom we begin to share a new journey. During the Bible study we sometimes might be curious as to why God had drawn this particular group of us together and allow ourselves to wonder, “why are these characters and stories being drawn together just now?” and “What

might God have for us as we continue to allow Him to invite to our individual stories and our shared story?" We offer our own true story told with grace and truth, humility and authenticity. The stories we share during the Bible study are not meant to be argued with, judged or dismissed. They are meant to be received.

Helping us find ourselves in the story is exactly what Jesus did for the disciples on the Emmaus Road, and it was, indeed, transformative. *"And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself"* (27). When Jesus referred to "all the Scriptures," He was speaking of the Old Testament and he provides us with the master key for interpreting it correctly: What does it say concerning Himself? Trent C. Butler commented that Jesus said one principle should guide our reading of Scripture. We should search the Scriptures to see how each part points to the life, death, resurrection, and mission of Jesus. Scripture is read correctly only when it is read in light of Jesus. The Hebrew Scriptures were written to prepare people to recognize Jesus of Nazareth as Son of God, Redeemer of Israel, and Savior of the World. (*Luke*, Holman New Testament Commentary, vol. 3 (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), p. 425). Warren Wiersbe said, "The key to understanding the Bible is to see Jesus Christ on every page." (*The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), Lk 24:13)

The disciples received a once-in-a-lifetime lesson on the Old Testament and Jesus. That Bible study was the most intense, interesting, insightful and enlightening Bible-study ever. These two disciples were definitely beginning to realize the significance of what was taking place. Jesus was locating their personal experience within the larger story of what God was doing in the world. He drew attention to the fact that the traumatic events that had felt so random and personal up to that point had actually been predicted long ago as part of a much more encompassing plan. The disciples began to find meaning in the events they had endured.

They encountered Jesus' transforming presence in and through the biblical story and in their own story, and it changed them utterly.

Many of us are used to studying Scripture and listening to good preaching and teaching in order to gain information about God. Oftentimes we use Scripture as a tool for our own ends – becoming more learned, preparing to lead or participate in a Bible study, teaching and preaching, passing a test or writing a paper, proving a point. In the Protestant tradition we are very Word and word-centered. The Word of God in Scripture is our highest authority for faith and practice, and the "preached word" is the highest priority in many of our church services. While the study of Scripture is foundational to the Christian life, information alone does not bring about transformation. Only a life-changing encounter with Christ can change our lives.

When we engage Scripture, we are drawn into a relationship with Christ, the Living Word. We are engaged not only at the level of the mind but also with our heart, our emotions, our curiosity, our imagination and our will. As we encounter Christ in the text, we respond to what we read with our whole being – heart, soul, mind and strength. When we interact with Scripture, we pay attention to our own inner dynamics and allow our responses to take place in the deeper levels of our being. We open to a whole different set of questions. In addition to asking questions like 'What does the text say?' 'What does it mean?' 'How do I apply it to my life?' we might also ask the following questions: 1) How do I feel about what is being said? Where do I find myself resisting, pulling back, disagreeing, wrestling with what the text might be saying? Can I be honest with Jesus and with these companions about that? 2) What aspect of my life and being is being touched, challenged, spoken to through this Scripture? What do I want to say to Jesus about that? 3) What do my reactions tell me about myself – my attitudes, my perspectives and behaviors? Can I be with that in God's presence and let him guide me to what is needed? 4) As spiritual companions, can we leave the space open to each other as we