

A Deep Well of Devotion
Psalm 121

*I want to let you know up-front {right away} that this series of sermons owes a great deal to Michael Slaughter's book *Momentum for Life*. It is not my intention to present his ideas as my own, but only to share the important lessons that I have learned from his book with others.*

- I. The Detroit Tigers are on their way to the World Series.
 - A. For a long time the Tigers were the laughing stock of the American League.
 - B. This year they were one of the best teams in baseball.
 - 1) Last week they beat the Yankees in 4 games.
 - a) In game 1 and 2 (until the 4th inning) it was all Yankees.
 - b) In game 2 (from the 5th inning on) through game 4 it was all Detroit.
 - 2) What was the difference?
 - C. The difference was momentum.
 - 1) Some teams come on strong and then fade.
 - 2) Others start slowly and come on strong at the end.
 - 3) The Tigers started strong, faded a bit at the end, and recaptured Momentum.
 - 4) Regardless of how it works the teams that succeed are the one's who pay attention to the fundamentals and understand the power of momentum.
 - D. The same is true of our walk in faith.
 - 1) As apprentices of Jesus we better pay attention to the fundamentals.
 - 2) We better understand the power of momentum.
 - E. All of us want to grow to be like Christ.
 - 1) We have big dreams about how God will use us.
 - 2) But do we have the commitment, the longevity, and the momentum to realize those dreams by the power of the Holy Spirit?
 - F. I think we undercut our momentum in a variety of ways.
 - 1) We start to make exceptions.
 - a) We do this for a variety of reasons –
 - b) And some of us have momentum in one part of our lives and not in another.
 - c) But the call to holiness, wholeness, Christ-likeness is for all followers of Jesus.
 - 2) We forget that “there’s no time like the present.”
 - a) Sometimes we don’t know where to start.
 - b) We’ve been inactive or stagnant for long enough that getting started seems like an insurmountable task.
 - 3) We don’t have a plan.
 - a) That’s what we’re doing today – starting to make a plan.
 - b) We’re going to get started, all of us, without exception.
 - c) And we’re going to get started today.
- II. By talking about devotion: Specifically, I mean the depth of your commitment to God.
 - A. How deep is the well of your devotion?
 - 1) How strong does your commitment to God get?
 - 2) Who or what is your primary focus?

- 3) The psalmist says, “¹I lift up my eyes to the hills— where does my help come from? ²My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. - Psalm 121:1-2.
 - a) “My help” means “meaning,” “purpose,” or “life-power.”
 - b) Is God the one who gives us meaning, purpose and power?
 - B. If you confess God as the object of your devotion, that choice is telling.
 - 1) Because the object of your devotion proclaims your ultimate value.
 - 2) The object of your devotion is also the object of your worship.
 - 3) And what or who you worship drives you!
 - C. Breaking inertia and gaining momentum for growth has its beginning in the depth of your devotion to God (and your desire) for the things of God.
- III. Key to your devotion is what we’ll call developing a “Jesus worldview.”
- A. It’s what Paul talks about in 1 Corinthians 2:16 when he says, “But we have the mind of Christ.”
 - 1) It involves a rejection of our current worldview.
 - 2) And a conversion of sorts to the world view that Jesus espouses in the Gospels.
 - 3) Let’s look at this in a number of ways.
 - B. First, are you committed to the Kingdom of God (with its focus on the eternal) or are you committed to your life (with its focus on the here and now)?
 - C. Are you saturated with the truth of God or are you committed to your ability to navigate your way through life on your own?
 - D. Are you reaching out to others in care and concern for the world (caring for people on the fringes) like Jesus or are you committed to your life, your satisfaction and your well-being?
 - E. Are you making sacrifices for God’s Kingdom or are you donating for the maintenance of God’s Kingdom?
 - F. Are you building a Godly life (content in God’s calling on your life) or are you building a resume (that elevates you and your accomplishments)?
- IV. The answers to these questions speak to the depth of your desire to follow God and become more like Christ.
- A. What I’m asking you to do is reorient or rearrange your way of thinking.
 - 1) Paul said, “²Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” – Romans 12:2.
 - 2) The Greek word that in English gets translated “be transformed” is not talking about a point in time when this transformation occurs.
 - a) That verb in Greek is a continuing action verb.
 - b) It identifies a process that takes place over a period of time.
 - 3) This is something wholly and completely different than our acceptance of God’s salvation.
 - a) That is the occasion of our acknowledgement of His grace.
 - b) Being transformed if an acknowledgement of His Lorship.
 - c) We recognize our need for a Savior – by accepting God’s Grace.
 - d) We recognize our need for a Lord – by accepting God’s sovereignty.
 - B. Your transformation into the likeness of God is a process.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 3:18 puts it very clearly; “¹⁸And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”
 - 2) A process that begins with a conscious decision of your will.
 - 3) A process that you can help or hinder by an act of your will.

- C. I am asking you today to wade out into the deep end of the pool.
 - 1) I'm asking you to take on the race that is your faith with more passion and desire than you have now.
- D. How do we do that?
 - 1) How do we deepen the depth of our devotion?
 - 2) How do we rekindle our desire and passion for the things of God?
- E. Let me suggest a few ways.
 - 1) One, make a decision; an act of your will.
 - a) Make it today. And then stick with it.
 - b) A prayer like this: "God, here I am fully submitted to you; use me as you have never used me before."
 - 2) Second, make yourself accountable.
 - a) There should be someone that will hold you accountable for your decision.
 - b) "I'm accountable to God." – That's a copout to avoid accountability.
 - c) God makes it clear in Scripture that brothers and sisters in Christ are to hold one another accountable.
 - 3) Devote yourself {notice that word?} to a personal time with God everyday.
 - a) We mentioned this last week, but it bears repeating.
 - b) A personal quiet time is the fuel that will carry you through those times when your will weakens.
 - c) Start with 5 minutes – then 10 – then who knows? Take that next best step!
 - 4) Devote yourself {there it is again!} to corporate worship.
 - a) Sunday is an important day – demonstrate that by your actions.
 - b) Be here!
 - c) If you make it once a month or a couple times a month – give God one more Sunday, then another, until he has them all.
- F. A commitment to a deeper devotion to the things of God, a stronger desire for the things of God, begins with a change in your thinking.
 - 1) Adopting a Jesus world view.
 - a) Begin a journey during which you are transformed into the likeness of Jesus.
 - b) The evidence of that change in thinking is a change in behavior.
 - c) Those changes in behavior reinforce your new way of thinking.
 - d) It's a wonderfully complete circle.
 - 2) Paul said, "But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." – Philippians 3:13-14.
 - 3) Today, let's put aside what is behind and run the race before us.
 - 4) Break your spiritual inertia and gain some Godly momentum toward the life that God has planned for you.
 - 5) So that, when you reach the finish line, you can say with the Apostle Paul, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." – 2 Timothy 4:7.