

RELIGION

Scripture of the Week

Hebrews 11:1-3

What Makes Your Life Worth Living?

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The text for the Sunday School lesson (International Series) for next Sunday is Acts 26:1-8, 22-23, 27-29. I suggest we study the whole 26th chapter of Acts this week, and I urge my readers to attend Sunday School and worship this week. With the time of Thanksgiving close at hand, we ought to ask ourselves seriously: to whom do I owe thanks, if not God?

In his best-selling book "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People," Mr. Steven Covey invites his readers to engage in an unusual mental exercise. Imagine yourself attending the funeral of a loved one. As you enter the church or funeral chapel, you see your own family, your closest friends, your neighbors, your fellows employees, and others you know as well. Now imagine that somehow you can approach the front of the chapel and glance into the casket--and you come face to face with your own lifeless body.

All these people are present to remember you and your life. The program indicates that four speakers will be sharing their remembrances of your life: a family member, someone you worked with, a fellow church member perhaps, and a neighbor. As you take your seat (unnoticed) in the chapel, ask yourself this question. What would I like each of these people to be able to truthfully say about me? How would I like to be remembered when my life is done?

You might want to take a few minutes right now, and turn away from this paper and make a list of some qualities and accomplishments you would really like to be remembered for. Think deeply about the things that most matter to you. Take your time.

A lot of times our lives tend to lose their focus, their sense of direction. An exercise like Mr. Covey's will force us to take stock of our lives, and ask some penetrating questions about how we are using our lives, and what kind of legacy we are leaving to those we care

about. You see, all too often we are influenced by the opinions and expectations of those we hardly know, and by the pervasive influence of media (news, TV, music and movies), and we tend to confirm to others' ideas rather than evaluating our lives and making our own moral decisions.

As someone wisely said, "If we don't stand for something, we will fall for anything." And I have seen a lot of Christian believers who have lost their focus, their sense of purpose for this life, and they have fallen into destructive patterns they have later regretted.

These are not always notorious sins, though they may lead to that. We may be developing a pattern of prayerlessness, even though we value prayer. We may be ignoring the personal needs of our spouse or children, though we know they are our most important responsibilities in the course of a life-time. We may begin to conform to the creeping dishonesty, and rudeness, and unfaithfulness which characterizes so much of our society today, though we surely wouldn't want people to remember us that way. We need to live with eternal values in view.

Now let me invite you to participate in a second "mental exercise." Imagine now that you were an attendant of King Agrippa, standing by quietly in the court of Festus in Caesaria. Now read Acts 25:23 through the end of chapter 26, and pretend you are hearing the words of Paul for the first time. Read them aloud, if possible. What is your estimate of this man? Does he have a focus for his life? How does he handle contrary opinions, and opposition from supposed experts? Is his commitment to Jesus Christ an attractive option for your life?

This speech has been called the Apostle's Apologia pro Vita Sua, his "Defense of My Life." It is the longest account in the Apostle's own words, of his life, his conversion, and his message. In light of his situation, arrested and imprisoned for two years without trial, we would not be surprised to hear

doubts, or compromise, or frustration. What we do see is a man who was focused on the Lord Jesus Christ, and unwilling to let anything else move him from that person.

Do you know the Lord Jesus? I don't just mean as one great Teacher among many, or even as a Savior. Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Universe and Redeemer of humanity, deserves our faithful dedication and trust. When we how have experienced his love and the pardon of our sins, focus our hearts and minds on him, we will gain a sense of purpose and resolve that will allow us to live meaningful, successful lives--lives that will leave a legacy of hope to our family and our community.

Do I need to tell you that many Christians today have lost that sense of purpose and hope? Some folks who go to church every Sunday (or Saturday) act and feel as defeated and confused as those lost "sinners" we always talk about. We can't get a lasting peace and joy in living, if we don't get down to the root problem. And that's our focus on Christ. If we make him the source of our direction, and the model for our behavior, we will be largely freed from the forces which try to suck us into spiritual compromise and defeat. And we will also be someone, like Paul the apostle, who can stand up under trial, and come out a winner.

James warns us that "a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways" (James 1:8). If you try to live for the Lord, but also try to focus on others' opinions, or the fashions of the world (and I don't mean just dress), or the pursuit of money, you will be unstable, likely to fall over, and unlikely to be at peace with yourself or anyone else. And you will not likely be a person remembered for strength, or love, or godly character. The hymnist put it well:

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in his wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow
strangely dim,
In the light of his glory and grace.

Hebrews 11:1-3

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for.

By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

Hallelujah!

LIFT YOUR VOICE AND SING.
GOING HOME TO GOSPEL
WITH PATTI LABELLE
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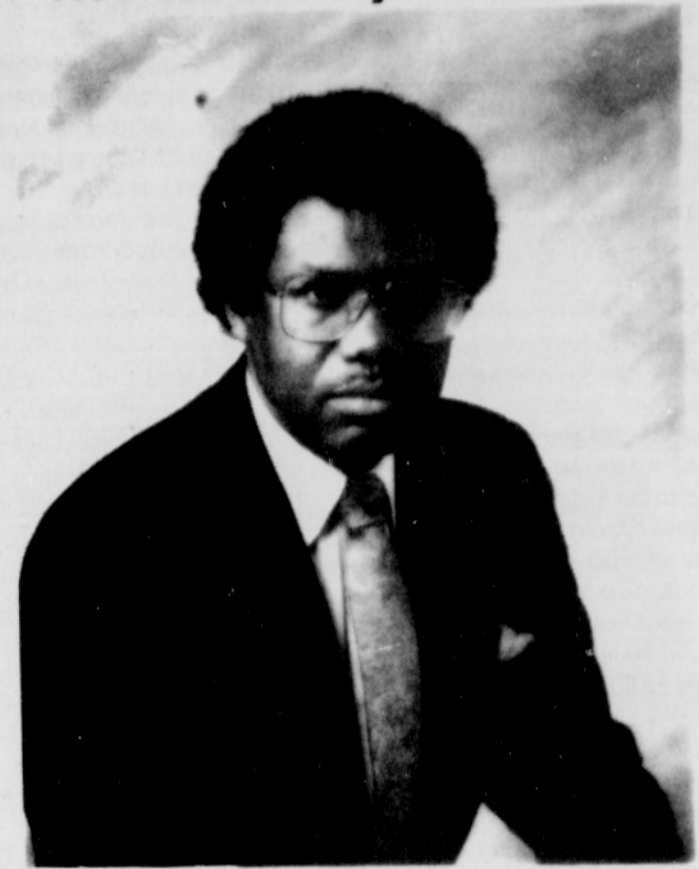


IT'S
WHERE
YOU
BELONG
CHANNEL 10



Cargo floating on the water from a sinking ship is called flotsam, while the debris washed ashore is called wreck.

Deacon Threatt to Preach Catholic Revival at Holy Redeemer



Marvin Threatt

Marvin Threatt, 52, a permanent deacon in the Catholic diocese of San Diego, Calif., will preach a four-day revival in Portland Nov. 18-21. Threatt, assistant principal at the University of San Diego High School, will speak at 7 p.m. services at Holy Redeemer Catholic Church, 25 N. Portland Blvd. Choirs and soloists, including Goldie Irby, will perform.

The public is invited. A reception will follow closing services, which focus on youth, on Thursday, Nov. 21.

Ordained a deacon in 1983, the Birmingham, Ala. native has served as pastoral associate at Christ the King Parish in San Diego and now ministers at Nativity Catholic Church in that city.

An evangelist, lecturer and motivational speaker, Threatt has conducted revivals and retreats at both the local and national levels. He holds a BS degree from the University of California at Long Beach and a master's degree in religious education from the University of San Diego.

Threatt is past chair of the San

Diego Diocesan Commission for Black Catholics and has served as diocesan coordinator for implementation of the National Black Catholic Pastoral Plan. He is also a member of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Liturgy in the Black community based in Washington, D.C.

A Vietnam veteran, the deacon, who has three grown children, served as a medic in the Marine Corps in 1968-69 during his 22-year tenure in the Navy. He is currently conducting a series of workshops on leadership and development for welfare and eligibility workers for the Los Angeles County Social Service Department.

Threatt and his wife live in San Diego.

The revival is sponsored by Holy Redeemer, Immaculate Heart and Saint Andrew Catholic churches, the Portland Black Catholic Lay Caucus, the Knights and Ladies of Saint Peter Claver and the Archdiocese of Portland. Free transportation to the revival is available by calling the sponsoring churches: 281-4429, 287-3724 or 285-4539.

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- Morning Worship 10:45 am.
- Men's Training Leadership 5:00 pm.
- Women's Bible Class 6:00 pm.
- Evening Worship 6:00 pm.
- Attended nursery for all services
- Wednesday prayer meeting and bible study 7:30 pm.

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Matthew 11:28

"Come to me all you who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest"

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Pastor, Rev. James C.E. Faulkner

Theme: Whatever you're going to do for the Lord, do it now

I Peter iv. 11