

SCRIPTURE: Philippians 4:19, Psalm 28:7

As I began to pray about the message today, I thought...maybe I should talk about my favorite Bible story. As I thought about my favorite story, I decided I don't really have a FAVORITE Bible story. When I joined this congregation in 1979, someone called to interview me to do a little feature in the Newsette, welcoming the 'new member.' One question was, "What is your favorite Bible story?", as well as what my favorite hymn was. Even though I had been baptized when I was in 6th grade, I had not attended church regularly most of my growing up years and I did know some Bible stories, but I just went blank...couldn't think of one to toss out thereand a hymn, hmmm, did I say 'Amazing Grace'? That might have been one that popped into my head.

Long before I knew who the Holy Spirit was, he had been leading me and giving me the courage to say yes. I have been blessed to accept the challenge to lead a children's choir (having never been in a choir before), to teach in Sunday School, VBS, and direct church camps. Every time I was so nervous....when you are working for God you don't want to mess it up. I found you really do learn a lot when you teach, because you must prepare for any questions that might be asked. Sometimes I'd just have to say, "Let's look that up" or "That's your homework for next week." I still participate in adult Bible study and Sunday school, because I still have so much to learn and as I learn it gives me so much peace to know that God loves me, Jesus died for me, and the Holy Spirit walks with me. I still haven't chosen one favorite story.... mostly I love the words in red, the voice of Jesus speaking to us even now.

Though I don't have a favorite story...I can say that I have really appreciate the life of David...not the children's story of David killing Goliath (although that is pretty impressive), but the story of a person who was tempted, failed to resist and was quick to confess his sins and repent. He was forgiven, blessed and used by God. That has given me confidence through the years. If God would forgive David and bless him, even after he had done such "BIG" sins, like killing someone and being an adulterer, surely he can use a sinner like me. I've never killed anyone, but I have done things am not proud of and were BIG sins to me. I'm sure they grieved God, and yet I can honestly say, "Thus far, the Lord has helped me." (I Samuel 7:12)

Archie has challenged us to be ready to have an answer if someone should ask us why we believe. Honestly -- no one has ever asked me that question, but as I have given thought to what I would say I have decided I would turn to the gospels. Matthew and John were written by disciples who were present with Jesus and heard his promises and later recorded them. They experienced his death on the cross, and saw his resurrection. Mark and Luke were

with Paul. They had heard the stories of Jesus, even though they were not among the 12 disciples. They were faithful to record what they had heard.

If someone asked me why I believe God's word is true, I would say as David did in Psalm 28:7 - "The Lord is my strength and my shield, my heart trusts in Him and I am helped." In times of turmoil, where does my peace come from.....it's comes from prayer and knowing I am never alone. "Thus far the Lord has helped me."

I would tell them I believe in the Bible because it is not a book of novels, written from men's imaginations, but a recorded history.....one that God wants us to know. The Gospels are really love letters from God, so we can trust how great his love is for us. He sent Jesus, who took every sin we have ever done to the cross. My hope is solid because Jesus rose again, just as he told them he would, and they saw him. I know that we will see him too.

Carolynn

Call to Action: What would you say if asked why you believe?