

B2B

Genesis 24; Romans 7:15-25; Matthew 11:28-30

Rev. Kenneth M. Locke, Interim Pastor  
St Paul United Church of Christ; New Bremen, OH  
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Let's say we play the piano and we're trying to master a new piece of music. It's not going well. What do we do? Break it down, look for chord progressions, go back and practice our scales. When we're stuck, go back to the basics.

Or we enjoy basketball but lately it's been nothing but airballs. What do we do? Stop and look at ourselves. Are we holding the ball correctly? Is our posture OK? Do we have adequate follow-through? Are we taking aim or are we just throwing the ball in the general direction? Go back to the basics.

Or perhaps we're outside on a really hot day. We want to make sure we don't overheat. What do we do? First thing, most basic thing, is drinking plenty of water. Staying well hydrated is a basic step in staying healthy when it's hot outside.

When we're having trouble, when things aren't going well, one of the best things we can do is go back to the basics. Go back to the basics and see if that doesn't make things better.

The Apostle Paul has a problem. He knows what he should do, but somehow he just can't. He knows he belongs to Christ; he knows he should live a godly life. But somehow, he just can't. It's like sin has taken control of his life. What can he do?

If Paul came to me and asked me about making sin less of a force in his life, my first question, my most basic question, would be about how big a role God has in his life. How basic is God to your life, Paul? Does God play a big part in your life? Does God play a small part in your life? How basic is God to your life?

How about us? How about you and me? Does God have a major role in our lives? Does God have a minor role in our lives? How basic is God to our living?

Think about our Old Testament lesson. Did you notice how many times God comes up? Did you notice how often God is prayed to, worshipped, invoked? By my count, God is brought into the

action no less than 9 times in just these few verses. Clearly, God is a big part of bringing Isaac and Rebekah together.

How often is God a part of our lives? Day-in and day-out, not just Sunday but Monday thru Saturday, how often do we call on God, worship God, praise God? How often do we think about God during the day? How often do we try living godly lives?

Every week we as a congregation pray The Lord's Prayer. It's a basic part of our worship. How often do we try making God's Kingdom as real on earth as it is in heaven? How often do we thank God for our daily bread? How often do we forgive our debtors?

How basic is God to our daily living? How basic is God to who we are? Is living as God wants us to live a basic part of who we are?

Does that sound onerous to you? Does it sound maybe too heavy duty, too hard core? Are we maybe expecting too much of ourselves by making God that basic to our living?

I think, and I really do believe this, the more we know Jesus, the more we walk in Jesus' footsteps, the more we live a Godly life, the more we know the truth of what Jesus said in our Gospel lesson. "My yoke is easy and my burden light." The more we know Jesus, the more we live like him, the easier it becomes. The more restful it becomes. The more basic Jesus is to our living, the more we enjoy our living.

Paul's dilemma is not unique to Paul. This is the human condition. We are all torn between God and sin. And sometimes we just get tired of it.

Beloved, are you tired of it? Are you tired of wanting to do one thing but always doing the other? Are you tired of sin having a major role in your life?

If so, let me ask you a pretty basic question. How important is God to your living? Do you know God well? Is spending time with Jesus a basic part of your day?

Let me put it another way. In Jesus' time, most people got their water from wells or from large pools that were filled during the rainy season. Most water was stored. And what happens to water when it's stored too long? What happens to water when everyone uses it for washing and bathing and everything else you can think of, as well as cooking and drinking? Gets pretty nasty, doesn't it?

Jesus, though, is not stored water. Jesus is living water. Jesus is moving water. Jesus is pure, living water. So, what do we need to do? Go back to the basics. Hydrate! Drink deep! Drink like those camels at the well. Get to know Jesus more and more. Make him as basic to our lives as water.

Will it make us perfect? Will we ever be completely free of sin? No. Of course not. In this life sin will always have some hold over us. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't push back and resist. Of course not. With God's help. We can make life better.

If we go back to basics, if we drink deep of Jesus' living water, if we live the Godly life, we'll know the truth. Jesus' yoke is easy. His burden is light. By living his life, we will find rest for our souls.

Beloved, this is how much God loves us. Thanks be to God. Amen.