

October 23, 2011

1 Thessalonians 2:1-8    Matthew 22:34-40

### “Angels and Angel Food”

Angels. What do you think about angels? Do they exist? Are they supernatural beings? Are they the eternal presence of loved ones who have died who are now watching over us? Are they PEOPLE God has inspired to share his words and do his work?

Whatever you believe, one thing is sure. Angels appear innumerable times in Scripture. Angels as distinct creatures have been a part of all Western monotheistic religions since their beginning. In Judaism, Christianity and Islam there is universal recognition that the one supreme God over all uses some form of “helpers” to act as mediators between Almighty God and God’s creation and creatures, including humanity.

For many people today, that topic is shrouded in mystery, difficult for us to understand, and perhaps too ethereal to contemplate. I’m fairly certain that God’s angels, the ones who are actually “distinct creatures” are never to be the focus of our lives. God wants us to LISTEN to angels, as they bring their messages through Scripture, and perhaps even at times through dreams and so forth. But it’s their MESSAGE that matters, and not the angels themselves.

And one more thing is certain: WE are called at times to take up the angelic role ourselves. We are called to be Earth Angels who not only see the need for the world to be different, but who DO SOMETHING to make a difference themselves. The world needs more Earth Angels.

The reading from Thessalonians today both states why all Christians may be considered Earth Angels, AND describes what is expected from them.

In 1 Thess. 2:4 Paul declares that he—and by inference ALL believers--- has been approved by God to be entrusted with the message of the gospel...to please God. This is the Christian earth angel’s task: to bring the great good news of God and his grace--- the good news that God became flesh, lived among us, died and was raised from death, opening the door to forgiveness, abundant and eternal life.

But bringing the good news is not JUST talk or teaching about Jesus. It includes those, to be sure, but also includes bringing the good news through our actions! Paul describes “angelic” activities of the Thessalonians through the image of a nurse tenderly caring for her own children.

Earth angels are called to offer “angel food”, life-giving activities that bring alive God’s grace. God counts on us here at Baker Memorial to be earth angels who LIVE the Great Commandment, stated in our text from Matthew. We are to bring alive loving God with heart, soul and mind. We are to bring alive loving our neighbors as ourselves. Our mission statement, “Loving God, Serving Others and Growing Together”, is drawn directly from Christ’s command. Are we doing this mission, so we can reach God’s vision for us??? To be a hub of Christ-directed activity, radiating out to the world, from the heart of St. Charles???? Are we?? I think we are.

Let’s hear from one of our members, Kristin Swayze, as she considers how “angel food” is being offered through Baker Memorial’s ministries. ( invite Kristin to share.)

Are we offering angel food? What other people or ministries come to your mind as we consider who among us are Earth Angels, and what angel food is being offered through our church?  
(Move into congregation with microphone.)

As Kristin reminded us, this is the season in the church when we consider how to serve and love God through our financial stewardship. I ask you to embrace the challenge that has been raised—to increase your commitment to our ministries for 2012. Remember, through God’s Word we are taught to give a tithe, or 10% of what God has given us. I know this often seems impossible, but God would not ask us to do something impossible! If you cannot see how you could manage that level of giving, I ask you to define a percentage of your income that you will give, and then move towards the 10% year by year.

I am so grateful to serve here at Baker Memorial, where there is an abundance of Earth Angels who offer Angel Food in a wide variety of ministries. Please pray over the coming week about God’s call inviting you to faithful stewardship. Bring your commitment card with your estimate of giving for 2012. We will dedicate them to God, and open our minds and hearts to what God has in store for us as we minister in Christ’s name!