LET YOUR FINGERS DO THE WALKING

“Let your fingers do the walking through the yellow pages.” I’m sure many of you remember this little jingle advertising the value of the yellow pages in the telephone book. Your fingers turning those pages will open you up to the world of advertisers like doctors and dentists, schools and churches, car dealers, real estate, restaurants. You name it and it’s in there even things like fumigating services, blasting contractors, scalp care, street cleaning, embalmers, grease collection service. Letting your fingers do the walking through the yellow pages can be interesting as I found out this week but also helpful and informative.

In a sense, Moses was telling the Israelites to let their fingers do the walking but not through the yellow pages. He wanted their fingers to do the walking through the pages of a much more valuable book, a book that had all the answers to the meaning of life and what happens after this life. This book is unlike any other, a book that has no errors, no mistakes, true in everything that is written. I am talking about the only true God’s very own words, the Bible. Moses wanted them to always have the Bible close at hand, at their fingertips, in their hearts and minds. That’s the same encouragement he gives to us. When it comes to God’s Word, Let Your Fingers Do the Walking. Let them do the walking to be reminded of what God has done for you and the promises he makes to you.

Moses was coming to the end of his ministry as leader of the Israelites. He had watched God deliver the people from Egypt with a miraculous display of power. He had watched the people rebel and complain against God again and again. He had watched a whole generation die off in the wilderness never to enter the Promised Land because of their lack of faith and trust in him. In fact, Moses had disobeyed the Lord and was told he would not be allowed to enter it. Now before Joshua took over as leader, Moses in his parting words wanted to focus the hearts and minds of the people on the beautiful covenant God had made with them, a covenant that promised countless and eternal blessings to those who loved him and remained faithful to him.
What did God mean by faithfulness? Moses told them. The Lord will again delight in you and make you prosperous, just as he delighted in your fathers, if you obey the Lord your God and keep his commands and decrees that are written in this Book of the Law and turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Faithfulness to the Lord would really be determined by their faithfulness to his Word. The only way they would continue to know God’s law and how he wanted them to live as his children was by letting their fingers do the walking through the pages of his Word. The only way they would be able to turn to the Lord with all their heart was by letting their fingers do the walking through his Word which reminded them of the coming Messiah. Only through God’s Word could the Holy Spirit work in their hearts and lives and keep them faithful to him. He wanted them to let their fingers do the walking and not just once in a while. It was to be a regular exercise. It was to be top priority in their lives. Sad to say, as time went on, the majority of the Israelites decided not to exercise their fingers by doing this walking. As a result, false teachings constantly led the children of Israel astray leading many to their eternal destruction.

My friends, how much walking exercise do your fingers get? When it comes to faithfulness to God’s Word, when it comes to letting our fingers do the walking through the pages of Scripture, haven’t we often failed to do what God demands when he says we are to gladly hear and learn his Word? The apostle Paul tells us this. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly. Not poorly, not meagerly, but richly. Sad to say, aren’t we often guilty of letting false gods cripple our fingers from turning the pages of Scripture? Think about it. Our fingers have no problem handling the remote control for our TVs or our tablets but how about handling our Bibles? What excuses do you come up with for not getting into the Word or for letting your Bible become a dust collector? “I don’t have time. I go to church on Sunday. Isn’t that good enough? I really don’t see the importance or the need to let my fingers do the walking.” When it comes to faithfulness to God’s Word, it’s easy for us to find all kinds of excuses for not letting our fingers do the walking. We often fall way short of what God expects and our faith as well as our faith life suffers as a result of that. Because of our lackadaisical attitude toward God’s Word, we deserve nothing but his wrath and punishment, the punishment being an eternity in hell. Letting our fingers do the walking reveals this truth to us but it’s a truth none of us really like to hear.
Yet, it’s something we need to hear because then, letting our fingers do the walking through the pages of the Bible, will also reveal that God is a loving God, and in his mercy, does not give us what we deserve. The Bible very clearly reveals to us how God provided salvation for a sinful and evil world. In spite of our sin of not letting our fingers do the walking, God sent his one and only Son into this world. His Son, Jesus, was perfectly faithful to His Father and the Word. He did this as our substitute. Jesus suffered the death that we deserved for our sins. Jesus then rose from the dead to show he had paid for our sins; that he truly was the Son of God, that heaven was now ours through him. The Bible again and again comforts us with this glorious truth that because of what Jesus has done for us, our sins have been washed away and we have a glorious future waiting for us in heaven. In our second lesson for today, Paul says this. God has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

My friends, God promises that if we turn to him with all our heart and soul, he will bless us. The amazing thing about this is God is not asking us to do something that is too difficult or impossible. He is the one who does the turning. By giving us his Word, by giving us the gift of faith and the ability to hear, read and accept his Word in its truth and purity, God has made faithfulness to him as easy as it can possibly be. Moses makes that clear in our text. Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, “Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?” Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, “Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?” No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it. The point Moses was making here is that the good news that we are saved by the grace of God through faith in Jesus isn’t a secret or a faraway message. We don’t have to climb the highest mountain or go searching for it in the deep waters of the ocean, or look for some sort of a treasure map where x marks the spot. God has made his word readily available to us. Through that Word, the Holy Spirit works faith in our hearts. That faith will then show in our positive attitude toward His Word, toward serving
the Lord in our lives, by being willing to generously give of our time, our abilities and our money toward the Gospel ministry of our church.

My friends, think about it. God’s Word is as close as the Bible on our bookshelf or the coffee table in our home. It’s as close as the pastor’s voice in your ears when you gather here for worship and Bible study. It’s as close as remembering passages you memorized, putting a Bible CD into a stereo system or someone reading the Bible or a meditation to you. You can even put an app on your phone. There are so many ways we can let our fingers do the walking through the pages of Scripture.

Is it really that important for us to do? Look at it this way. The Father-son relationship we have with God is built on the solid foundation of the suffering, death and resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ. This is what guarantees to all who are faithful to him a glorious eternity in the Promised Land of heaven. The only way to be faithful to God is to be faithful to the Word that he has graciously given us. Falling away from the Word leads to falling away from our Lord. Being unfaithful to the Scriptures is being unfaithful to our God who has given them to us. This is why it is a necessity for us to let our fingers do the walking through the pages of the Bible. So my friends, give your fingers a workout every day. Make this a daily exercise so that the Holy Spirit continues to remind you of what our Savior God has done for you and the promises that he makes to you. In doing so, he will bless your life not only here on earth, but forever in heaven. Amen.