**Hillside UMC Sermon Prep Sheet**

***Pastor Chris Neikirk***

**Date: Sunday, August 20, 2017**

**Sermon Title: Practically Christian: What Matters?**

**God’s Word Matters**

**Scripture: Psalm 119:97-112 (NIV)** 97Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long. 98Your commands are always with me and make me wiser than my enemies. 99I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes. 100I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey your precepts. 101I have kept my feet from every evil path so that I might obey your word. 102I have not departed from your laws, for you yourself have taught me. 103How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! 104I gain understanding from your precepts; therefore I hate every wrong path. 105Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path 106I have taken an oath and confirmed it, that I will follow your righteous laws. 107I have suffered much; preserve my life, Lord, according to your word. 108Accept, Lord, the willing praise of my mouth, and teach me your laws. 109Though I constantly take my life in my hands, I will not forget your law.  
110The wicked have set a snare for me, but I have not strayed from your precepts. 111Your statutes are my heritage forever; they are the joy of my heart. 112My heart is set on keeping your decrees to the very end.

**Ephesians 6:10-17 (NIV)** 10Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. 12For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

**Call to Worship: (8:30 only)**

**Almighty God,**

**to you all hearts are open, all desires known.**

**and from you no secrets are hidden.**

**Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts**

**by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,**

**that we may perfectly love you,**

**and worthily magnify your holy name,**

**through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**Basic Theme: *John Wesley and early Methodists were particularly concerned about inviting people to experience God’s grace and to grow in their knowledge and love of God through disciplined Christian living. They placed primary emphasis on Christian living, on putting faith and love into action. This emphasis on what Wesley referred to as “practical divinity” has continued to be a hallmark of United Methodism today. (umc.org – Our Wesleyan Heritage) How we practically live out our Christian faith is dictated, in part, by identifying what matters? What matters to God should influence both our beliefs and our actions.***

**Sermon Snapshot (Key Points): John Wesley was said to be “a man of one book” and he claimed to “try all things great and small by scripture.” The foundation of our faith is the Word of God. Studying God’s Word matters. Obeying God’s Word matters. Sharing God’s Word matters. We are saved by grace through faith, but we grow in grace by learning God’s Word and putting it into practice.**

**So What? How well do you know God’s Word? When what you believe contradicts what God’s Word teaches, who is wrong? Will you commit to digging into God’s Word so that you are prepared to live out your faith as a practical Christian?**