



2024 Lenten Devotional

WALKING WITH GOD



The
Little Church
with a Big Heart
Lakewood, WA



**THE LITTLE CHURCH ON THE PRAIRIE
LAKEWOODGRACE
2024 LENTEN DEVOTIONAL BOOKLET
“Walking with the Lord”**

How to Use This Booklet: Pick a quiet time each day during Lent for devotion. Start with a prayer. Then it is important to read the Bible passage before proceeding. The authors of these devotional messages assume that the Bible passages will have been read first, because the messages refer back to the Bible passage on the daily devotional page. Then reflect on what you have read and end with a prayer. It is a five-step process: Pray, read the Bible passage, read the message for that day, reflect and discuss, then close with a prayer. It is our hope that this devotional booklet will be a blessing to you each day of Lent. As you read each daily page, remember that you are connected to the author of each page through the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

About This Booklet: This year we once again reached out to members and friends of The Little Church on the Prairie and Lakewood*grace* to write a page for this booklet. Our theme for this year is: **Walking with the Lord.**

It is hoped that each contributor to this booklet will gain from the experience. It is also hoped that each person who uses this booklet will be moved to a deeper relationship with Jesus, will become a better disciple, and will be motivated to bring the good news of Jesus to others, showing the love of Jesus to all.

About the Lenten Season: The term “Lent” comes from an Old English word that means springtime. The Lenten season is a time for spiritual preparation for Easter by remembering the suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ. Lent is the period between Ash Wednesday and Easter. The Lenten spiritual disciplines such as prayer, alms giving, and fasting are meant to help us realize our dependency on God for everything, and to prepare our hearts to hear what God will say to us. May our Lord bless your spiritual journey this Lenten season.

Ash Wednesday, February 14, 2024

Walking With the Lord: The Story of Enoch

READ: Genesis 5:22, 24; Hebrews 11:5

OPENING THOUGHT: The Bible reveals that because of Enoch's faith walk was pleasing to God, that God took him; meaning that God carried him across the river of death and placed him on the other side. Enoch didn't experience death.

MEDITATION: About 50 years ago, I recall a heartwarming story about Enoch's walk with God. Over many years, I have retold it to my kids, and grandkids numerous times. They all loved it. This story is a big part of me. It goes like this:

One day, Enoch was sitting on his porch swing pondering what following God meant. Then unexpectedly, the Lord came down the road and asked Enoch if he wanted to take a walk with Him. Enoch got up and answered, "Yes Lord."

So, they walked and talked. Enoch learned of God's love, grace, forgiveness, and expectations. Enoch became very encouraged. When Enoch got home, he said to himself, "Was not my heart burning within me when the Lord was speaking with me on the road?"

Then every day thereafter the Lord would come by about the same time and say to Enoch, "Let's take a walk." Enoch would wait with anticipation and always say, "Yes Lord". One day the Lord asked, "Enoch, how would like to go on a very long walk with Me?" Enoch replied. "Yes Lord". So, they walked and talked losing track of time. Finally, Enoch said, "Lord, it's late, getting dark and I am a long way from my home, I need to go back." The Lord said, "Enoch, because of your faith, you are a lot closer to my home than yours. Come on home with me."

CLOSING THOUGHT: In my life, I have seen many of my friends and family pass away. I also have faced significant issues that you all have faced. When I am in the stormes of life, I remember Enoch's walk of faith. (*Heb 11:6*) "*Without faith, it's impossible to please God*". Remember, God will bring us home also.

Hans Brockhoff

Thursday, February 15, 2024

TITLE: Walk in God's Way

READ: Deuteronomy 10 12-13

OPENING PRAYER: Dear heavenly Father, help us to know our ways are seldom your ways. Help us to walk in your path. As David said in the 23rd Psalm, "He guides me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake."

MEDITATION: God made some big promises to the children of Israel. As his chosen people, if they committed to obeying the commandments, then he would fulfill his promises. He also gave them fair warning that if they did not obey there would be severe consequences. So what was expected of them to reap his blessings? They were to fear (reverence/respect) God, walk in his way, love and serve him with all their heart and soul and to keep his commandments.

God expects the same of us today. We cannot go through life living any way we want and still expect God to send his blessings. Just as God would punish Israel for not obeying him, he will punish us too. It's important to note that God ended these verses with, "which I commanded thee this day for thy good." God's commandments are for our good. He only has our best interest in mind. His laws are not meant to make life boring-but so that we can live life to the fullest within the bounds that he has created.

CLOSING PRAYER: God, just as Israel failed in keeping your expectations, so we fail every day. Forgive us and give us a desire to live within the bounds that You have set. Help us to revere you, walk in your way, to love and serve you with all our heart, and to keep your commandments.

Clark Montgomery

Friday, February 16, 2024

TITLE: Walk With Others

READ: Psalm 133:1, Romans 12:10

OPENING PRAYER: Lord, we pray that we will work in unity in bringing justice and mercy to all. Amen

MEDITATION: “Unity” is defined as a “oneness of mind, being in touch with one another, in agreement and harmony with one another.”

King David understood that more is accomplished and goodness is done when we are working together as God’s people. Working together accomplishes more than the sum of each individual’s efforts. God shows his boundless love when we live, work, and engage with each other for the greater good of our families and communities.

God is asking us to understand his word, gaining insight into what we are called to do in this world. The Holy Spirit will guide us in understanding our purpose. When we recognize the unique talents and skills we each contribute, we are better able to serve God- placing others needs above our own.

This attitude of focusing on God produces a person who is healthy physically, socially, intellectually and spiritually in pursuing everyday life’s activities.

CLOSING THOUGHT: Help us to show gratitude for all that God has given us. Let us look for the Lord’s blessings in both our lives and the lives of our love ones. Help us learn to be thankful, giving God all honor and praise.

Natalie Humphrey

Saturday, February 17, 2024

TITLE: Walking With Two Special Friends

READ: Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

OPENING PRAYER: Dear Lord, thank you for the blessings of friendships which enrich our lives in so many ways. Amen

Ecclesiastes' roots lie in the wisdom literature of the Old Testament but break away from the optimism of Proverbs. However, a few bright spots such as 4: 9-12 are positive in message. Written in relation to toil, they stress benefits of working together. My walk with friend Zina was the result of our mutual replies to an organization named "Letters for Peace" in 1991. Based in Florida, the group requested pen friends for Russian citizens and other countries formerly under Russian control.

They could read and write in English and wanted a American pen friend. Thus, it happened that two women about the same age were randomly paired. One from Lakewood, WA, the other from an industrial town on the Volga River in central Russia. We connected as wives, mothers, daughters, and grandmothers - it's never been about politics. It's been about faith, love, worries, sorrows and joys. Zina has told me many times I'm the only person she can speak to about some issues. It's been an amazing privilege to walk together through 30+ years and blessed my life beyond measure. It has brought joy to both of our lives and deepened our faith. Although we will never meet during our earthly lives, we have woven an enduring cord of friendship through letters, pictures and packages and we thank God for it in every letter.

CLOSING THOUGHT: Our friendships are indeed a great blessing but none can compare to the lyrics of the hymn, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus", written by Joseph Scriven

Janet Lordahl

First Sunday in Lent, February 18, 2024

TITLE: Walk in God's Light

READ: 1 John 1:7-9

OPENING PRAYER: Dear Lord, please open my heart and mind to receive your Word. I pray to have humility to seek your truth.

MEDITATION: Being humbled is a blessing.

This passage reminds me of the human-ness of each of us. We do not have the power to create truth, to create light, to create purity. That is all in God's hands. When we forget our place and forget that we all fall short of the glory of God, God calls that out as deception and lying to ourselves.

Because we cannot save or purify ourselves, all we can do is confess our sins and trust God to do the rest. Jesus' sacrifice allows us to walk in the light. Walking in the light means knowing the truth of Jesus' sacrifice- that God loved us so much, he gave his only son.

I love how this passage names fellowship with one another as a result of walking in the light. When we know God's truth, we are in community. It is a blessing to be able to hold each other accountable, to take care of and be there for each other, and to spread God's love. God wants us to be in fellowship with one another.

God did the hard part by sending Jesus to die for our sins so we might be saved. What is in our power to do, is to make a choice to follow God's truth, walk in the light, and confess our sins so that we may have a fresh start through Jesus' death and resurrection.

CLOSING THOUGHT: Thank God that he does not expect us to be perfect and do everything right. Let us work on being humble, confessing our sins, and having faith in our creator and savior.

Kim, Kaitlin

Monday, February 19, 2024

TITLE: Walk in God's Light

READ: Ephesians 5:6-10,15

Opening Prayer: Dear Lord, help us focus on You and live a life that is pleasing to You.

MEDITATION: The light of the Lord vs. darkness is emphasized over and over in the Bible. In today's passage, Paul writes with a sense of urgency due to evil's hold on society. This passage still holds true today. Paul warns us to not be deceived by those who do not follow Christ. If we base our lives on Christ, our actions will reflect our faith.

If we are not living a Christ centered life, we can become a stumbling block to others and ourselves. Let us follow Christ so that His light will be reflected through us into the world and show His love and forgiveness towards others.

Lent is a time to weed out things in our lives that hinder our Christian walk. This is a time to pray, study and move forward as daughters and sons of the Lord, continuing to mature as Christ followers. The Christian walk is not easy but Isaiah 41:10 assures us: "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

When we respond to God's love and faithfulness, we enter into the community of God's people. God's Word calls us to test everything to see what is pleasing to the Lord. This can only be done by seeking the Lord first.

CLOSING THOUGHT: Psalm 43:3 "Send me your light and your faithful care, let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy mountain". Thank you and praise you Lord.

Marilyn Sexton

Tuesday, February 20, 2024

TITLE: The Christ that Others Can See

READ: 2 Corinthians 4:6, Ephesians 2:10

Opening Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for shining your light into our hearts, that we may radiate your glory and walk in your light as your handiwork. May we shine YOU today. Amen.

Meditation: Light always has a purpose. Of its many uses includes to cheer, warm, brighten and illuminate. However, the most important is to allow for vision.

Six million cones and 120 million rods. That's how many photoreceptors are in our retina. Eight million variations of color. That's how many shades of color we can detect through our vision. Every waking moment, these receptors capture photons of light and convert the light energy into electric signals that travel to the brain and form images which allow us to see. The marvel of the human eye, which closely resembles a camera, also serves as unspeakably powerful evidence for the existence of our Creator God.

The same God who created the human eye to receive light also describes himself as the Light of the world (John 8:12). Even more amazingly, Jesus also calls *us* "the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14-16). The parallel in wording and directness of the claim is unmistakable. In following Jesus's footsteps, we are meant to be like him; we are to BE the light and what do we illuminate? What do others see when we shine? We brighten Christ to those around us. We literally *shine Christ*. That is the incredible and beautiful calling of being a Christian, a disciple of Jesus, a follower of Christ, the Light of the World.

When Christ shines in our hearts, we become the Light of Christ, radiating the Lord. Receiving his light energy, we are transformed into signals that travel out to those around us to allow them to see Christ. The marvel of the Christian who walks in the light thus closely resembles a camera. We become walking, living, talking pictures of the God we encounter. *We* become the unspeakably powerful evidence for the existence of our Savior.

CLOSING THOUGHT: How can I shine Christ to others around me today?

Jinshil Yi

Wednesday, February 21, 2024

TITLE: Walk In God's Light

READ: Matthew 5:14-16

OPENING PRAYER: Dear Lord, deliver us from the darkness and give us the light of life as we follow you and as we speak and conduct ourselves in all ways that are right, true, honorable and trustworthy. Amen

MEDITATION: Jesus had limited time on earth as the "light of our world". His light was his offer of salvation to those who might receive it. He is the source of the light that illuminates our path and his power persuades us to do good! We must find the ways to make our light shine! We should examine our heart for any lingering shame and share our troubles with God, be authentic with others, pray and encourage one another to show we care and read the Bible as it is the handbook for our lives.

As a veteran counselor to disabled members of our armed forces, I must provide them genuine support and understanding when comparing military training to civilian life, the importance of disability rights in the workplace, overcoming mistaken assumptions about their disabilities and in dealing with poverty, homelessness, and unemployment due to their disabilities. I must emphasize that their light should always shine brightly as a reflection of God.

CLOSING THOUGHT: The light of God will forever shine to help us in the work we do and the love we share with our family and friends. We are not the source of light but merely a reflection of light from above. We must share the light with others toward the path of hope and peace for all!

Roy Davis

Thursday, February 22, 2024

TITLE: Walk in God's Light

READ: Psalm 119:105, John 3:21

MEDITATION: Many children are afraid of the dark. A room can be perfectly safe and welcoming with the lights on, but as soon as the lights are out, the perception changes. What was once a chair is now a spooky corner creature. The creak of the door becomes the footsteps of a wild beast. A shadow on the wall turns into an unsettling reminder of the unknown depths below the bed.

When the lights are back on, they once again see the room for what it really is. The truth is illuminated, and the fear is gone.

Just as a child's mind can go to dark places in an otherwise safe room while the lights are out, our minds and spirits can turn dark without the light of God's word. The darkness is full of fears and lies. It's easy for our minds to jump to deceptive conclusions when we see no other truth to shine a light.

This is why following the Word of God and committing to a close walk with Him is so crucial to our spiritual wellbeing. God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Living by this light keeps us walking along a path of truth and righteousness instead of succumbing to the darkness of this world.

CLOSING THOUGHT: There is no darkness too deep for God to see us or too strong to hold us in our sin. God's Word is the light to guide us out of the dark. We must only choose to come into the light.

Brumfield, Caroline

Friday, February 23, 2024

TITLE: Walk in Truth and Love

READ: 2 John 1:1-6

OPENING PRAYER: Lord, help me to convey your truth and love as shown us in this reading.

MEDITATION: The first love we know as children growing up is familial love and what comes with that is learning right from wrong. The right is learning the truth as Jesus taught of how we should live and treat others. The wrong is judging and discriminating. Jesus' truth is listening, helping, giving, serving.

A famous missionary (Hudson Taylor) said, "There are three great truths:

1st, That there is a God.

2nd, That he has spoken to us in the Bible.

3rd, That he means what he says."

Our Pastors preach to us, that to love and know Jesus we must be in the Word every day. There are no shortcuts. We must spend time with him. How? By being in the word, in prayer and meeting together in church as well as small groups.

John: 14:6 *"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*

CLOSING THOUGHT: Lord, thank you for the familial love and truth I received as a child to make me one of your believers and servants. You say that you are truth and that your word is truth. Help us Lord to see clearly how to walk in truth as we spend time with you in prayer and studying your word. Also, help us believe and trust in your great promises.

Shirley Burrows

Saturday, February 24, 2024

TITLE: Walk in Love

READ: Psalm 103:13; 1 Peter 4:8-9

MEDITATION: The Christian Standard Bible entitles this passage from 1 Peter as “End-Times Ethics”. The Message (MSG) entitles it, “Learn to Think Like Him” Peterson (MSG) interprets it bluntly, “Everything on Earth is wrapping up”. Whoa. I can't help but think of the sentiment we hear most from people in their last days; Nothing matters as much as loving God and loving one another.

Then, Peter goes on to mention the importance of hospitality. What does love and hospitality have to do with one another? Turns out, in the Jewish culture/tradition, hospitality, known as Hakhnasat Orchim is one of the most important Jewish values. Jesus was raised in a tradition that emphasized hospitality to strangers and friends with absolute reckless abandon. It's partly why we read about feet washing and a manger birth. Everyone is welcome – and no one is left out in the cold.

This all makes perfect sense to us when we're talking about the Messiah. But the reality is, we find ourselves in a position of hosting sometimes the hardest of people to love. So, we're reminded by David in our Psalm to show compassion – just as the Father has done for us. And like our Jewish friends, it's not just a lovely sentiment. It's a moral standard – a commandment. Peter reminds us to make the rest of our lives about this.

CLOSING THOUGHT: Often, in our fast-paced lives, we forget the importance of showing love, gratitude and hospitality. It's easy to let the fatigue set in and take over. When this happens, I have to stop, take a deep breath and remember what God has promised us. Perhaps I'm so feeble, I need to walk the race, remembering the house with a table the Lord has prepared for me when I reach Heaven.

Billingsley, Katelyn

Second Sunday in Lent, February 25, 2024

TITLE: Walk in Love

READ: John 13:34-35

OPENING PRAYER: Dear Lord, Please help us to love one another in everything we do, as you love us. Amen

MEDITATION: Jesus commands us to love one another and that by seeing how we love one another he will be able to tell that we are disciples of Christ. Loving people when we are happy can be an easier thing to do than when we are sad. Sometimes it can be difficult to love others, especially if we feel as though they've wronged us.

It's times like this where we should remember Jesus's command that we should love one another. This is not a conditional love that we can turn on and off depending on our mood much like an air conditioning unit. But we must love others all the time as Jesus first showed his love for us by giving his life on the cross for our sins despite betrayal and being wronged from those around him at the time of his big sacrifice.

I will strive to be a disciple of Christ, be a beacon of love in both words and actions. Through Jesus's example of how he loved us when we were still sinners, we can learn to exercise love towards everyone, even those who have hurt us. Through love we can find forgiveness and great healing powers which come from God.

CLOSING THOUGHT: Dear Lord, Please help us to lead lives which would make you happy and filled with love to the very brim in everything we do and with everyone we fellowship with. Thank you for loving us first. Amen.

John Yi

Monday, February 26, 2024

TITLE: Walking By Faith

READ: 2 Corinthians 5:7, Psalm 23:4

OPENING PRAYER: Heavenly Father, how completely dark and dismal my life would be without my belief that you are always near orchestrating each of my days. Thank you. Amen.

MEDITATION: As Christians, we have heard the words, "We live by faith, not by sight", many times on our faith journey. Do we really live by faith or just say we do when actually we are only fooling ourselves (but not God).

I believe that, even though I daily mess up and have to confess my messes and seek forgiveness, the only way I'm able to keep on keeping on is by not sitting on the fence. I'm either all in for Christ or if not all in, I'm against who he is and what he wants and desires for my life. No, I can't see Christ, but all I have to do is to look around me and see him in nature, in friendships, in family, in answered prayers, in fellowship with others, and in the kindness of others.

Knowing that we won't see God personally here on earth, how can we not accept him by faith? God sees our unbelief when we think we know what is best for ourselves. I believe it grieves God when we don't accept his gifts and promises to us. If we do not, by faith, completely give all of ourselves to Christ, we are not in a place where he can work with us and guide us to the life he wants for us.

CLOSING THOUGHT: Live by faith and experience the peace of walking with God.

Jan Edwards

Tuesday, February 27, 2024

TITLE: Walk By Faith

READ: Mark 5:25-34 , Mal 4:2

OPENING PRAYER: Our Father, help us to walk in your ways by faith. Amen.

MEDITATION: The book of John concludes with the following statement, “But there are also many other things Jesus did; and if they were all to be recorded, I don’t think the whole world could contain the books that would have to be written”. The implication is that those things that *were* recorded are essential to our faith. Today’s reading is a great case in point.

Jesus healed many in His short time on earth and by many methods. In today’s reading, he was essentially passive—the woman touched the ‘hem’ of Jesus’ garment and was healed. Then, Jesus tells her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you”. Clearly, she had faith, but faith in what exactly? Was it faith that Jesus’ could heal her of her ailment, or was it faith in something much more?

Numbers 15:37-41 is part of the ‘*shema*’—one of the central daily prayers for Jews both then and now. These verses describe the commandment to tie fringes (‘*tzitzit*’ in Hebrew) on the corners (‘*kanaf*’ in Hebrew) of their garments. Jesus, of course, kept this commandment, and in fact, the ‘*tzitzit*’ on the ‘*kanaf*’ of Jesus’ garment is exactly what the woman in our reading stretched out and grabbed—immediately before being healed. Did she inadvertently grab the corner of Jesus’ garment, or was she intentional?

I believe the reading from Malachi gives us reason to believe that the woman grabbed the corner of Jesus’ garment purposefully, because of who she believed Jesus’ was. She believed that Jesus’ was much more than just a good rabbi. Malachi, states that ‘the sun of righteousness (one of the many different titles for the Messiah) will rise with healing in its *wings*’ (‘*kanaf*’ in Hebrew). The word ‘*kanaf*’ links the Number’s text to the messianic Malachi text. The woman understood the Malachi text to mean that the coming Messiah was to have healing in the corner of his garments. Acting on her faith that Christ would heal, she got close enough to Jesus to touch the corner (wings) of his garment and was healed!

CLOSING THOUGHT: God’s word is the foundation of our faith—we need to read it, and then act on it.

Kirk Keppler

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

TITLE: A Commendable Faith

READ: Hebrews 11:1, 6

OPENING PRAYER: Lord, please give me understanding as I seek inspiration and guidance from your word.

MEDITATION: FAITH is an over-arching theme in lots of Bible studies as it should be—it's a pretty big deal! We all want to be right with God. As I pondered how I would describe faith, I boiled it down to this: faith is seeking to live a life that is pleasing to God. The guys mentioned in this passage weren't trying to win points with God. They were merely living their lives as "sure" and "certain" men - **sure** of things hoped for and **certain** of things not seen. Abel pleased God by presenting a thank offering that was choice and generous when compared to his brother Abel's almost obligatory offering. God knows our hearts. We can't hide our motives from him. Is our motivation for our gain or for his?

Enoch, another man of deep faith, is the only one in his lineage who is singled out for having "walked with God." These two Heroes of the Faith believed God existed and earnestly sought him. If we are right with God, we don't have to plan or strategize our thoughts or words or actions toward God and others. They will be an automatic response to God's goodness and faithfulness to us. A word the passage uses repeatedly is "commended." Abel was commended as a righteous man and Enoch was commended as one who pleased God. Wow! What an honor!

I'm pretty sure I am not commendable yet, but I am trying to live a life that pleases God by sharing his love and by honoring and loving his people.

CLOSING THOUGHT: God, I am inspired by these ordinary people with extraordinary faith. May my heart be fertile ground for me to hear your voice and seek your will. Thank you. Amen.

Jane Macpherson

Thursday, February 29, 2024

TITLE: Walk by Faith

READ: Mark 9:23-24

OPENING PRAYER: Lord, open our eyes of our heart to see your promises.

MEDITATION: This is one of the most poignant passages in the Bible. A desperate father pleads with Jesus to heal his son after the disciples tried and failed. He doesn't quite get it right though. He seems to doubt Jesus' ability to heal when he says, "***But if you can*** do anything, take pity on us and help us."

Jesus seemed a little taken back by what appears to be the father's lack of faith. Then the father, in his desperation said that words that Christians throughout history have identified with "I do believe; help me in my unbelief."

When life is comfortable, my prayers tend to become complacent and proper. Life is good for me right now. My husband and I enjoy good health, our needs are met, we have dear friends, great kids (mostly) and amazing grand kids (totally). We have been blessed so much more than we deserve.

This has not always been the case. There have been times in my life that I reached out to God in desperation for healing, peace, or a resolution to what seemed to be an irresolvable situation and those prayers were nothing like the prayers of my times of blessing. When I'm desperate, when my heart is breaking, all the truth, hurt, doubt and pain just pours out. Yes, even the unbelief.

When these desperate times come, (and they will) as believers we find a way to hold on to our faith and disbelief together, at the same time while we work it through. One doesn't necessarily cancel the other out. I'm thankful that God understands.

CLOSING THOUGHT: During what seem to be the good times, we need to remember that even though our lives may not appear to be desperate, in God's eyes, our sin and our world are in a desperate place. Remember to reach out to him, reflecting the true desperation of our situation and ask God to help in our unbelief.

Judy Brockhoff

Friday, March 1, 2024

TITLE: Walk Not with the Wicked, But with Discernment

READ: Proverbs 13:20, 1 Corinthians 15:33

OPENING PRAYER: Dear Heavenly Father, we seek your guidance as we embark on this moment of reflection. May your boundless love and wisdom fill our hearts with unwavering faith, Amen.

MEDITATION: In this Lenten season, we reflect on the profound impact of our church. The Apostle Paul reminds us that our companions shape our character. Proverbs 13:20 reinforces this wisdom, stating that “walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm.”

Consider the story of young David and Jonathan whose friendship was rooted in faith and mutual respect. Their bond strengthened both spiritually and personally, inspiring courage and loyalty. Yet, we must also acknowledge the cautionary tales of those who walked with ungodly companions leading to moral compromise and spiritual drift. The choices we make about our relationships can profoundly influence our journey of faith.

During Lent, let us reflect on our own circles of influence. Are we surrounded by those who encourage us to grow in our faith, love, and service to God? Or are we entangled with influences that lead us astray? As we meditate on these passages, may we seek God’s guidance in choosing companions who uplift and challenge us in our walk of faith. Let us be intentional about nurturing relationships that foster spiritual growth, for in doing so, we honor the Lord and become vessels of his light in a world in need of His love.

CLOSING PRAYER: Heavenly Father, grant us discernment in our choice of companions. May we seek relationships that draw us closer to you and inspire us to live lives of love, grace, and righteousness. Guide us in being influencers for your kingdom. In Jesus’ name, we pray, Amen.

Kaleb Kim

Saturday, March 2, 2024

TITLE: Walk With Understanding

READ: Galatians 6:7-8

OPENING PRAYER: Holy father, please guide us in our walk with you and help us to make the journey with wise choices and an understanding of how we can best serve you. Amen.

MEDITATION: In this passage from his letter to the Galatians, Paul emphasizes that how we walk with God matters. We have a choice to live our lives for ourselves, or to live them for God. He also points out the cost to us of making the wrong choice. We need to “walk with understanding” regarding the result of our choice.

Have you ever thought about why God lets us choose how we live our lives? I certainly have. God could simply have programmed us to do all the right things and none of the wrong ones. That would have made it easy for us. However, I think God wants us to do the right thing for the right reason, choosing to live our lives in a way that pleases him rather than out of compulsion. That puts the focus on God and brings honor and glory to him!

Sometimes, I need a reminder that my present life on earth is just a precursor to an eternal one in God’s presence if I choose to walk with understanding on the path he sets before me. “Walk with understanding” is the key. Realizing that brings the way I choose to live my life back into sharp focus. Choice matters!

CLOSING THOUGHT: The path we take through life will not always be smooth and we will face many choices along the way. Knowing our ultimate destination will help guide us in those choices.

Jim Aguirre

Third Sunday in Lent, March 3, 2024

TITLE: Saved by God's Forgiveness

READ: Ephesians 2:4-9

OPENING PRAYER: Dear Heavenly Father, as we know you extend your grace to us, lead us to deeds that help others, and forgiveness from the heart.

MEDITATION: So much power in such few words from God. God loves us so much he showers kindness on us. Forgiveness is a blessing, as we daily struggle with less than sinless behavior, in ourselves and others. As we love our children, no matter how challenging the behaviors are that we must correct, redirect, and discourage in the future, God loves us even when we sin.

We are not saved by deeds, but by grace. We are created to do good things for others. We are called to care, share, support and teach. We are expected to forgive with a willing heart, even while we remember why we were affronted, disappointed, or angry. We can protect ourselves from the same thing happening in the future, forgive, and move on to a happier tomorrow. Keep your eyes on Jesus.

While grace was manifested in the Old Testament, John:17 tells us, again, that Jesus is the basis of salvation, faith and spiritual gifts. Thanks be to God for sending his only son to teach us the meaning of grace.

CLOSING THOUGHT: It isn't easy to forgive or feel forgiven. God knows our thoughts and deeds and has faith we will improve. Thank God for grace.

Candy Tingstad

Monday, March 4, 2024

TITLE: Walk in God's Forgiveness

READ: Matthew 6:14-15

OPENING PRAYER: Father, thank you for your beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Savior, teaching us to love and forgive all. Amen.

MEDITATION: Jesus spoke clearly regarding forgiveness, and not just in parables. Much more than being displeasing to the Father, we are commanded to treat others as we wish to be treated.

What trespass can be committed to us, that we have not committed in sin during our lives? Jesus forgives us of our sins, never to be thought of again. Father, may we let go of a trespass and quickly forgive, replacing our hurt and anger with love.

Forgiveness is not an option for us. It is what the Lord expects us to do. When we forgive, a burden on our our soul is released and lifted off of us. Also when forgiving, may it be honest and from the heart. As a Christian, let us include "I will always love you." This not only heals our hearts but pleases the Father.

CLOSING THOUGHT: Jesus, you are the living Word. Your love and teachings provide strength needed to remain mindful, never to trespass upon another. I pray daily to remain a transparent and loving Christian. Thank you, Jesus, for forgiveness of our sins. Amen

David Byrd

Tuesday, March 5, 2024

TITLE: Walk in God's Forgiveness

READ: Isaiah 1:18, 1 John 1:9

OPENING PRAYER: Dear Heavenly Father, I am... a lame man ... walking. Forgive me for not following the steps you've ordered as I have been walking full speed ahead of you, attempting to keep pace next to you, and not closely behind you. Amen.

MEDITATION: How often must we be reminded that God perpetually calls on us to turn from sin and trust in Christ? God extends His grace, designed so we may experience life and his goodness. But we must repent as only he has made that possible through the ultimate sacrifice Jesus paid on the cross.

Yet, we allow the bondage of sin to stain us like "*scarlet – red as crimson,*" while he offers not only to pardon our sins, but to wash them "*white as snow,*" and to restore our souls like "*pure undyed wool.*"

God's invitation to walk with him in the light and to fellowship with one another also requires us to confess our sins. But how much longer will I continue to burden myself with the bondage of sins? He has commanded me to confidently ask for mercy so I may be renewed.

CLOSING THOUGHT: But why do I choose to walk alone on my terms as if it's much easier or less burdensome than walking with my creator? Thankfully I am reminded that in the Old Testament, God's forgiveness was conditional on people's obedience (Isaiah). In the New Testament, God provides forgiveness and cleansing through faith in Christ (1 John). Thus, there is hope for any of us walking lames.

Phillip K Shelton

Wednesday, March 6, 2024

TITLE: Walk Worthy of Your Calling

READ: Ephesians 4:1-3,17; Matthew 24:35

OPENING PRAYER: Heavenly Father, please strengthen and grow my faith to resolve to live according to your Word to be worthy of your calling. Amen.

MEDITATION: To be worthy, Paul says to be completely humble; be gentle, be patient; deal with one another in love. Sounds simple? When we accepted Christ we are given the gift of the Holy Spirit to guide us in the fruits of love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Paul also says “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not of yourselves; it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast”. The book of James says, “Do not merely listen to the word, ... Do what it says”.

Oh, but how life can get in the way of our good and faithful intentions. Ever since my husband retired 9 years ago, we travel – a lot! We spend several months in the desert every year. With age, health issues have taken a bigger part of our daily lives and focus with constant appointments with various doctors, etc. I worry, sometimes at night, about our kids and our precious grandkids and how to juggle our time to spend enough time with them. Then there is just the everyday stuff. Even with a calendar that I am constantly looking it is hard to stay disciplined.

And by discipline I mean staying in the Word every day, which is what it takes to walk worthy. God speaks through his Word to guide us into understanding what he wants us to do. He will draw us closer and we will be drawn to obey, not only in our personal lives and how he wants us to live, but also as members of the body of Christ in the Church. For it is in the Church we gain strength from one another, not only to grow ourselves but to disciple others by our example as we radiate the love of Jesus Christ. As we lose ourselves in Christ, we will progress with time to walk worthy of his calling.

CLOSING THOUGHT: “For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. (Ephesians 1: 4) Stay in your faith one day at a time, faithfully obey God in all the details of your life.

Judy Eng

Thursday, March 7, 2024

TITLE: Walk Worthy of Your Calling

READ: Colossians. 1:10-12

OPENING PRAYER: Father, thank you for bringing us into your kingdom. Give us the strength, endurance, and patience to live a life pleasing to you, knowing that you don't require perfection, but you do require us to trust and follow your son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

MEDITATION: In the book of Colossians, the Apostle Paul is writing one of his inspirational letters to the church in Colossae. In this passage he is giving a pretty tall order: to "live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way". It seems I always fall short in some area of my life and just don't feel like I can do that. In fact, sometimes I don't even know what that means! Fortunately, Paul reminds them that their strength, endurance, and patience all come from the power of God. We are so fortunate that God has given us a road map. We can please him through serving (bearing fruit in every good work), through worship and reading the bible (growing in the knowledge of God), and by prayer (giving joyful thanks).

Now, the church of Colossae seems to be doing okay compared to some of Paul's letters where he really had to give churches the business. Later in this letter, he warns them about those who might try to get them to follow hollow, or bad philosophy, or bind them more to tradition than to Christ. But he also tells him that, even though he has "*Never Even Met Them*", he prays for them continuously. His prayers are not that they would send him help (he is in prison, along with their former leader), or that they would perform miracles, or even grow their church. His prayers are that God would fill them up fully, so that they can meet that tall order. So that they can walk the walk that is a life worthy of the Lord.

CLOSING THOUGHT: Father, help us remember that you are enough. When we don't feel worthy, help us turn to you for validation and not the standards of this world.

Amy Trevino

Friday, March 8, 2024

TITLE: Walk Worthy of Our Calling

READ: 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12

OPENING PRAYER: Lord, you've helped me so much by being in my life; please stay with me.

MEDITATION: Paul had visited Thessalonica during his second missionary journey and was chased out by a crowd and city officials objecting to Christianity. Paul is writing back to the people of the church there and praising their faith in his absence.

The letter to the Thessalonians emphasizes the followers' rewards to come in the end times. It all hinges on faith. It is not we who become worthy, achieve goodness, and perform deeds to gain the ultimate reward; it is God who does all that in us if we have faith.

But what does faith look like? Some believers imply faith is certainty, but if I have certainty, why do I need faith? I'm not a pastor but I'm inclined to say faith is more like determining to believe when I don't fully understand, deciding to follow after experiencing more compelling things that validate belief, than those that seem to question it. Things like how it's worked for me, how it seems to work so well for a lot of other people, and the flood of good that comes from our Christian fellowship. So, I'm in. How 'bout you?

CLOSING PRAYER: Thank you, Lord, for your Word and the learning and encouragement we get by sharing it among us. Amen.

Alan Macpherson

Saturday, March 9, 2024

TITLE: Walking With The Lord

READ: Psalm 119: 129-135

OPENING PRAYER: Lord, I want to learn your ways and follow you. Continue to call out to me so that I can hear your voice and follow you into the fold. This little sheep needs you. Amen

MEDITATION: I was born and raised a city girl. I married a fellow born and raised on a farm, and that proved to be a rather steep learning curve for a while. For example, I was enlightened on the difference between “hay” and “straw” and many other terms by learning how the items differed in how they were made and what they were used for. The learning brought understanding to their entire way of life. I loved the learning and understanding, as it made me more accepted by my new family and bonded me to them.

Imagine how God delights when we seek to find out more about him! He loves us all, but he delights in the fact that we want to know all about him and love him back. We are definitely “in his image” when we show our love for him. And he will give us eternal gifts in return: mercy and grace. Why? Because we are the children in his family, and he will give us good gifts——just like we give to our children and grandchildren that we so dearly love.

To love God more fully, we must learn as much as we possibly can (gain understanding) about him——his laws, the examples he has given us recorded in the Bible about his people and their ways, his seriousness in saving us for eternity by sacrificing his only son, etc. It is our good fortune to believe and have faith and gain understanding in such a God!

CLOSING THOUGHT: Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

Gretchen Alden

Fourth Sunday in Lent, March 10, 2024

TITLE: Walk in God's Truth

READ: John 14:6, John 17:17

OPENING PRAYER: As you sent your Son, Jesus, to give a path to eternal Life, help us to follow Jesus' teaching from your Bible. Amen.

MEDITATION: We as Christ followers, need to look at each other in Christ, in the ways which help our brothers and sisters, lifting them up by the words of Jesus to help them stay on the path that Christ has laid out for us. When our actions and words are alike, listening to and understanding Jesus' teachings, the word helps us to understand what Jesus is expecting us to do.

What is truth and how can we find it? By following Jesus' words as found in the Bible, we have the example to follow and know him through his message. The Bible is his truth, our standard to live by. As we listen to the passages as taught by our teachers and follow within our own Bible, with the leading of the Holy Spirit, God's word leads us to truth and sanctification (morally right or acceptable by God).

God wants us to stand out to the world. We need to be in the Bible gaining knowledge and wisdom, so we can share the truth with all of God's children. Gaining the truth and striving to be holy takes listening and sharing our knowledge with everyone.

CLOSING THOUGHTS: We are expected to share our learning and God's word with people everywhere. The Bible, with help and encouragement of the people in our church, equips us; now we must follow through and do what God commands. Be a disciple.

Groefsema, Glenn & Janet

Monday, March 11, 2024

TITLE: Walk in God's Truth

READ: 2 Timothy 2: 14-16

OPENING PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help us to hold tightly to your Word and your truth.

MEDITATION: There are countless cliches dealing with both the importance and the insignificance of words...Read between the lines, Talk is cheap, the pen is mightier than the sword, actions speak louder than words, etc.

In this passage we find guidance from Paul to Timothy on how to navigate the responsibility of sharing God's Word. These are important reminders not only for us to handle God's Word with reverence, but the positive and negative effect our words can have on our relationships.

Paul urges Timothy to avoid futile arguments and disputes over the intricacies of language and semantics. In other words, don't get caught up in the minutiae. "Keep the main thing the main thing."

We are called to diligently study and rightly divide the Word of Truth. When we handle God's Word with care, we honor him and through our invested understanding can lead others on the path of righteousness. With our relationships, spend time learning about people to deepen our connections. Remember..."Context matters."

Finally, Paul warns against idle and godless chatter. Let us be mindful of the conversations we partake in, ensuring they are edifying, respectful, and in alignment with God's principles.

CLOSING THOUGHT: Lord, let us commit ourselves to handle your Word with reverence, promoting unity within the body of Christ, and guarding against distractions that may hinder our spiritual growth. May our words and actions always be a testimony to the transformative power of your Truth in our lives.

Ryan Reid

Tuesday, March 12, 2024

TITLE: You Alone, Lord, Are God

READ: Psalm 86: 10-13

OPENING PRAYER: Father, I pray you will keep us in your word and in your will. Grow us in faith; grow us in trust; and grow us in love, with you and with one another. In Jesus' holy name. Amen.

MEDITATION: David wrote that there is no other god like our God, the creator of all there is. He is the only god who has ever been alive, who has ever had any power. He's not made of stone, nor wood, nor metal, like other gods. He is the only god worthy of our praise. In fact, we are all made to praise him (Isaiah 43: 20-21 and Isaiah 43:7) and one day we will ALL bow down and worship him (Isaiah 66:23 and Romans 4:11), some in praise and some in fear. Eternal separation from God would be brutal. Never to feel his love for me is something I don't want to contemplate. That's why it is so important that we tell others of his love for us and his plan for our salvation.

We have no excuse not to believe. Paul tells us that we can prove the existence of God by looking at what he created (Romans 1:20). We all know intrinsically that he exists. Yet too often we fight against him or reject him entirely. When I was nine, I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior. Even though I was only nine, I had an innate desire to know who God was, so a friend and I would gather each day to read the bible, the KJV, no less. Did we understand what we were reading? Surely, not everything, but we wanted to know more. David also wanted to know God better and he asked God to teach him his ways. God has answered David's prayer for us too. He has given us the Bible, which clearly tells us how we should relate to him and to our fellow man. It guides our steps daily, but only if we let it.

CLOSING THOUGHT: David asked God to unite his heart. He wanted all parts of it to follow him, praise him and thank him for his undying love. What a great prayer for us to emulate.

Deanna Price

Wednesday, March 13, 2024

TITLE: Walk in His Spirit and Truth

READ: John 4:19-26

PRAYER: Lord, let us worship you in spirit and in truth.

MEDITATION: Jesus' words to the Samaritan women in this passage (vs 24) were "God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

What does it mean to worship God in spirit and truth? Most of us seem to lean to either the spirit (heart) or truth (intellect). I find myself in the latter category and I suspect many Presbyterians do. After all, we are often referred to as the "frozen chosen." But God wants us to be balanced and to worship him not only in truth but to also engage our emotions. Music has a way of doing that because it bypasses our brains and can warm our cold hearts. How many times have you been moved by music led by our fabulous musicians on Sunday morning? I have sometimes wanted to raise my hands but didn't want to freak out those sitting beside me.

I am also moved to worship in spirit when surrounded by God's astounding creation. We are surely blessed to live in the beautiful Pacific Northwest where we are reminded of his handiwork on a regular basis.

Recently I listened to a podcast by a Notre Dame professor and was taken by the following quote which is found in Notre Dame's mission and vision statement:

We shall always place education side by side with instruction; the mind will not be cultivated at the expense of the heart. While we prepare useful citizens for society, we shall likewise do our utmost to prepare citizens for heaven.

- Blessed Basil Moreau, Circular Letters 36, 1849

CLOSING THOUGHT: Lord, during this Lenten season help us to cultivate worship that engages both mind *and* heart.

Mary LaTourelle

Thursday, March 14, 2024

TITLE: Walk in Prayer

READ: 2 Chronicles 7:14, Psalm 145:18

OPENING PRAYER: Dear Lord, thank you for your steadfastness and love. Knowing you are always there to hear our prayers is a great comfort and assurance.

MEDITATION: The Lord encourages us to pray to him wherever we are and whenever we can, but to do it with humility and seriousness...to do it in truth and with much thought.

What a Blessing! To be able to have the Lord's attention on such a personal level is so incredible that it's almost beyond comprehension. It's not something we should take lightly. However, when I look back in review of my own prayers, I find that they have often been done much too casually...without the personal attention and commitment that they or the Lord deserves.

I pray that all of us (and myself in particular), remember the great commitment our Lord has made to honor our prayers...that we give them our very best thought...that we offer them on behalf of others and not just to ourselves and those closest to us.

CLOSING PRAYER: Dear Lord, thank you for your many blessings...particularly the joy of being able to walk with you in prayer daily. Amen.

Glen Graves

Friday, March 15, 2024

TITLE: Walk in Prayer

READ: Colossians 4:2, Luke 18:1

OPENING PRAYER: God, teach us to pray with persistence, watchfulness, and thanksgiving. Help us trust that you hear us each time we come to you.

MEDITATION: If you've spent time recently on social media, you may have seen jokes and memes circulating that poke fun at the annoyingly persistent calls and letters people get from dealerships about their car warranty. One joke I saw recently showed an image of an open fortune cookie. The fortune inside read "We've been trying to reach you about your vehicle's extended warranty."

While warranty reminders are annoying, there may be some wisdom to gain from their persistence and audacity. Luke 1:18 begins a parable from Jesus about a widow who continually pleads to a town judge for justice against her adversary. The judge didn't fear God or what people think, but he finally decided to listen to the widow, simply so she'd stop bothering him. Jesus explains that if a wayward judge can answer a widow's persistent request out of annoyance, how much more will a just God answer the continual prayers of his beloved people?

What if we refused to give up on our prayers, and devoted ourselves to them with a watchful and thankful heart? We should not let our persistence be outdone by a car dealership's marketing department.

CLOSING THOUGHT: God hears us when we are persistent and faithful in our prayers to him. He will bring about justice to us as his chosen ones. Don't give up!

A.J. Brumfield

Saturday, March 16, 2024

TITLE: Walk in His Spirit

READ: Galatians 5:16-18

OPENING PRAYER: Dear Lord, please guide us that we may honor you in our actions and intentions.

MEDITATION: “You do you...you only live once...do what makes you happy...” Our society is filled with messages that tell us to do what we want. But as believers in Christ, we cannot live like the rest of the world. This passage describes how we should live out our faith and makes clear distinctions between what honors God and what does not.

So then, what does our passage mean when the verses say to “live by the Spirit”?

- When we listen to the flesh – live by the rules of society around us – we are ignoring the Spirit. Listening to the desires of the flesh leads us to live by the world, instead of living for the Lord.
- Listening to the Spirit is how we honor God. When we listen to the Spirit, God’s work on earth exists through us and ministry is done. Allowing the Spirit to move through us is how God’s intended plan for bringing peace on earth is played out.

These two paths represent a choice that we encounter daily. As you move on with your day today, think of the intentions behind the choices you make. Who do our actions speak to – the Spirit or the flesh?

CLOSING THOUGHT: Dear Lord, we thank you for giving us the choice to follow in your path. As we continue on, please remind us to live for the Spirit.

Kailey Kim

Fifth Sunday in Lent, March 17, 2024

TITLE: Glory in Our Suffering

READ: Romans 5:3-4, 15:4

OPENING PRAYER: Father God, teach us to suffer well.

MEDITATION: Who enjoys suffering? No one. In fact, common sense tells us that suffering is something to always be avoided. Suffering not only hurts, but is a sign that something is broken, either in our bodies, our minds, our hearts, or even in our relationships.

It might even be reasonable to believe that suffering is irredeemable. It is pointless and unnecessary. Even if suffering produces good things, why should it be necessary to suffer for those good things to come about?

It should therefore come as an absolute shock when Paul announces that we “glory in our sufferings.” Wait, what?? What planet is he from? Why should one glory in our sufferings? Doesn’t he know how painful suffering is??

And yet Paul sees golden shores through the dark and violent storm that is our sufferings. Not only that, but Paul seems to know that the shores of perseverance, character, and hope will have so much more meaning once we land there. He knows this because he has seen it, not only in his own life but in the journey of those before him.

It was Christ’s suffering that brought us hope. What he endured blossomed into a family of believers that has existed now for two millennia and counting. I do not understand why suffering works this way. But I am beginning to fathom that embracing it may be *essential*. Suffering is not only redeemable but also possibly the key to our sanctification.

CLOSING PRAYER: Lord, I am so far away from being able to embrace suffering as essential to becoming more like you. Give me the endurance I need to bear through it all, and let not my grafting come away from you.

Toby Steele

Monday, March 18, 2024

TITLE: Walk with God's Endurance

READ: James 1:3-4, 5:11

OPENING PRAYER: This is heavy stuff that causes us to pause and think carefully as we think about the life's challenges all of us face – so often forge ahead not stopping to ask for your help – forgive us! Amen.

MEDITATION: So often when we find ourselves in difficult situations, we forge ahead and react or make decisions that we later realize could have been better or the situation could have had a different outcome. It is so easy to feel real or imposed pressure for a quick decision.

However, as the scripture tells us, this a good time to ask God to walk with us. A quick prayer often brought a successful resolution to a difficult situation.

As many folks will attest, tough times are easier when God is walking beside us. But we need to remember to ask God for his help!

CLOSING THOUGH: I am confident in saying there isn't a person reading this who has not faced tough times – I pray you were not alone and knew your faith was carrying you.

Edith Wallace

Tuesday, March 19, 2024

TITLE: Walk in God's Endurance

READ: Hebrews 12:1-4

OPENING PRAYER: Father, provide me with understanding from this passage so I may put into practice what is taught. Amen

MEDITATION: Perseverance is “the steady persistence in a course of action despite difficulties, obstacles and discouragement. The purpose of perseverance is learning a skill that will help you stay motivated and keep working hard.” (dictionary.com)

We apply these principles in all facets of our lives, and it is because of our faith we can deal with them rather than being overcome by them. Even though we have “bad days” when we feel we have accomplished so little and feel alienated from God, we have the comfort of knowing that Jesus is always with us no matter what. He persevered through unimaginable struggles and had the discipline to not allow defeat to overcome him. As we confront what seem to be unsurmountable issues, it all pales in comparison to what he endured.

Our human nature is to avoid hardship and “go along to get along.” It takes perseverance to make tough decisions that we know must be made. Because we have endured hardship, our experience can motivate others. Isn't that what being a mature Christian is all about? It's about sharing our own life experiences with its inevitable struggles and challenges that can then inspire and motivate others.

CLOSING THOUGHT: Give me the courage to act upon the promptings of the Holy Spirit in dealing with the challenges I face daily.

Becky Huber

Wednesday, March 20, 2024

TITLE: Waiting and Resting in the Lord

READ: Psalm 37:7, Psalm 116:7

OPENING PRAYER: Good morning God. It's Gordon checking in. Lord, how wonderful it is to enjoy such a relationship with you. Father, I call upon your Holy Spirit for guidance and wisdom as I address your scripture for the Lenten devotional.

MEDITATION: Does God really expect us to understand what he is telling us? I do believe he not only expects us to understand but also to be inspired and responsive to the words he created for our benefit.

I could share with you my travel experiences and the time spent on Iwo Jima, Johnston Island, Hong Kong, Hawaii, and Japan, but you cannot share my experiences. Those are mine, not yours. I can only encourage you to go to those places and then we will have something in common, something we can now talk about.

Are we denying God the opportunity to fulfill his promises to us? Those promises are very real. Are we forfeiting a life free of fear, anxiety, stress, etc., etc., etc. Let's just trust and take a rest with our Lord.

I guess I'm advocating spending time exploring God's spiritual domain with your heart, not your head. Create your own experiences meditating on his word. Trust is a great word to meditate on while resting and patiently waiting for the Lord. Trust is mentioned over 100 times and often used as a metaphor for faith. Enjoy an opportunity to test your faith and consider it pure joy. James 1:2. NIV

CLOSING PRAYER: Lord, how grateful we are. I pray that our church will come to truly trust you. I am simply thankful and appreciative that your word is true and so available to anyone who truly seeks your kingdom and trusts you.

Gordon Neu

Thursday, March 21, 2024

TITLE: Walk in God's Rest

READ: Matthew 11:28-30; Psalm 23

OPENING PRAYER: Lord God, we thank you for dying on the cross and loving us. Help us to walk in your rest and to trust in you daily. Amen.

MEDITATION: The invitation to “come and he will give me rest”, reminds me of Psalm 23. Certainly, David was weary and heavy laden when he wrote Psalm 23 and this Psalm is one that I go to when I am weary. Walking through “the valley of the shadow of death” is not a pleasant experience but because God is with us, we don't have to fear evil or anything else.

As I learn and grow closer to Christ, I am learning that finding rest daily doesn't depend on my circumstances and there will be burdens and valleys that are unpleasant that I will go through. My priority must be reading and studying his word and following Jesus daily, wherever that may take me. When I do that, he is with me and instead of having to climb twenty sets of stairs on my own I can take the elevator.

Jesus carries me to places I cannot go on my own, and I can find rest in my soul, even when I walk through “the valley of the shadow of death”.

CLOSING PRAYER: Jesus, help us daily to trust in you no matter our circumstances. We praise you in everything, including things we don't understand. Amen.

Richard Coppin

Friday, March 22, 2024

TITLE: Walk in Gods Peace.

READ: Isaiah 26:3, John 14:27, 16:33

MEDITATION: The word peace is used in the Bible in three ways. First, there is spiritual peace—peace between God and man. Second, there is psychological peace—peace within. Third, there is relational peace—peace among mankind. When man was created, he was at peace with God, with himself, and with others. But when he rebelled against God, man lost peace in every way. These dimensions of peace can be restored. Man cannot bring this about, but God certainly can, and has.

Jesus Christ, was sent into the world to take away our sins by his death on the cross, therefore making it possible for us to be at peace—at peace with God, at peace within ourselves, and at peace with each other. “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:6-7)

Christ provides the power for man to overcome every sin. Man can know the peace, joy, and fellowship with God, with himself, and with others. “These things I have spoken to you, that in me you may have peace” (John 16:33).

CLOSING THOUGHT: No matter how difficult your situation feels, Jesus Christ can help you get through it. But you must first acknowledge your sin and commit to Jesus, then you can have perfect peace and walk in God’s peace.

Don Becker

Saturday, March 23, 2024

TITLE: Walk in God's Peace, Hope and Joy

READ: Romans 5: 1- 5, 11

PRAYER: Lord, help us to understand your word as we read these verses and interpretation. Thank you for your guidance. Amen.

MEDITATION: Romans was probably written in AD 57 when Paul was on his third missionary journey. He was giving God's plan of salvation. Peace meant a new relationship with God and access to him. Rejoicing in sufferings sounds strange to us until we realize suffering can make us stronger and more able to follow through with our task. Tribulations brings about perseverance and perseverance produces proven character.

The Lord allows us to experience the storms of life in order to grow in proven character shaped by faith as a result of adversity. Hope springs from character and joy is the result of reconciliation. As we walk with God enjoying his lovely creation, help us to walk in peace, hope and joy.

CLOSING THOUGHT: When we face difficult times, let us not say "Why did this happen to me?" Let us say instead, "Lord, what are you trying to tell me, show me and what attitude do you want to change or strengthen in me?"

Helen Amsbary

Palm Sunday, March 24, 2024

TITLE: Walk in God's Hope & Joy

READ: Romans 15:13, Psalm 40:16

OPENING PRAYER: *I want to believe, Lord; help my unbelief! Holy Spirit, fill my heart with hope, joy, and peace. Do not let me doubt your promises based on what I feel or experience today. Amen.*

Ever since Genesis 3, humanity has chosen to reject God and live as if we are our own ultimate authority. And the worse part of thinking we don't need God? We like it! We like our vices, and we like living for ourselves, just as sin would have us do.

But when all the empty promises of life without God finally breaks a person down, where do people turn? God's word calls us home. Look at Psalm 40:16 for instance and notice what happens when we seek the Lord: we find reason to celebrate, we experience gladness, and we can find ourselves with a renewed mind that worships the Lord and we can declare his greatness.

And we find hope, *real* hope. This hope will not disappoint or fade away because this hope is grounded in the work and character of God. There's not a person alive who can provide hope, joy, and peace the way God does. All we have to do is surrender and trust.

CLOSING THOUGHT: Perhaps today is the day you needed to be reminded to stop looking inward or away from God to find meaning and hope. Trust the Lord and watch what happens next...

Pastor Brad Epperson

Monday, March 25, 2024

TITLE: Walk in Obedience and Submission

READ: 1 Samuel 15: 19-22

OPENING PRAYER: Lord, I pray that when I disobey, that you are there to pick me up and take my hand and lead me in the right direction. Amen

MEDITATION: Do you think some of Saul's excuses sound similar to excuses we hear today? "I did this for God, even if it goes against his word". (1 Samuel 15: 15). "Everyone else was doing it". (1 Samuel 15: 21). I don't know about you, but I have been guilty of using a lot of these same words. Even, I hear my 10-year-old grandson using these excuses.

Today Christians do not rely on sacrifice, as in the Old Testament. We don't slaughter sheep and goats then roast them on the altar. Instead, we have other ways of serving God. Evangelism, church, ministry, worship, prayer, Small Groups, tithing and many more. Jesus calls us to make healthy interpersonal relationships a higher priority than all these things. To obey God always.

When we disobey God's ministry, to do our own thing and ask God to bless us, it defiles the altar itself. God has called us to obey and be his servant. May we always have a heart willing to hear the will of the Lord to trust and obey.

CLOSING THOUGHT: Father, I do not always have money or possessions to offer you, but what I do have I give you. I'll offer you myself - my whole life. Use me according to your purposes because I love you.

Jean Rich

Tuesday, March 26, 2024

TITLE: Walk to Produce God's Fruit

READ: John 14:21

OPENING PRAYER: Jesus, Thank you for creating the life in us and restoring us to new life in you. Amen.

MEDITATION: I recently spent some time pruning my yard. I got partway done, then left it for a few days before I got back to finish. There on the ground were the clippings from earlier and the fresh cuttings still in place. The old looked very dried out, brown and wilted. The new looked just like what was still on the bushes. But looks can be deceiving. Both are dead—one just doesn't know it yet.

Right when it's cut off, the pruned branch looks exactly like the living part—even at the metabolic level, there is still a bit of life going on. We are like that. Cut off from our Creator, we may still have a bit of life hanging on, but its life borrowed from the vine. Most people live their entire lives running on that bit of breath by which God shared life with us—you might even say that all of humanity is just running on fumes.

Jesus tells us here that he alone is the source of our life. Apart from him, we are just in various stages of decay. Salvation is like being grafted back in to the living vine—reconnected to the source of our life. Only in this way—by recognizing and embracing our dependency on Jesus for life—can we live and become fruitful. No matter how good a flower in the vase may look, it will wilt and wither because it is already dead. But the flower on the living vine becomes fruit and thus the vector of new life—even as the vine is still the source of that life.

CLOSING THOUGHT: So, stay connected! Let Jesus' resurrection life renew and restore you—and let him bring you to fruitfulness!

Bill Ward

Wednesday, March 27, 2024

TITLE: Walk to Produce God's Fruit

READ: Colossians 1:10-12

OPENING PRAYER: Dear Lord, help me to treat others as you want me to. Amen

MEDITATION: One day as I was trimming our huge laurel hedge between our neighbor's home and ours, our neighbor who was hidden behind the hedge, was cursing me quietly. I waited a few minutes and then said calmly to her that I had heard her cursing me and I wondered what had caused her to feel that way.

She was embarrassed that I had heard her and let me know what she was dealing with in her life. She broke down in tears, telling me her story.

I became aware that how I responded to her made a difference in her life. She and her husband became friends and treated us differently from then on.

CLOSING THOUGHT: The word "walk" in the title above refers to all our actions where we can reflect Christ's ways or not. "God's Fruit" was the change that happened with our neighbor!

Rob Roy and Carol Wilson

Maundy Thursday, March 28, 2024

TITLE: WALK TO PRODUCE GOD'S FRUIT

READ: Galatians 5:22-23

OPENING PRAYER: Father, please teach me to be more like you, even when I don't feel like it.

MEDITATION: God's promises don't make sense. He promises love, joy, and peace if I surrender to his plan for my life, but to be honest, his prompting doesn't *sound* like it will bring me peace and joy.

God asks me to forgive someone who hates me, but won't I just be opening myself up to more abuse?

God asks me to give generously to someone who I know will just take advantage, but that doesn't make any sense.

God asks me to be patient and obey him in my current job, but doesn't he see I'm not earning as much money as I deserve, and my manager treats me unfairly?

God asks me to repent for my sins, but can't I just pretend they're fine?

I'm starting to learn that unforgiveness actually leads to bitterness and revenge leaves me feeling empty. When I forgive, God teaches me to love my enemies and rely on him for comfort in the midst of the pain. When I give generously, God teaches me how he meets all my *real* needs.

When I'm faithful and patient in a difficult situation, God teaches me that focusing on him instead of comparing myself to others leads to real peace. When I am truly disgusted by my own sin, I'm kinder and gentler to people around me.

CLOSING THOUGHT: Thank you, Father, that you really do know what I need, and you lead me in the way everlasting.

Janta Steele

Good Friday, March 29, 2024

TITLE: Food that Satisfies...

READ: John 6:26-29

PRAYER: Lord, everything that our hearts desire is found in you and you alone. Take our eyes off the things of this world and set them on you.

MEDITATION: This passage is 'sandwiched' between the story of loaves and fishes and Jesus as the Bread of Life. After Jesus fed the 5000, the crowds followed him, not out of devotion, but in hopes of seeing another miracle. They were more interested in the gift than the giver - they couldn't wait to see what Jesus would do next.

So much of our lives is spent in search of earthly satisfaction. We tell ourselves that this next purchase, this next achievement, this next experience will finally give us the gratification we crave. We are addicted to the promise of the 'next thing,' but the subsequent satisfaction we feel is momentary at best. What Jesus offers us is true, lasting fulfillment that can only be experienced through believing in him.

In the summer of 2020, during the heart of the pandemic, our Children's Ministry team started making videos for our kids. Each week, we filmed at different locations that illustrated our message. The week that we learned about this passage, we filmed at a bakery in Steilacoom. Surrounded by tempting pastries we talked about how Jesus is the Bread of Life. At that point in time, everything seemed particularly uncertain, but Jesus saw us through it. Jesus offered satisfaction to the people that followed him to Capernaum. He offered satisfaction during a pandemic. He offers satisfaction now.

CLOSING PRAYER: *As the deer pants for the water, so my soul longs after You. You alone are my heart's desire. And I long to worship You.*

Mary Mannering

Saturday, March 30, 2024

TITLE: Walk In His Purpose

READ: John 15:16

OPENING PRAYER: Lord, help us to remember that it is not enough to simply accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior. That decision must come with action. Help us to serve as he did and to love as he did. - Amen

MEDITATION: To add some context to this verse, Jesus is in the upper room speaking to his eleven remaining disciples and reminding them that he chose them out of all of his followers for the specific task of learning from him so that they could do the things he did.

This does not mean that Jesus has *only* chosen these eleven to do his work, for numerous other texts in the Scripture show us that all who believe in Jesus are chosen, or selected, by him to have a place in helping him advance the Kingdom of God on earth.

Now that the Holy Spirit is present, all believers are similarly chosen. Just as Jesus chose the eleven for this task, we are called to do the same. After all, the Mission Statement of our church is to MAKE disciples, GROW disciples and SHARE the love of Jesus Christ with ALL people...just like Jesus did!

CLOSING THOUGHT: We too, like the eleven disciples, were not chosen to only receive eternal life, but we are chosen to serve God and love others. For it is in doing so, that we receive the gift of eternal life through our faith in Jesus Christ.

Semon, Lisa

Easter Sunday, March 31, 2024

TITLE: Amazing Grace

READ: Acts 13:26-38

OPENING PRAYER: Father, thank you for sending your Son to make a way for sinners to become children of God. Jesus, thank you for paying the ultimate sacrifice on the cross. Holy Spirit, thank you for revealing this truth.

MEDITATION: Happy Easter!!! The passage you read this morning is a portion of a sermon the Apostle Paul preached in Pisidian Antioch on their first missionary journey. The sermon caused such a stir in the synagogue that the Jews in the city expelled them from the city.

What caused such a stir? The gospel. The sermon Paul preached was about the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ. Paul started with the Exodus, through the kings of Israel, eventually arriving at Jesus. Paul was declaring to the Jews that salvation through Jesus was God's plan all along.

Whenever the gospel is proclaimed some respond with fear, others are offended, and some believe. The one response that you cannot have to the gospel is indifference.

Jesus Christ. The Savior of the world. Good news!

CLOSING PRAYER: Thank you, God, for sending your Son to die on our behalf. Thank you, Jesus, for your obedience and your sacrificial death. Thank you, Holy Spirit, for revealing to us the truth of the resurrection!

Pastor James Kim