



Daily Meditations

May 25-30, 2020

The Biblical readings are taken from the Daily Office in the Book of Common Prayer for Year 2 and written by the St. Stephen's Meditation Writing Team: Dave Boyd, Becky Denton, Pat Gillory, Traci Maxwell, Jay Nickel, Bob Reed, T.Cay Rowe, and Carroll Wilson.

Click on the scripture reading for each day to go directly to link.

COLLECT, EASTER 7

O God, the King of glory, you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven: Do not leave us comfortless, but send us your Holy Spirit to strengthen us, and exalt us to that place where our Savior Christ has gone before; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.

Grace

Monday, May 25, 2020

Ephesians 3:1-13

"The mystery is that people who have never heard of God and those who have heard of him all their lives (what I've been calling outsiders and insiders) stand on the same ground before God. They get the same offer, same help, same promises..."

"Little girl, you better learn how to give others grace if you ever want to receive some?" My great-grandmother was a spirited God-filled 4'8" bundle of goodness in my eyes, but my personality and my very opinionated conviction had definitely struck a nerve. I was also old enough to understand I needed grace in my life but wasn't exactly understanding why the comment I had made irritated her so much. She had been a founding member of a thrift shop, and each summer I would go and "help" at the store and get to visit with her friends and sort the donations. A young mother with two children came through and Gammie jumped up as did another lady and herded them to a back area. A bit later the kids came out with all new stuff, followed by mom and big smiles, as well as carrying a couple of bags. They headed up the street, as they had walked to the shop, and when Gammie came back, I popped off something to the effect of "must be nice to get all those things and not have to pay for them." Needless to say, later that day Gammie explained a few facts of life to me, I felt terrible.

Lucky for us all, God doesn't see us for anything but His beloved children. *Every one* of us! His grace goes out to all. Those known and unknown; "insiders and outsiders," He grants grace to us all.

Gentle Spirit

Tuesday, May 26, 2020

Ephesians 3:14-21

"God can do anything, you know--for more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us."

Oh the difference a year can make! May 2019 was a time of angst and emotional roller coasters. Living with a teenage girl is like that, but living with a graduating senior is a special little roller coaster all its own. Although very proud of her, I knew the unknown ahead was weighing on her heavily, and there were nights she cried herself to sleep wondering if she would find her place and her own people as she was going off on her own to college where no one else she knew would be. Today, she has been in Wimberley a total of eight days and is already anxious to be back with her people! It took some time. It took being uncomfortable and on a few occasions miserable. All temporary, and then out the other end of the tunnel came all the excitement, joy, happiness, and His spirit sits deeply within her and her group of friends. She *knows* she has found her place and friends whom He chose for her to walk with in this life journey.

Any of us who have a few years under our belts know this. Life is not always comfortable, but we need to be pushed to grow. To grow spiritually, emotionally, and physically. This season of quarantine has not been easy, and for many the uncomfortable has come from having to sit with ourselves. My prayer is that we allow the sitting to be a time to allow His spirit to live in us and to rest deeply in our souls.

All About Him

Wednesday, May 27, 2020

Ephesians 4:1-16

"There is one body and one spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all."

These chapters are the practical instructions for behavior and putting into practice the love given us to bring about Christian Unity. The virtues mentioned in this reading--humility, gentleness, and patience--make me wonder what many may have thought at the time the letter was written.

The first virtue mentioned is that of humility; however, in the time of this original letter, this characteristic was not necessarily a desired one. Humility was a trait expected of the lower class people; slaves were expected to show humility; women were expected to show humility; servants but not the general audience were meant to hear this letter. I'm sure there were many who thought this was not intended for *them*, "surely not me!". In contemporary times as our younger generations tend to remind us: It's not *all* about you! It should, however, be all about *Him*.

"Less of *me* and more of *Him*!" Lyrics from a contemporary Christian song I love, and I have said this to myself over and over during the past several months. I find myself lost in the "stuff" going on and sometimes lose sight of the real issues at times; this passage reminds me that there is *one* Body, *one* Spirit, *one* Hope, *one* Lord, *one* God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in *all*. We should all be humble unto *Him*.

New Normal

Thursday, May 28, 2020

Ephesians 4:17-22

"So, I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts."

Several years ago, I facilitated a group with teenage addicts within a support group setting. These young adults had all struggled with either alcohol or drugs, which had become so out of control that their issues were public to their family and friends. One young lady wanted badly to do the right thing, as she had always been the "good girl," and this new situation had caused great disappointment from those whose opinion she valued. She committed to getting clean, came to class faithfully, worked on her grades and relationships, and by the end of 12 weeks she had shown substantial progress in every area but one. She had not been able to walk away from the friends, the same "friends" who all continued in their lifestyle of drinking and drugs. She was unwilling to let go completely of her former life as what she *knew* seemed safer than the Unknown.

In our faith, it is much the same. If we are not willing to put away the old life, *all* of it, we cannot clothe ourselves in true righteousness of the Lord. It is a process for many. How do we give up the things that make us, "us"? Letting go of control and realizing maybe we never had control of anything and what we thought made us the person we are, really doesn't. As this quarantine time continues, many of us are taking this time to look over our life and what is working and what is not. Although I thought I had made huge changes, turns out I was still holding on to some things that I see now, He would like to see gone as they continue to drag me back to those old ways that may be hardening my heart. As life crawls back to "normal," I continue to reflect on all that is my life currently, and I can share many things. Some people will not make the cut for what will be my "new normal" and a more authentic version of myself.

Rise and Shine

Friday, May 29, 2020

Ephesians 5:1-20

"...walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

"Give, give give! Sometimes it feels like that is all they want--more money!" A dear friend of mine was frustrated with her church administration and felt her worth was only seen as monetary at times. She was a "chronic volunteer," as we like to call ourselves, and did not have much monetarily to give, which was also a source of her insecurities. The note she had received was quite harmless, and I believed she had read much more into it than had been intended. The monetary insecurity she felt in everyday life had now seeped into her church relationship because of its significance in secular life. Once I explained to her that her talents were most likely appreciated more highly than her monetary gifts, she began to feel better.

This phrase is heard every Sunday throughout Anglican Church services through the world as a preface to the offertory. However, within the Book of Ephesians, it prefaces a list of admonitions of an old life. During the time of this letter, many of the audience are pagan, and this letter renounces those previous ways of living. The writer asks these newly called Christians to cease these actions and gives them a framework to walk anew in Christian light; ending the passage with the words we can all be reminded of:

"Sleeper awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you!"

The Gift of Light

Saturday, May 30, 2020

Matthew 7:28-8:4

"Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people."

I sat reeling from the doctor's words, then quickly pulled it all together again to ask questions and take notes and then I prayed. The morning of surgery, I prayed. Every day in ICU, I prayed. Through all the coming weeks and months, I prayed and many of you prayed for us as well. Had I not prayed and been blessed with the peace and grace that only God could give; I would have run screaming through the darkness of what my world had become. But I did pray, I did receive comfort and blessings; that is what faith brings to our lives. I have been asked by many, "How have you possibly managed?". Most of them are not Christians, and I take the opportunity to tell them, "I have managed all of this thanks to my faith, God's Love, and the prayers of friends. I just can't imagine how those who face dark times get through them without the light of His love."

This is the gift I was given through the pain of the past months: the gift of sharing my story with those who do not have faith and the hope of bringing them through. Our Lord can help. My faith story can hopefully help them obtain the tools needed to get through the darkest of times before they have to go it alone. We all have a faith story to share, and I hope you will find someone to share yours and bring them into the Light of our Lord.

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