



Daily Meditations

May 4-9, 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 4

O God, whose Son Jesus is the good shepherd of your people: Grant that when we hear his voice we may know him who calls us each by name, and follow where he leads; who, with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Prologue:

As I write these meditations on Palm Sunday afternoon, I am warned by the Surgeon General and others that it's about to become hauntingly bad here in the U.S.--that deaths this week will spike as never before. These thoughts have an impact on my writing. I can see the faces of many of you. I miss all of you. Bless you all. Jesus would have mercy.

The Beatitudes

Monday, May 4, 2020

Matthew 5:1-10

"You're blessed when you are content with just who you are--no more, no less. That's the moment you find yourselves proud owners of everything that can't be bought." - The Message Remix Bible

"How blest are those of a gentle spirit..." - The New English Bible

We've all heard the Beatitudes before. Verse 5 of Chapter 5 was originally known to me as: "Blessed are the meek...". But that word "meek" got in my way. I held a negative connotation for "meek." I equated it with not strong, just weak.

Thanks to the two translations above, it is no longer (for me) a negative word at all. Now it can mean "content" or "of a gentle spirit." I aspire to both of these two states of being. And now, as I am daily caught up in the frenzy of bad news, I can aspire to having a gentler spirit--not one overcome by the noise of the day. I'll just keep trying to find ways to communicate caring for others, and I'll attempt to be content with just who I am. Thank you, Jesus. TYJ

Salt and Light

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

Matthew 5:11-16

"Let me tell you why you are here. You're here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth...You're here to be light that brings out the God-colors of this world." - The Message

So this, Jesus says, is why I'm here--to bring out the God-flavors and the God-colors of the world as we know it. And how am I going to do that from my living room (sheltered in place)? I venture out with mask for mail and groceries. Today was special. I got propane for the gas grill too. I can't go visit friends or family. I can't hug. I can't look someone in the eye to tell them that I care.

Here's a thought: I have never before become more aware of, and more thankful for, my current situation in life. I am not wealthy. I am not entirely healthy. But I don't have to look very far to find others who are less fortunate than I am in these troubling times. My daily prayers were always (in the past) of an intercessory nature. Now, prayers of thanksgiving and of gratitude flow from my lips more easily. Maybe it's about time that they did.

Here's another thought: I have 100s of names in my iPhone's contact list. I've started contacting those folks, just to check on them and to convey concern. I have not communicated with some of them in years. I think it's the right thing to do. I could go on. TYJ

Completing God's Law

Wednesday, May 6, 2020

Matthew 5:17-20

"Long after the stars burn out and the earth wears out, God's Law will be alive and working." - The Message

So, Jesus said He did not come to demolish the law, but to complete it. And He said that we are to show the way for others.

Sometimes in all this virus worry, I think: What difference do I make? I mean, if we're all just stardust, and we are all going to return to stardust, *What Difference Do I Make in the Grand Scheme of Things? So, What if I Don't "Show the Way for Others?"*.

I guess, for me, it all boils down to what others have done to show the way for me. And I'm not talking about the Mother Theresas of the world. I'm talking about the simple, beautiful people who have been caring toward me. I'm talking about Betty, my favorite waitperson in my favorite restaurant. She makes such a fuss over Bob and me. I'm talking about the folks at Crisis Bread Basket who are tenderly supplying basic needs to so many overwhelmed by this crisis.

I think I've still got a little time left before I return to stardust. Phil says it best: "There is little time to gladden the hearts..." I had better get busy. TYJ

On Murder

Thursday, May 7, 2020

Matthew 5:21-26

"The simple moral fact is that words kill. If...you suddenly remember a grudge that a friend has against you (or you against her),...leave immediately, go to this friend and make things right. Then and only then, come back and work things out with God." - The Message

Well, now here's a tall order. Remember that contact list that I talked about earlier, the one in my phone? I have now come across two or three names there--people I got mad at, or they got mad at me. In my mind, I wrote them off. Jesus says words kill. Jesus says I've got to try to fix this. So, here's what I'm gonna try to do. I'm gonna pick one of these names. I'm gonna contact that person and try to fix it. I'll try to fix it on Jesus' terms, not on my own terms. I'll try because it's the right thing to do. TYJ

Empty Promises

Friday, May 8, 2020

Matthew 5:27-37

"And don't say anything you don't mean. You only make things worse when you lay down smokescreens of pious talk saying: 'I'll pray for you' and never doing it, or saying 'God be with you' and not meaning it. You don't make your words (or your works) true by embellishing them with religious lace." - The Message

These verses are quite difficult for me. People who know me, know that my prayer and meditation time is early in the morning when it's quiet here, and I am alone in my easy chair. I spend some time at it. I pray for lots of folks, including myself.

I'm not a believer in: "Ask and it shall be given unto you." I do believe in the power of prayer, but I'm not sure that it is a power that most others think about. It is difficult for me to describe. If I pray for you, it definitely has an impact on me. I believe that it creates in me a kind of attentiveness. I become more attentive to the needs of others, and not just the needs of those for whom I pray. And it causes me to be less wrapped up in my own needs and concerns. My hope is that my awareness of the needs of others will be translated into right actions on behalf of others. If I say to you: "I'll lift you up in the early mornings," it's a promise. And, I believe it's a good thing for me and for you. TYJ

Love Your Enemies

Saturday, May 9, 2020

Matthew 5:38-48

"No more tit for tat stuff. When someone gives you a hard time, respond with the energies of prayer, for then you are working out your true selves...This is what God does. He gives his best...to everyone, regardless: the good and bad, the nice and nasty. If all you do is love the loveable, do you expect a bonus? Anybody can do that. Grow up! Live generously and graciously toward others." - The Message

Here's another pretty tall order. I do so enjoy surrounding myself with the nice and not the nasty. I tend to flee from the nasty and then complain about them later.

Maybe I should try to understand them. Maybe I should try to acknowledge that I have been in their shoes before. I have a friend who likes to say: "Dave, it's not always about you." Maybe it's about them, and I really need to try to understand.

I could, at least, "respond with the energies of prayer." TYJ

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