



---

## Daily Meditations

### July 20-25, 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, PROPER 11

*Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom, you know our necessities before we ask and our ignorance in asking: Have compassion on our weakness, and mercifully give us those things which for our unworthiness we dare not, and for our blindness we cannot ask; through the worthiness of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

---

## Love Fulfills

Monday, July 20, 2020

### Romans 13:8-14

*"Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law...Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law."*

This passage is a beautiful prayer that Paul wants all believers to experience. As much as we all want to fully experience this, the reality is that we all fall short. In these unprecedented times as I write these meditations, many of us can see that shortfall all around us and may even be part of it in our own lives. Paul's message in these chapters is all about "fulfillment of the law." I cannot help but see irony in this today as the new "law" has so many bickering and showing no love to their neighbors.

Is it fear that brings out the worst in us at times of challenge? I want to find a reason for the negativity and name-calling, but in reality it is the loss of focus on what is truly important in our daily goal to fulfill our mission here. Love is the fulfillment of the law. When faced with a neighbor whom we find difficult to even like, let's take a moment and pray for them for ourselves. Let's ask the Lord to fill our hearts with the love that does no harm to a neighbor and be cleansed of frustration. These days seem filled with opportunities to choose negative responses, but these are choices; the choice to be positive and show love is also there. Let's choose Love!

---

## Doing God's Business

Tuesday, July 21, 2020

### **Romans 11:13-24**

*"Do you have any business crossing people off the guest list or interfering with God's welcome? If there are corrections to be made or manners to be learned, God can handle that without our help."*

Paul's words here are to help clarify for those present who may not know him but know of him via a previous gathering with Peter in attendance. Paul had an episode of "bad form" at the table shared with Gentiles (Galatians 2:11-14). His words now are much calmer and considerate. The takeaway from this is a message to all. Christ died and rose again in order to create community across the most fundamental of differences. No group, race, denomination or individual is called to judge nor to sit above another.

As Christians we all bring our own perspectives to our faith, which then also leads to disagreements, but we are still part of the church, right? Paul's answer is to welcome one another (v.14:1) and to put up with each other's failings. He tells the "strong" to behave this way toward the "weak," but his words will resonate with both sides because who on opposing sides of any debate does not imagine they are the strong and their opponents to be the ones who just don't "get it" yet? Paul offers that with the gifts of peace and joy in the Spirit. The church can abide a lot of disagreement over many other things, and our place is not to assume God needs our help!

---

## Stumbling through Love

Wednesday, July 22, 2020

### **Romans 14:13-23**

*"Therefore, let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister...Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace..."*

My journey of faith is about growing into perfect trust of God. The goal is communion with God and each other, which would look like peace and mutual enlightenment in our communities centered in a pursuit of trust in God. That goal/journey is sometimes completely overwhelming and challenging. Examining ourselves and our journey can sometimes be scary.

In these days, for me, it has meant a *lot* of alone time to self-reflect and question. I've found patience and the ability to hear other and opposing voices. These times have brought about more understanding and a deeper desire to listen than be heard. My responsibilities have for some time required me to listen and bring all those perspectives into my decisions. I have found myself wishing that same thing for many others as I watch some of the divisiveness between neighbors in our community, divisiveness that not only puts stumbling blocks in the way but also figuratively hurls them, and it hurts to see.

Our communities are all hurting for varying reasons, and my prayer is that we all stand fast in our faith and embrace this week's readings of love and peace as we interact with all of our neighbors, brothers and sisters. Amen+

---

# Strength in Power

## Thursday, July 23, 2020

### **Romans 15:1-13**

*"Those of us who are strong and able in the faith need to step in and lend a hand to those who falter, and not just do what is most convenient for us. Strength is for service, not status..."*

Relationships are never easy. Jesus never took the "easy way" or avoided the messiness; he waded right into the mess. "I took on the troubles of the troubled," is the way Scripture puts it.

I am a firm believer that each of us needs to look after the good of the people around us, asking ourselves, "How can I help?" In this passage it reads those of us who are "strong," but if we go to what Paul wrote in Greek, it was actually "the powerful people." From this perspective the concern, especially for those of us who in whatever way have "power," should be for the building up of the community over and above the desire to please ourselves. How can we be of service to those who do not have the same "power?" Lately this has been harder to do as we continue in varying states of quarantine, but there are always options. As Paul reminds us in Philippians, Jesus laid aside all his privileges in order to become a servant to all. Leading by His example, we too must lay aside the benefits of power/strength and become the servants of all so that all can be welcomed in.

It's a tough calling, to be sure, but it is our calling all the same. "Welcome one another, as Christ also welcomed you."

---

# Showing God's Love

## Friday, July 24, 2020

### **Romans 15:14-24**

*"...in the context of Jesus, I'd even say proud, but only in that context. I have no interest in giving you a chatty account of my adventures, only the wondrously powerful and transformingly present words and deeds of Christ in me that triggered a believing response among the outsiders."*

I have always been drawn to this chapter in Romans because I've felt it is a call to mission work, and mission work is very close to my heart. I've been part of more than 30 mission trips from college years through not so long ago. Not all were church sponsored, but these words from Paul were always with me and part of what I hope I shared with those I came into contact with. In college, we went to Brazil and that opened up the world for me, which I then wanted to share.

Mission work is God's work! What I mean is not that He does it instead of us, but He does it through us. Mission is really a supernatural work, God's work in and through us. I've seen mission at work many times and most especially through youth. It's taking youth outside their safe area and putting them in a space with others to show God's love to those who may not feel loved or safe. Watching teenagers become vulnerable in a way that shares God's love with peers and others is amazing to see. But even more amazing is hearing their stories of seeing God at work in their own lives and the lives they touched. There is no satisfaction I can compare that to—God at work through us and in us!

---

# See the Spirit of Goodness

Saturday, July 25, 2020

## **Romans 15:25-33**

*"Pray also that my relief offering to the Jerusalem believers will be accepted in the spirit in which it is given."*

Paul is asking the believers he is with to pray that the non-believers he is soon to visit will be accepting of the Words of the Lord he brings to them. This single sentence jumped out at me in the reading, and I immediately knew why. In my life, I have responsibilities to this community surrounding our children and their education. Never have I felt that responsibility more than the past few months. The challenges of communicating that responsibility has been difficult as many have their own vision of what these decisions should look like in our community.

I am no stranger to this prayer that Paul requests. I have prayed it many times, but it seems to be a daily request lately. It is said that "patience is a virtue" and most especially in our current times of frustration and fear. In these times, let us take a moment to pray for the leaders making decisions. We will not always agree, but we can disagree respectfully and with an open heart to see the intent behind the decisions and perspective of others.

Keep the leaders in your prayers; we all need them!

Connect with us

