



Daily Meditations

November 23-28, 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 29

Almighty and everlasting God, whose will it is to restore all things in your well-beloved Son, the King of kings and Lord of lords: Mercifully grant that the peoples of the earth, divided and enslaved by sin, may be freed and brought together under his most gracious rule; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

Prologue:

As I type these meditations, it is Election Day. COVID-19 is spiking dramatically. Fires are still burning in large parts of California and Colorado. And I am desperately seeking the solace and respite of a small farmhouse in Llano County where I can lose some of my current thoughts and just drift for awhile. In spite of it all though, I know that I don't have to look too far to know how very blessed I am. It's just one of those "truths" that is easily pushed aside by the onslaught of anxiety.

A Collection of Stories from the Jerusalem Journey

Monday, November 23, 2020

Luke 18:15-30

"Unless you accept God's kingdom in the simplicity of a child, you'll never get in." AND "Then who has any chance at all? No chance at all," Jesus said, "if you think you can pull it off by yourself." - The Message Remix Bible

Here we have two stories. The first is a highly visual one of parents bringing their children to Jesus so that He might touch them and bless them.

I tend to believe that we are charged to bring about "God's kingdom" here and now. I don't subscribe to the oft-quoted "many mansions" in the hereafter. For me, the "simplicity" mentioned here in scripture means that I am to emulate Jesus through acts of compassion, kindness, justice, and mercy. Over and over, Jesus demonstrates to me just what I need to be doing. If I am to create the kingdom of God on earth, I am charged to be a follower of Jesus. Jesus says it's as simple as that. So, why is it so hard for me?

In the second story, the rich man wants to know what he needs to do to inherit eternal life. He's a rule follower, and he wants a prescription for how he can gain this inheritance. He has already kept the Ten Commandments.

I'm not going to comment herein on eternal life. I cannot fully comprehend the concept, and my thoughts on the subject probably just don't line up with those of many of you who might read this. I'm also not going to bad-mouth riches or talk about camels and needles. The crux of this story for me is that Jesus' last instruction to the rich man was "follow me."

Here's the simplicity again. It's not so hard to figure out. We are charged to follow Jesus. He never asked to be crowned or worshipped. He asks to be followed. Thank you, Jesus. TYJ

The Blind Man's Faith

Tuesday, November 24, 2020

Luke 18:31-43

He said, "Master, I want to see again." Jesus said, "Go ahead – see again! Your faith has saved and healed you." - The Message

This is truly a difficult passage (story) for me to digest and relate to. I will focus on one word – "faith."

I've poked around in many sources to come up with some kind of definition of the word "faith" as it is applied here by Jesus. It seems to embody the concepts of: complete trust in, engagement with, and a commitment to control by another power.

Now then, this is where I bare my soul to you. Do I exemplify this kind of faith? Do I have complete trust in, or do I surrender control to another power such as "God?" The truthful answer would be "No."

Would such an ownership of that kind of faith have prevented a cancer or saved a relationship? Would I be a better human if I could muster that kind of faith?

Maybe it's taking the easy way out here, but I'll just continue to try to be more like my friend who gets up every morning and tries to emulate Jesus' acts of love. TYJ

Come On to My House

Wednesday, November 25, 2020

Luke 19:1-10

"Zacchaeus, hurry down. Today is my day to be a guest in your home." - The Message

Wouldn't you just love to have Jesus come over for dinner at your house? I think we'd have tacos made with venison burger on soft corn tortillas with lots of salsa and guacamole on the side. I'd have lots of questions for Him, and I'd want Him to help me know what and how to believe. I wonder if He'd like ice cream as much as I do?

So many things I'd like to have help with in understanding: questions about bad stuff happening to good folks; questions about prayer; questions about my role on this earth and my difficulties in doing the "right" things.

Then, I think we'd play cards. I'll bet Jesus is a great poker player.

Imagine Jesus coming to your house for dinner. What would it be like for you? TYJ

Risk vs. Playing it Safe

Thursday, November 26, 2020

Luke 19:11-27

"Risk your life and get more than you've ever dreamed of. Play it safe and end up holding the bag." - The Message

Happy Thanksgiving!

I have always been averse to risky investments, and our accumulated assets are a testament to that trait in me. As I have grown older, I have become even more risk-averse, preferring a certain level of security to an uncertain potential for gain.

But for a moment here, let's take risk to another venue. Let's talk about the risk of letting others know what you stand for; who you are; what you believe to be true. Rather than opting for social graces and polite nuances, I have actually become less risk-averse. My wife is too often reminded of this.

I'm not talking about politics here. I don't care what political party you are affiliated with. I'm talking about doing the "right" thing. I'm talking about WWJD. I'm talking about trying to be a Jesus follower. I try (and fail) to do this every day. But, I don't want to exit this earth knowing that I always played it waaay too safe. TYJ

Blessings and Glory to the King

Friday, November 27, 2020

Luke 19:28-40

They brought the colt to Jesus. Then, throwing their coats on its back, they helped Jesus get on. As he rode, the people gave him a grand welcome, throwing their coats on the street saying: "Blessed is He who comes, the King in God's name." - The Message

It's the familiar Palm Sunday scene here. Jesus is extolled as king by the very crowds who, days later, cried out for his execution. But, as I said earlier in my Monday meditation, Jesus never asked to be crowned or worshipped. Jesus came to be followed and emulated – then and now. Thank you, Verna Dozier.* TYJ

The Dream of God, Verna Dozier, 2006

Jesus Was a Good Jew

Saturday, November 28, 2020

Luke 19:41-48

From then on (after He threw out everyone who had set up shop selling anything and everything), He taught each day in the Temple. The High Priests, the religious scholars, and the elders of the people were trying their best to get rid of Him. - The Message

The Temple (the church) had become some kind of hybrid of Walmart, pawn shop, and currency brokerage house. I can imagine that many were getting their cut of the action.

Jesus was a good Jew, and he wasn't going to have any more of this. There was no need for a new religion. Folks just needed to do a better job with the one they had.

Christians don't need to quibble over what denomination or sect has the inside track on God or Jesus, or the Bible, or marriage, or baptisms, or the Eucharist. All we need to do is to do a much better job of following and emulating Jesus. TYJ

And, a big thank you is due here to Bob Reed's Coed Bible study class for many of the thoughts and ideas in my meditations.

Connect with us

