



Daily Meditations

December 28, 2020 - January 2, 2021

The Biblical readings are taken from the Daily Office in the Book of Common Prayer for Year 1 and written by the St. Stephen's Meditation Writing Team: Dave Boyd, Jon Campbell, Becky Denton, Pat Gillory, Jay Nickel, Bob Reed, and Carroll Wilson.

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

COLLECT, First Sunday after Christmas Day

Almighty God, who has poured upon us the new light of thine incarnate Word: Grant that the same light, enkindled in our hearts, may shine forth in our lives; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Become Simple Again

Monday, December 28, 2020

Matthew 18:1-14

"Watch that you don't treat a single of these childlike believers arrogantly." - The Message Remix Bible

The disciples have come to Jesus asking who, among them, gets the highest rank in the kingdom. They just don't get it—AGAIN! Jesus replies that they must "return to square one and start over." They must "become simple and elemental again."

Getting hung up with how we worship, and what we "know" to be the truth—this is not simple nor elemental.

I am not a "childlike believer." But, Jesus has warned against arrogant treatment of them. I do think that my beliefs are "simple and elemental." I shall strive to be a follower of Jesus. That works for me. Thank you, Jesus.

Where You Are From

Tuesday, December 29, 2020

John 7:37-52

"This has to be the Prophet." Others said, "He is the Messiah!" But others were saying, "The Messiah doesn't come from Galilee, does he?"

Here we have yet another example of folks not being able to see what is before their very eyes. To these folks, where Jesus is from, and what line He is

descended from, are much more important (per scripture) than all the words He has said and all the acts He has performed. They do not know that He WAS born in Bethlehem and that He IS of the line of David.

Here, again, we see people focused on the unimportant minutiae, rather than listening and seeing what is right in front of them.

For me, Jesus is saying that I should do what is just, merciful, kind, and compassionate. It doesn't matter who my daddy was or is, and it doesn't matter where I was born. TYJ

The Leaders and Law-Givers Try to Set Another Trap

Wednesday, December 30, 2020

John 7:53-8:11

"Teacher, this woman was caught red-handed in the act of adultery. Moses, in the Law, gives orders to stone such persons. What do you say?"

As I said in years past when I wrote on this passage, it seems strange to me that only the woman was seen as the guilty party by her accusers, and not her partner as well.

The law-givers and the powerful leaders would like Jesus to betray the Law of Moses, or betray his own teachings. Instead, he turns the tables on them, saying that whomever is sinless should cast the first stone. What a novel thought. I wish I could have been there to see it.

So, what shall I glean from this story for myself? Perhaps I shouldn't be so quick to condemn, and not so "sure" of who is right and who is wrong. Maybe I should consider carefully the goals and intended outcomes of the rules or laws applied in certain situations.

Jesus does not condemn this woman. He does not condemn us. He asks her, and he asks us, to turn around and follow Him. TYJ

The Basis of Judgment

Thursday, December 31, 2020

John 8:12-19

"You decide according to what you can see and touch. I don't make decisions like that. I would not make judgments out of the narrowness of my own experience."

Jesus addresses the rulers and law-givers suggesting that they NOT make judgments "out of the narrowness" of their own experience. So often, I do that very thing.

The best example I can think of for myself is just how piously I judged my father's parenting behavior to be lacking and wrong—even unto his death and afterwards. My epiphany came many years after his death. My father never had an example of a "Daddy" in his life. My father's father was an angry, mean-spirited fighter of a man who was totally unconcerned about his own parenting skills. He (my grandfather) cared about his business ventures and his own personal pleasures. When we visited his home for a holiday meal, children were required to eat in a separate room from him. He was a terrible example for my father. And, I spent waaay too much time harshly judging my father out of the "narrowness" of my own experience. Jesus would have mercy. TYJ

Paul's Advice is to Live Jesus

Friday, January 1, 2021

Colossians 2:6-12

"You know your way around the faith. Now do what you've been taught. School's out; quit studying the subject and start living it! And let your living spirit spill over into thanksgiving."

Paul is writing from his jail cell to the church in Colossae. He cautions them about empty superstitions, about myriad spirit beings. His advice to the Colossians in the early 60s AD is cogent for us today.

We know what to do. We know what Jesus said to do. "Simple and elemental" come to mind here again. We know about justice, kindness, compassion, and mercy. We know about doing unto others.

I guess, in this post-Christmas writing, the thing that is missing in my "living" is the part about "spilling over into thanksgiving." Just when I thought I could get away with merely attempting to live a WWJD life, now I need to practice thanksgiving. I will try and fail on all counts, but I will, must assuredly, try again. TYJ

Just Do It!

Saturday, January 2, 2021

Psalm 34

Turn your back on sin. Do something good. Embrace Peace—Don't let it get away.

This verse is from a psalm written by David when he outwitted Abimelech and escaped.

I have never written a meditation on a psalm. I almost always write on the Gospel reading for the day—sometimes the New Testament reading. But this short snippet from Psalm 34 just got to me. It reminded me of something I'd recently read, and I scurried around until I found it. Who better to quote here than Bishop Curry?

"There is a simple way to connect to the divine, anytime you feel like it. If God is love, and love is an action, you've only got to get out there and do it. You've got to get out there and receive it. And the easiest way to do that is to become part of a community of people who want to give and receive love, to liberate themselves from the tyranny of self to look outward. From a small gesture to a large sacrifice, every day provides an opportunity to do love..."*

My prayer is that St. Stephen's is such a community, and that we'll all just get out there and do it. TYJ

**Love is the Way by Bishop Michael Curry, 2020*

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