

Saving Grace Daily Devotion

Monday, February 15

Listen

Genesis 9:11

¹¹ "I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth."

"A young boy went to the local store with his mother. The shop owner, a kindly man, passed him a large jar of suckers and invited him to help himself to a handful. Uncharacteristically, the boy held back. So, the shop owner pulled out a handful for him. When outside, the boy's mother asked why he had suddenly been so shy and wouldn't take a handful of suckers when offered. The boy replied, "Because his hand is much bigger than mine!" (unknown)

The covenant that God makes with Noah and his descendants is also a covenant that God had made with us. We stand like the little boy in front of the candy jar with the realization that God's hands are bigger than ours. He provides for all our needs and more abundantly than we could ever imagine. We are still bound to the law, but God is gracious and merciful. ***"The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness," (Neh. 9:31, Ex. 34:6, Num. 14:18, Ps. 86:5, Ps. 86:15, Joel 2:13)*** It God who has blessed us, it isn't ourselves who brings blessings to ourselves. ***"For in Him we live, and move, and have our being;" ... (Acts 17:28)***

If you want to dig deeper look at Genesis 6:5-6 and Genesis 9:1-11. God also sets up the law and grace/blessing. This is very much part of our relationship with God. He still calls us to Him that we may receive His blessing in our lives.

Take 2 minutes and consider these things as you think about this verse from Genesis 9.

Almighty God help me to see how You are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love in my life today. Help me to see the blessings You give me every day and help me never to forget to give You thanks. Amen

Saving Grace Daily Devotion

Tuesday, February 16

Pray

1 Peter 3:21

²¹ And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

I've been working on my trailer lights in the past couple of weeks. It seems as if I just get them working, then they go out again. I've done everything. I soldered all the connections and they still didn't work. I replaced the soldering with quick couplers and they still didn't work. Then I looked at the ground on the trailer hitch. It was broken off. Without being grounded nothing works.

Peter explains to us that baptism now saves us. What we may miss is that came before, way before baptism. Peter points to the flood. ***"...God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water."*** (1 Peter 3:20) God saved all of humankind through His graciousness in which eight persons were saved through water. In Hebrew the number eight is the number of "completion". Nothing can be added to it. They were saved through water, but now we are complete in what Christ has done for us. ***"¹⁸For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit,"*** (1 Peter 3:18) Nothing can be added to it or taken away from it. It is complete.

When we are baptized, we are baptized into Christ's death and resurrection. It is complete. ***"³Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his."*** (Romans 6:2-5) We are grounded in Christ and what He has done is complete.

Take 2 minutes consider what God has been teaching you as you pray:

Feel free to end your prayer in this way:

Almighty God, thank you for grounding me in Christ. Guide me to look to you every day and to trust in your work in my life. Encourage me in faith as I walk with you that I may encourage others as they walk with You through Jesus Christ I pray. Amen

Saving Grace Daily Devotion

Wednesday, February 17

Last week our Bible verse was John 3:16. A verse about how much God loved us and it's convenient that the words can be lined up to spell 'Valentine'. But if we read just a little bit further into verse 17, we read "For God did not send His Son into the World to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." Jesus's death is what saves us from our sins.

Today we enter the season of Lent. During Lent we prepare ourselves, much like Advent. Although now we're preparing for Jesus' death and His resurrection. We will spend the next 40 days fasting, praying, and giving to become closer to God.

For our Bible Journals, we are going to take a journey through Lent. We'll start by journaling about the three pillars of Lent- pray, fast, give- and then we'll journal the story of Holy Week.

Fasting

When you hear the word Lent, the first thing that may come to mind is "What should I give up this year?". To some fasting may mean giving up a certain food or drink. For others it could be stopping a bad habit, television, or social media.

I read a poem on the Catholic Company website- I know, but I liked it- not only does it list some things to fast from, but also a feast ([click here for the poem](#)). It's those feasts that would bring us closer to God. Find something meaningful to give up this Lent and bring yourself closer to God in the process.

We might like to share what we're giving up- at the end of Lent we may have accomplished something big and we want to relish in our achievements- but Matthew reminds us that what we decide to fast on is between us and God.

In the book of Matthew we read, ***"When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."*** (Matthew 6:16-18)

Choose what you will fast from this Lent, write it in your journal along with the passage from Matthew. Keep track of your fasting by placing a check mark or a small heart on this page each day you've completed your fast.

Saving Grace Daily Devotion

Thursday, February 18

Study

Mark 1:12

¹² And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness.

It took less than ten seconds for Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt to cover the one-hundred-meter distance on the Olympic track and win the gold medal in London. Those few seconds cemented his status as the “fastest man alive” and placed him on the winner’s podium once again. But the race was not won in those seconds—it was won by hours and hours of practice, workouts, weightlifting, special diet, and coaching.

The race was not won in the performance but in the preparation. It is our desire for something greater that causes us to sacrifice some things, even some good things, for the sake of things that are better. (Usain Bolt: An Unauthorized Biography, Belmont and Belcourt)

Jesus, who is God, was baptized by John the baptizer. It was an anointing of His ministry. God claims Him. **“You are my Son, the Beloved; with You I am well pleased.” (Mark 1:11)** Jesus for all eternity had been one with the Father. He knew just what the Father wanted and what His will was for His life on earth. Now, at the beginning of His ministry it doesn’t start with teaching the people, it starts with testing Him in the wilderness.

Sometimes we feel as if life should be easier than it is. Why does everything seem to be a test? Why do we have to endure all of the things of this world? Faith is based in trust and centered in Christ. Faith itself is a gift from God calling us to trust in Him for everything. It calls us to trust that everything is in His hands. Life is an opportunity to see the power of God in our lives as He shapes us into the people He desires us to be. While training is important, God is the trainer, we are the athlete. The difficult part is listening to the Coach as He tells us what’s next.

Lord, teach us to trust in You today. Help us to recognize Your voice in our lives and respond to Your direction. Convict us when we are wrong, humble us when we are proud, the lift us up when we grow weary. Encourage us to tell others what You have done, are doing and the promises of what You will do through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Saving Grace Daily Devotion

Friday, February 19

Hymn Devotion: Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer

Scripture: Psalm 25:5 - *Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long.*

*1 Guide me ever, great Redeemer,
Pilgrim through this barren land.
I am weak, but you art mighty;
Hold me with your pow'rful hand.
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,
Feed me now and evermore,
Feed me now and evermore.*

*2 Open now the crystal fountain
Where the healing waters flow;
Let the fire and cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through.
Strong deliv'rer, strong deliv'rer,
Shield me with your mighty arm,
Shield me with your mighty arm.*

*3 When I tread the verge of Jordan,
Bid my anxious fears subside;
Death of death and hell's destruction,
Land me safe on Canaan's side.
Songs and praises, songs and praises,
I will raise forevermore,
I will raise forevermore.*

History: The original text of this hymn was written in Welsh by William Williams, a circuit-riding preacher, in 1745, and given the original title, "A prayer for strength to go through the wilderness of the world." It has since been translated in seventy-five languages. It was translated into English by Peter Williams (no relation) in 1771. Most modern hymnals now use the first verse of Peter's translation, and the last two from William's own translation into English.

William often used the metaphor of "pilgrimage" in his hymn texts, and this is no exception. The general theme of the song is an allusion to the Israelites' journey through the desert to reach the Promised Land. There are a few textual differences between versions. The editors of the Psalter Hymnal changed the name of God in the first line from "Jehovah" to "Redeemer," to reflect the change in modern scholarship that does not accept "Jehovah" as a credible name for God, since it stems from a mistaken medieval interpretation of the Hebrew names "YHWH" and "Adonai." Another difference is found in the last two lines of each verse, where different

words are used to construe the same sentiment. For example, our hymnal reads, "Feed me now and evermore," while most others read, "Feed me till I want no more." (Laura de Jong)

Devotion: The notion of "the unknown" is not an idea we're overly fond of. Part of us would love to know how the future plays out - what to prepare for, what to let go because it won't be successful anyway. Not knowing what the future holds brings a certain uneasiness to our lives. And yet, in a strange kind of way, there is comfort in the fact as well. Whatever happens to us or our loved ones is out of our hands; we simply couldn't know anything about it if we tried. There is a common phrase: "Let go and let God." In this hymn by William Williams, we are given the words to express our prayer that God would guide us as we walk through a life of unknowns. Let us pray that we are always ready to go with God wherever He takes us, songs of praises ever on our lips.

Prayer: Great Redeemer. As we walk through life, we thank you that you are always with us. You go before us to guide us, next to us to support us, and behind us pick us up when we fall. Help us to follow your ways and sing your praises, knowing that you provide for our every need and will be with us every step we take not only in this earthly life, but for eternity. AMEN

Source: www.hymnary.org

Saving Grace Daily Devotion

Saturday, February 20

Prepare for Worship

Psalm 25:4

**⁴ Make me to know your ways, O Lord;
teach me your paths.**

All of our scripture passages for this weekend have had something to do with Baptism. As we come to Psalm 25, we might think to ourselves that we've found the one that doesn't match with the rest! Baptism has everything to do with what God does, but this psalm is focused on learning to walk with the Lord and learning to act in righteousness. But, if we read more closely, we hear that this praying believer is not self-absorbed with how holy he or she is. Instead, they pray, "Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of your goodness, O Lord!" (Psalm 25:7). Now we can understand how this Psalm is a great fit with these other passages about Baptism. We could pray verse 7 with these words, "Lord, Remember me according to my Baptism!" Now, this prayer reminds us that Baptism is not the end of the story. God doesn't just save us to leave us here to go through hell on earth (because of our sin or another's) until he takes us to heaven after our last breath! Instead, "good and upright is the Lord; therefore, he instructs sinners in the way," (Ps. 25:8). The person who prays this psalm is aware of the mess they make of things apart from the Lord's help. So, they ask the Lord for his guidance in everything that they do.

Prayer: Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, we are so thankful that you have claimed us as your own through Baptism. Now, we are convinced that you know best for our lives in all things. So, we ask that you would lead us and prepare us for worship tomorrow and every day after that into eternity. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen

Saving Grace Daily Devotion

Sunday, February 21

Praise

1 Peter 3:18a

¹⁸ For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God.

If a homeless person walked into the Whitehouse, they might get the question, "What do you think you're doing here?" Others might look at the person in old, torn clothes and think to themselves, "Well, they're out of their mind, they have no idea of where they are or what's going on." Whether a visitor, a security guard, or a legislature, they would recognize the homeless person and think that they don't belong there in the Whitehouse. Well, if we entered God's throne room in heaven, we'd look more out of place than a homeless person at the Whitehouse. Unless, of course, we didn't just stumble into heaven, but were brought there by someone with power and authority to send out the invitation. This is exactly what we see in this passage from 1 Peter. We were brought to God through Christ and his suffering for our sake. Apart from Christ we have no business being in God's presence! But praise God, that he has brought us near through Jesus Christ, not only so that we make it into the presence of God, but that when we arrive, we are welcomed and cherished as God's children.

Prayer: Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, we are thankful that you have brought us into your presence. We do not need to be afraid or ashamed and there is no room for pride concerning our position before you. You have made it so that we can have peace in your presence. Help us to recognize your peace this morning, through worship, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen