

## **Saving Grace Daily Devotion**

Monday, February 1

*Listen*

**Isaiah 40:28**

**<sup>28</sup> Have you not known? Have you not heard?**

**The Lord is the everlasting God,  
the Creator of the ends of the earth.**

**He does not faint or grow weary;  
his understanding is unsearchable.**

This verse is to remind those who are hurting just how powerful our God is. It comes after a long list of praises that fill us with wonder as we think about our God. He is one who can measure all the water of the earth in his hand (Isaiah 40:12). Yet, we'd have our two hands full with just a cup of water. No one has ever taught him anything as if he lacked understanding (Is. 40:14). Yet, the simplest of tasks must be taught to us. This is the God who stands above everything that ever was and will be, "who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers...who brings princes to nothing, and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness," (Is. 40:22-23). So, when the people cry out and say, "God has lost track of me!" (Is. 40:27 MSG) as if God didn't care what happened to them, God responds. And he says, "Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable." We cannot comprehend it, but God is controlling all history so that justice is accomplished. Our suffering is never hidden from him and he is taking it all into account. In moments of tragedy, God has not lost track of us. Instead, he gives us a promise that "they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength," (Is. 40:31).

Prayer: Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, sometimes we feel as though you have lost track of us. But, you are God over all things, creator of heaven and earth. Your mind is unsearchable and your thoughts towards us can't be counted. Encourage us in our patience for you while we wait in this broken world we pray, in Jesus' name, Amen

## Saving Grace Daily Devotion

Tuesday, February 2

*Pray*

**Mark 1:35**

**<sup>35</sup> In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed.**

Jesus had a habit of praying. His disciples were very aware of this. At one point they ask, “Lord, teach us to pray,” (Luke 11:1). The prayer that Jesus teaches is none other than The Lord’s Prayer that we pray and we teach our children to pray. What better prayer partner to have than Jesus himself? And here in Mark, we catch a glimpse of Jesus praying to his father. Often tragedy will drive us to our knees in prayer, but here at the beginning of Mark’s gospel, Jesus has just experienced a great success. Simon Peter’s mother-in-law was sick and Jesus healed her. Word got out and the whole town arrived at this mother-in-law’s doorstep. (Imagine the lines that would form in Eau Claire if Jesus was found off of main street healing people!) He ended up healing many and he even cast out demons from people who were being oppressed. What an amazing impact! Why not stay a little while and soak in the praise and good will that would naturally come from such miraculous work? Instead, he gets up early to pray to his Father—even when times were good—so that he might be directed to do the Father’s will. His disciples come out searching for him because, “everyone is looking for him,” (Mark 1:37). In Jesus’ response, we hear what came through clearly in his prayer with the Father, “Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out,” (Mk. 1:37). Jesus teaches us to pray for direction from the Father, even when things are going well.

Prayer: Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, in our suffering and in our celebration, you are God, creator of heaven and earth. You comfort us in our suffering, but even in our celebration you wish to guide us in wisdom and love. Help us to remember you as you guide us throughout all of life, in Jesus’ name, Amen

## Saving Grace Daily Devotion

Wednesday, February 3

Psalm 27:14

Wait on the Lord; Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart;

Wait, I say, on the Lord!

Yesterday was Groundhog Day. A day in which a little woodland creature predicts a longer winter or an early spring. Punxsutawney Phil predicted 6 more weeks of winter, while his Wisconsin counterpart, Sun Prairie Jimmy said early spring. Personally, I like Jimmy's prediction. Don't get me wrong, I love snow, but this year I'm just not feeling winter and would like to see spring come early. And really, spring is coming no matter what; I may have to wait a bit longer than I'd like.

While I may be a bit impatient to wait for spring, I wait nonetheless.

Today's Bible verse reminds us to trust in the Lord while we're waiting for Him. We wait for Him to speak to us, guide us, and one day return to us.

How do you wait for the Lord and trust in Him while waiting for Him to speak to you or guide you? Take a moment to ask God to help you wait for him, to 'be of good courage' and trust that His plans are exactly what you need and they will strengthen you and shape you into exactly who He wants you to be.

## Saving Grace Daily Devotion

Thursday, February 4

*Study*

### 1 Corinthians 9:22b

**I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some.**

Last week we had a reading from the eighth chapter of 1 Corinthians. They had issues in their congregation about eating meat that was previously sacrificed to idols. Paul gave them clear direction to make decisions for the sake of others. In other words, make loving decisions for the sake of your neighbor. In the following chapter, Paul describes how he has been living out his own advice. He is not just talking the talk, but he is walking the walk.

He tells the Corinthians that he has freedom and rights as an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. He lists a couple of things but quickly makes an argument about making his livelihood from being a minister of the gospel. He tells them that God has made it so that the one who is a worker in the field is allowed to reap a harvest from the crop. It would be totally appropriate if the Corinthian church were to pay him for the ministry, he continued to provide to them. But he has “made no use of any of these rights...all for the sake of the gospel,” (1 Corinthians 9:15, 23). He decided to work a different job to make a living and to minister to them without pay as a way to make a loving decision for the sake of others. He actually neglected something provided by the gospel (his rights to a paycheck) in order to reach these Corinthians.

He lets them know that he has been making decisions like this everywhere that he has been ministering, “for though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them,” (1 Cor. 9:19). Paul clearly sees how the Gospel changes our lives. Without the good news we are stuck thinking of ourselves *all the time*. We only consider my wants, my needs, my desires. We make decisions based on what we know and have learned without thinking about those who have not had the privilege of study or the wisdom of experience. But, the Gospel places us in a different school. It’s the school where we spend our lives learning to act for the sake of others. It’s the school where we learn to love our neighbors as ourselves. This is true freedom.

Prayer: Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, you acted for our sake by sending your Son to die for us. Lord, would you guide us so that we don’t misuse our gospel freedom to harass or put down our neighbor. Instead, help us to learn how to walk a day in our neighbor’s shoes so that we might all grow in cherishing the Gospel in Jesus’ name we pray, Amen

## Saving Grace Daily Devotion

Friday, February 5

**Hymn Devotion:** On Eagle's Wings by. Michael Joncas

**Scriptures:** Psalm 91 and Isaiah 40:21-31

**History:** "On Eagle's Wings" is a devotional Hymn composed by Michael Joncas. Its words are based on Psalm 91, Book of Exodus 19, and Gospel of Matthew 13. Joncas wrote the piece in 1976, after he and his friend, Douglas Hall, returned from a meal to learn that Hall's father had died of a heart attack. It was recorded in 1979, with Douglas Hall as producer, published by North American Liturgy Resources and later purchased by New Dawn Music, a subsidiary of Oregon Catholic Press. It has become popular as a contemplative hymn at Catholic masses as well as at Protestant services of worship and is now sung during services of many Christian denominations. In addition, this hymn has been played at the funeral of opera singer Luciano Pavarotti. And it was also used as an anthem for healing after the Oklahoma City bombings in 1995.

**Devotion:** How often have you heard this song and where have you heard it? I know in all my years as a musician, I have sung and/or played this beautiful piece for many funeral services. And yet, this song based on Psalm 91, can be related to so many things in our everyday life. As we face trials and tribulations, the psalmist reminds us that God is our refuge and our strength. In verse 1 he states: *"Whoever rests in the shadow of the Most High God will be kept safe by the Mighty One."* His shadow will shelter us from the heat of any personal struggles and difficulties when we choose to walk with Him by our side. If you continue to read verses 2-13, you will see that the Psalmist describes all the blessings we receive from God if we faithfully follow Him. Then, it concludes in verses 14-16 with God's promises of why we should not fear: *"The Lord says, 'I will save the one who loves me. I will keep him safe, because he trusts in me. He will call out to me, and I will answer him. I will be with him in times of trouble. I will save him and honor him. I will give him a long and full life. I will save him.'"* God's promises are also evident in the Old Testament reading for this week: *"But those who trust in the Lord will receive new strength. They will fly as high as eagles. They will run and not get tired. They will walk and not grow weak."* (Isaiah 40:31) What a comfort to know that in all our circumstances, we, as believers and followers of the Lord, can find strength in Him if we simply place our trust in Him.

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father. As it is written in the Holy Word, I know that You are the great provider for all my needs. I praise You for the unending shelter, love, and care You give each and every one of Your believers. Help me to be a faithful steward of You. Help me to turn to You in my times of troubles and rest in Your safety. In so doing, I know you will 'raise me up on eagle's wings, bear me on the breath of dawn, make me to shine like the sun, and hold me in the palm of Your hand.' Thank you for providing me with Your unending comfort. In Your loving name we pray. AMEN

Sources: Wikipedia.com

crosswalk.com; Debbie McDaniel; June 14, 2017

## **Saving Grace Daily Devotion**

Saturday, February 6

*Prepare for Worship*

### **Psalm 147:10-11**

<sup>10</sup> **His delight is not in the strength of the horse,  
nor his pleasure in the speed of a runner;**  
<sup>11</sup> **but the LORD takes pleasure in those who fear him,  
in those who hope in his steadfast love.**

A little boy was running a race and he was in first place. But instead of running toward the finish line, he ran to his mom a hug. He finished in fourth place, but he won her heart. Psalm 147 talks about what God has done. God is gracious, He builds up Jerusalem, gathers the outcasts, heals the brokenhearted, binds up their wounds, determines the number of stars and their names, His power is beyond measure. He provides for everyone's needs. The Lord is to be praised, "for He is gracious, and a song of praise is fitting." (Psalm 147:1)

It isn't about one's strength or your position in life, because all of that has been given to you from the Lord. "The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in His steadfast love." (Psalm 147:11) We are called His children that we might know that it isn't by their own strength or might that we succeed, but our delight is in knowing a holy and awesome reverence of the Lord. We are "the sheep of His pasture." (Psalm 100:3) We give Him praise, for we are fearfully and wonderfully made. (Psalm 139:14) It isn't about what place we finish or how strong we are, it's about knowing and loving God who is perfect in every way and loves us beyond understanding. He wants us to run into His arms and know His love for us. He loves you more than you will ever comprehend.

***Almighty God, may I give You glory, honor and praise every day for all that You have done for me. Open my eyes to see and ears to hear all that You are doing around me today, that I may give you thanks and praise for all You are doing. Amen***

## Saving Grace Daily Devotion

Sunday, February 7

*Praise*

### **Mark 1:38**

**<sup>38</sup> He answered, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do."**

Ivan endured all the horrors of a Soviet prison camp. One day he is praying with his eyes closed when a fellow prisoner noticed him and said with ridicule, "Prayers won't help you get out of here any faster." Opening his eyes, Ivan answered, "I do not pray to get out of prison but to do the will of God." (Our Daily Bread, December 29, 1993)

Jesus left the synagogue and healed Simon His disciple's mother-in-law, by that evening the whole city was gathered around the door. He cured many who were sick cast out many demons and in the dark stillness of the morning to a deserted place to pray and commune with God His Father. He must have yearned for just a little time with God. Knowing that He couldn't fellowship with God as He did before He came to this earth. He prayed to do the Father's will.

When the disciples came searching for Him. Jesus doesn't ask for more time, He said, "***Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do.***" (Mark 1:38) We are to do the same. To trust in Him to guide us every day that we may do the will of the Father.

***Almighty God, thank you for sending Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord that through faith in Him we may have eternal life. Teach us not to lose our way in what others think or do, but to be about Your will today. Amen***