

Saving Grace Daily Devotion

Monday, February 8

Listen

2 Corinthians 4:6

⁶For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

In Paul's second letter to the church in Corinth, he is concerned with bringing comfort and describing the nature of his ministry. He begins this letter praising God, "the Father of mercies and God of all comfort," (2 Corinthians 1:3). And he goes on to say that his ministry is "the ministry of the Spirit," "by the mercy of God," (2 Cor. 3:8; 4:1). And so, in the same way that God created the world in the beginning, "Let there be light," he creates faith through the ministry of the gospel. "This little light of mine" has been placed in us by God himself as he showed us his sacrificial love in Jesus Christ. Consider this, which lets out more light? A lamp shade that is broken and torn or a lamp shade that is in perfect condition? Our lives are like a lamp shade that is broken and torn in certain places. But it is through that brokenness that the light of Christ might shine brightest.

Consider these things as you think about this verse from 2 Corinthians:

Whose power is it that has saved you?

Is there an area of brokenness in your life that God might like to shine some light through?

Can you think of a time when God has worked through weakness to achieve his purposes?

Saving Grace Daily Devotion

Tuesday, February 9

Pray

2 Kings 2:9

⁹When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, “Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you.” Elisha said, “Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit.”

Elisha was to be Elijah’s successor as a prophet in Israel. The word of the Lord came to Elijah while Ahab was king and his wife, queen Jezebel, was stirring up all kinds of mischief and idol worship. God commanded Elijah to pass the prophetic mantle onto Elisha. We find our verse right before Elijah is taken to be with the Lord. God did the miraculous through Elijah. He prophesied that rain would cease and it didn’t rain until he prayed three and half years later. God worked a miracle through him by providing jug of oil and a jar of grain to a widow that would never run out. Elijah even raised this widow’s son from the dead (1 Kings 17). God worked the miraculous through Elijah and Elisha desired to have a ministry of similar power among the people of Israel. Elijah replies, “You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it shall be so for you, but if you do not see me, it shall not be so,” (2 Kings 2:10). Then, Elisha saw Elijah surrounded by chariots of fire and horses that created a whirlwind that took Elijah up to heaven. Elisha saw Elijah being taken from him. Count the miraculous in the story of Elisha if you’d like and it will be clear that a double portion of Elijah’s spirit had been given to Elisha by the power of God.

Consider what God has been teaching you as you pray:

The transformative light of the Gospel comes to us by the power of God.

God invites us to come to him in prayer for everything we need and desire.

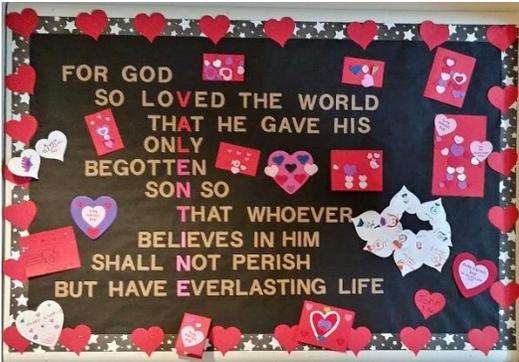
The things that are passed on and received from one generation to another are very important.

Feel free to end your prayer in this way: *Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, you upheld Elijah by your strong spirit. He was a faithful prophet, but he grew tired and longed for the comforts of heaven. Would you encourage us to press on until the time comes for us to pass on the things that have become so important to us. Then, provide a generation to take up the work that still needs to be done, in Jesus’ name, Amen*

Saving Grace Daily Devotion

Wednesday, February 10

John 3:16



Activity 1: Write the verse as shown in the picture. Color the letters for "VALENTINE" a different color.

Activity 2: Share this verse with someone you love. Happy Valentine's Day!

Saving Grace Daily Devotion

Thursday, February 11

Study

Mark 9:9

⁹ As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

Why would Jesus want his disciples to keep his identity as the Son of God a secret? Elsewhere, doesn't he tell us to go make disciples of folks in town, the town over, and to the ends of the earth? (Acts 1:8). Yet, this isn't the first time Jesus tells people to keep quiet about some miracle that has taken place. When he healed a man of leprosy, "Jesus sternly charged him, 'See that you say nothing to anyone,'" (Mark 1:43-44). When Jesus brings Jairus' daughter back to life, "he strictly charged them that no one should know this," (Mk. 5:43). He also stopped demons from sharing the truth of his identity, "he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him," (Mk. 1:34). And when Peter finally found the words to describe who Jesus was as "the Christ," "he strictly charged them to tell no one about it," (Mk. 8:29-30).

So, when we see Jesus transfigured on the mountain top, revealing his heavenly glory, we are less surprised that "he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen," (Mk. 9:9). We understand that Jesus wanted to keep his identity a secret during his ministry on earth, but isn't this counterproductive? "How are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?" (Romans 10:14). Well, we actually see Jesus say something unique that he has not said before when charging others to be silent in the gospel of Mark. He finally puts a cap on how long the secret must be kept! He tells them to not speak a word about the miracle they experienced on the mountain, "until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead," (Mk. 9:9). This phrase helps us understand every charge of silence that came before it.

Jesus wanted to live out what it meant to be the Messiah, the Son of God, before people went telling everybody and their brother that Jesus was the Christ. Just because you have a mug with a bible verse on it doesn't mean whatever you drink out of it is holy. Just because people could use the right words to talk about Jesus didn't mean those words were full of Christ's intentions to be crucified and raised on the third day. He wanted people using the right mug, filled with living water. He wanted people using the right words, filled with eternal life and hope in his name. When people could hear that Christ was crucified and raised from the dead for their sake, then they could understand what it meant for Jesus to be the Christ. It's not only what we say that matters, but what we mean matters all the more.

Prayer: Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, thank you for the care that you have put into sharing the good news of the Gospel. You do not come to us so that you can confuse us. You come to us so that you can teach us, challenge us, correct us, and comfort us. We thank you for revealing your Son to us as our Messiah. Remind us of the blessings we have in him, in Jesus' name we pray, Amen

Saving Grace Daily Devotion

Friday, February 12

Hymn: How Good, Lord, to Be Here!

Scripture: Mark 9:2-9 - The Transfiguration

Hymn History: Our hymn of the day for this coming Sunday, *How Good, Lord, to Be Here!* was written in 1890 by Joseph Armitage Robinson (1858-1933) Robinson was educated at Liverpool College and Christ's College, Cambridge. He served as Dean of Westminster Abbey (1902-1911) and Wells Cathedral (1911-1933). He was both a priest in the Church of England and a scholar, publishing many works. However, his writings were not closely associated with hymnology, the one exception to this was his hymn, "*Tis Good Lord, to Be Here!*". This hymn was written to be a song for the Transfiguration. The hymn was set to the tune, "Potsdam", written by J.S. Bach. The Lutheran Book of Worship hymnal has "modernized" the original lyrics as follows:

1. *How good, Lord, to be here! Your glory fills the night;
Your face and garments, like the sun, shine with unborrowed light.*

2. *How good, Lord, to be here! Where Moses and Elijah stand,
Your messengers of old. Your beauty to behold!*

3. *Fulfiller of the past and hope of things to be,
We hail Your body glorified and our redemption see.*

4. *Before we taste of death. We see Your kingdom come.
We long to hold the vision bright and make this hill our home.*

5. *How good, Lord, to be here! Yet we may not remain;
But since You bid us leave the mount, come with us to the plain.*

Devotion: "How, good, Lord to be here!" are truly words that stand out when we read the Transfiguration gospel (Mark 9:2-9). Imagine being Peter, James or John being on that mountain when ***"His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus.*** (vs 3-4) What would be our reaction if we had been there? What would we say? In verses 5 and 6, it says Peter did not know what to say: ***Peter said to Jesus, 'Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.'*** (He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.) (vs 5-6) ***Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!" (v.7)*** Even though Peter's words may seem confusing and he truly did not know what to say, he was right - "It is good for us to be here. As each verse of the hymn states, there is so much to behold through this Transfiguration. We are promised redemption through Jesus Christ, and we know that He will walk with us throughout our earthly lives and into eternity. It is TRULY good for us to be with the Lord here and everywhere! He will continue to shine on us in all His glory as we follow Him.

Prayer: Heavenly Father. We praise you for your glory revealed in the Transfiguration, and we thank you for the promise of eternal life through Your Son, Jesus Christ. We ask that You walk with us in our everyday life and help our faith in You to shine brightly so that people see Your love and grace in all its beauty. In Your name we pray. AMEN.

Saving Grace Daily Devotion

Saturday, February 13

Prepare for Worship

Mark 9:2

"Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them,"

I looked under illustrations of the Kingdom of God. The website said, "No illustrations yet" Yet, Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 18:3) "The Kingdom of heaven is like a man who casts seed upon the soil" (and it grows and is harvested) (Mark 4:26-29) The Kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, (Matt. 13:31-43) like a treasure hidden in a field, like a pearl of great value (Matt. 13:44-46) and so much more. Jesus had no problem explaining what the Kingdom of heaven was like. It grows because God provides for it. It so precious we would give everything to have it. It calls all people to serve the Master at different times in their lives. (Matthew 20:1-16) Jesus explains what the Kingdom of heaven is, yet it still illudes us. It is just beyond our grasp, our comprehension, it's a matter of faith.

When Moses came down from Mount Sinai ***"the skin of his face was shining and they were afraid to come near him."*** (Exodus 34:30) He had the residual effects of being in the presence of God. When Jesus went up the mountain with Peter, James and John, ***"He was transfigured before them."*** (Mark 9:2) They saw Jesus in His glorified state, as He will be when He comes again. Moses (representing the Law) and Elijah (representing the prophets) were talking to Him (Jesus the fulfillment of both the Law and the prophets. Worship is an opportunity to come into the very presence of God and give Him honor, praise and worship. He calls us to pause everything in our lives and center our lives on God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It's there we find a perfect peace that passes understanding. It's there everything in the world comes into perspective.

Almighty God, help me to take a moment every day to worship You wherever I am. It isn't about a place, it's about being called into Your presence to give you praise. Open my heart to see with the eyes of faith that you walk with me every day. Amen

Saving Grace Daily Devotion

Sunday, February 14

Praise

Psalm 50:3

“³ Our God comes and does not keep silence,
before him is a devouring fire,
and a mighty tempest all around him.”

A boy wanted some crackers. He said to his mama, “Can I have some Easter Crackers?” She didn’t understand. He said again, “Can I have some Easter Crackers?” Oh, Oyster Crackers. Yes! He still calls them Easter Crackers every time he wants crackers. It makes her think of how God has provided for us every day. God is always faithful. He hears our prayers and comes. He does not keep silent. Psalm 50:3 says, “before him is a devouring fire, and a mighty tempest all around him.” God is holy and still listens to our prayers as we come before Him.

Realize today, when you pray, you address the one who holds all things in His hands, provides for all of our needs, although before Him is a devouring fire and a mighty tempest all around Him, He love you more than you will ever imagine.

Almighty God teach me to come to you and humbly offer my praise, worship, and prayers before you, for You love me. Amen