



Weekly Devotionals for February 26-March 3

Monday, February 26 Read Psalm 22:23-31

The theologian Karl Barth talked about “cheap grace” wherein we become so used to God’s love and grace that we simply expect it and fail to be amazed, like the psalmist, at God’s incredible generosity. The end result is a stagnant, self-centered and empty religion that merely goes through the motions.

Tuesday, February 27 Read Genesis 17:1-7;15-16

Abram’s uniqueness is found in God’s call on his life, not from anything he does or does not do. Yet he does do one thing: he *responds* to God, despite his age and uncertainty. As the old saw goes, “ God is not looking so much for ability as availability.” Prayerfully reflect on this thought- how available are you, honestly- to God’s call to go and be about His Kingdom purposes? What are those purposes as you see them before you today?

Wednesday, February 28 Read Romans 4:13-25

Our walk of faith is not built on what we do for God, but rather how we trust God to care for us in all situations as we seek to respond to His call. Abraham’s “righteousness” came from steadfastly staying on the right path and direction because that’s where God will be and where God is going. Does your path exhibit real trust and how? If not, what would it take to grow in trusting faith?

Thursday, February 29 Read Mark 8:31-38

How does the challenge Jesus gives his disciples in v.34 relate to the rebuke he gives Peter in v.33? In your life, what do you stress and worry about and what takes the lion’s share of your energy and effort? In what ways might Peter’s rebuke apply to you? What “things of this world” might you need to give up if you were to grow in your discipleship? Write these down and discuss them with God in prayer today.

Friday, March 1 Read Philippians 3:17-4:1

According to this passage, what is the difference between true disciples of Jesus and those who are either in opposition or just going through the motions? What does it mean that “their god is their belly (3:19)” and what does that look like in modern society? How can we as a church hold strongly against these tendencies?

Saturday, March 2 Read Psalm 121

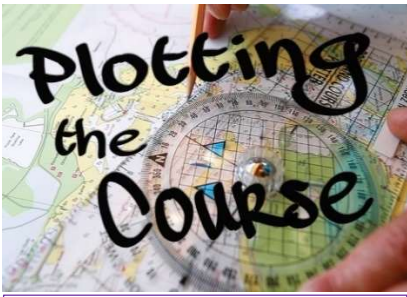
From this psalm, what can you learn about God? What can you learn about yourself? How personal are the words of this psalm to you and how applicable is its message for your life? If it is not, why do you think that’s so? How does this psalm define your own relationship with God?

Sermon Notes

“Knowing the Currents”

February 25, 2024 Mark 8:31-38

- 1. The biggest obstacles to true discipleship are:**
 - A. Our desire to make following Jesus compatible with serving ourselves.
 - B. A fear of losing control and the things we truly trust in.
- 2. Christ helps us navigate the world’s currents when we:**
 - A. Listen: I will engage in serious prayer and Bible study with other disciples.
 - B. Trust: I will look for areas where I’m needed that are out of my comfort zone.
 - C. Sacrifice: Three things I will stop doing/give up in order to grow in my discipleship-



Week #2: "Knowing the Currents" Small Group Discussion Guide

Part I. Taking in Our Surroundings

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Pray Fast Give

If you are currently practicing some or all of the Lenten disciplines of prayer, fasting and giving, use this space to reflect on what you are discovering on this journey.

Praying: What is foremost in your prayers this week and why? How (be specific) are you also listening to God?

Fasting: How is your fasting/sacrifice helping you pay better attention to God and His way?

Giving: What, specifically, will you give of yourself this week that might take you out of your comfort zone?

1. Read Mark 8:31-38 and discuss the following:

- How does the challenge Jesus gives his disciples in v.34 relate to the rebuke he gives Peter in v.33? In your life, what do you stress and worry about and what takes the lion's share of your energy and effort?
- In what ways might Peter's rebuke apply to you? What "things of this world" might you need to give up if you were to grow in your discipleship?

2. Look at Sermon note #1 and discuss the following with your group:

- What might be some of the ways we try to make Jesus compatible with our own plans and goals? Be as specific as possible. (Hint: Whenever we say/think "Jesus couldn't possibly want or expect me to...," we might be making Peter's mistake!)
- Why was Peter so shocked at Jesus' pronouncement? How might that be related to our human need to control and our ultimate trust in ourselves more than in God? How do we counter this lack of faith?

Part II: Plotting Our Course

1. Look at Sermon note #2 and discuss the following:

- Read Psalm 22:23-31. What helps you to be more aware of how God is working in and blessing your life? What role does Bible study, worship and Christian fellowship play in this awareness?
- Read Romans 4:13-25. How does Paul define righteousness here and how is that different from the way we often understand that term? How is trust profoundly more than a simple feeling and why is "moving out of our comfort zone" such an integral part of faith? How is such a move becoming a reality in your own life?
- Read Philippians 3:17-4:1 According to this passage, what is the difference between true disciples of Jesus and those who are either in opposition or just going through the motions? What does it mean that "their god is their belly (3:19)" and what does that look like in modern society? How can we as a church hold strongly against these tendencies?