



Devotions and Notes for the week of September 21-26

Monday, September 21 Read Psalm 23

This is probably one of the most familiar passages of scripture, but try reading it in an unfamiliar version (go to www.biblegateway.com for a wide range of translations). Look at v.4. Where does the psalmist find joy and confidence? Why? _____

What does this psalm say to you personally? _____

Tuesday September 22 Read Joshua 24:5-28

The warning for the Israelites (and us!) is that it is easy to forget God when we feel safe and are in the midst of abundance. How can we better remember our need for God and His priorities in times of security and avoid the warning of v.20? _____

What "other gods" even now tempt you away from discipleship? _____

Discuss this with God in prayer today.

Wednesday, September 23 Read Luke 10:1-12

Note two important points in this story: Jesus does not send his disciples out alone and even then, not everyone accepts their message or is well disposed towards them. Who are your teammates in discipleship and how do you encourage and strengthen each other? _____

When things don't work, how do you typically respond? Why? _____

Reflect on and pray over what Jesus has called you to in His service today.

Thursday, September 24 Read 2 Corinthians 6:1-10

How does Paul suggest we respond to opposition, criticism and negativity? Why? _____

Certainly such gracious responses are not easy nor particularly natural to us so how can we do it? _____

Make a list of the challenges you face in a growing

Lesson #2: September 20, 2020

"Lions and Tigers and Bears..."

Psalm 23 (Contemporary English Version)

1. **Though we don't like it, we need the dark valleys in our lives!**

2. **The valley teaches us...**

...to recognize our need.

...to lean on and appreciate others.

...how much *we* are needed.

...that this world is not all there is!

*Listen to this sermon at
www.cordelefirst.com/sermons*

discipleship and pray over each item. Keep your eyes open for how God responds to your prayer.

Friday, September 25 Read Acts 26:1-29

This is a long passage but read it through and try to envision the scene of Paul's defense in front of the Jewish king and the Roman governor. From his testimony, what role have challenges and opposition played in Paul's story of faith? _____

What role have his own mistakes and failings played? _____

If it was demanded of you, what would your testimony be? _____

Saturday, September 26 Read 2 Timothy 4:1-8

We are all called to be ministers and evangelists- witness to God I our lives. Read Paul's orders to his young protégé as if it were your own commission. What challenges do you face and how, specifically, might you be called to respond? _____

Reflect on what Paul means by being "poured out as a libation (literally, a sacrificial offering)." How is that to be a direction for all of us? _____

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

If you use these devotions as a basis for a small group study, here are some suggested guidelines for framing your study and your discussion

Part 1: Discovering our wildernesses

1. Read the passage from Joshua from Tuesday and begin your group time by sharing the questions from Tuesday's reading.

Part 2: Learning from the dark valleys

1. Read Psalm 23. If members have varying translations, share them and note where each is different and how that might affect your understanding of this familiar scripture.
2. Look at sermon note #2 on the front of this page. With your group discuss each of the four lessons the dark valley's can teach us. Give examples of how these lessons are (or have been) taught. Why were the valleys necessary to learning these lessons?

Part 3: Heading into the wilderness

1. Read Luke 10:1-12 and discuss the questions from Wednesday's devotion.
2. How can the members of your group be more supportive of one another and help hold each other more accountable to a growing sense of discipleship?
3. Close by sharing prayer concerns.