

DAILY DEVOTION

&

PRAYER JOURNAL



This booklet of devotion, prayer and scripture has been put together for you by the Elders at First Christian. Our hope is that by using it each day it brings you comfort as you draw closer to GOD. We are blessed to have a GOD that loves us, cares for us, watches over us and provides for our every need.

Take each day one step at a time, give thanks and rejoice.

The Elders are here for you. Please call us if there are needs you have that we can help with. Our names, Leonard, Brian and phone numbers are listed below.

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**GOD DOESN'T GIVE US
WHAT WE CAN HANDLE,
GOD HELPS US HANDLE
WHAT WE ARE GIVEN.**



DAY 1

Read Joshua 7: 1-13

Most of us have heard of the battle of Jericho, but do you know what happened after that? Joshua attempted to take the city of Ai, and 36 Israelites died in battle before their army retreated in fear. Why, Joshua wondered, would the Lord do this to them (Josh. 7:7-9)?

He was unaware of two problems. First, an Israelite disobeyed when he took forbidden plunder after Jericho fell. Second, God did not initiate the battle; Joshua had been persuaded by his own advisors. Because Joshua failed to seek heavenly counsel, he didn't know about the Israelite's crime until it was too late. After the wrongdoer was put to death, Joshua waited for God's cue to take Ai. Then, and only then, was the Hebrew army successful (Josh. 8:1-25).

The mistake that Joshua made was one that we make also—we try to handle a situation in our own strength? It's easier than we think when sin blurs our thinking and hinders our communication with GOD. Look at your heart, confess any sin, ask God to lead, and then wait for Him. Remember, His guidance is always better than our own.

DAY 2

“Let us not become tired of doing good. At the right time we will gather a crop if we don’t give up.”
Galatians 6:9

A lot can seem impossible these days. The simplest of tasks that we used to take for granted seem impossible. Going to the grocery store. Going to the barber/hair salon. Going to the park to play a pick-up game of basketball. Going to a professional baseball game. Going to school. Going to church. But this is where God comes in. God wants us to continue to do good. He wants us to continue to spread the Good News. He wants us to trust Him through this impossible time. If we continue to do good God will bless us. Don’t give up! Don’t lose hope! Spread the love for He is with us.



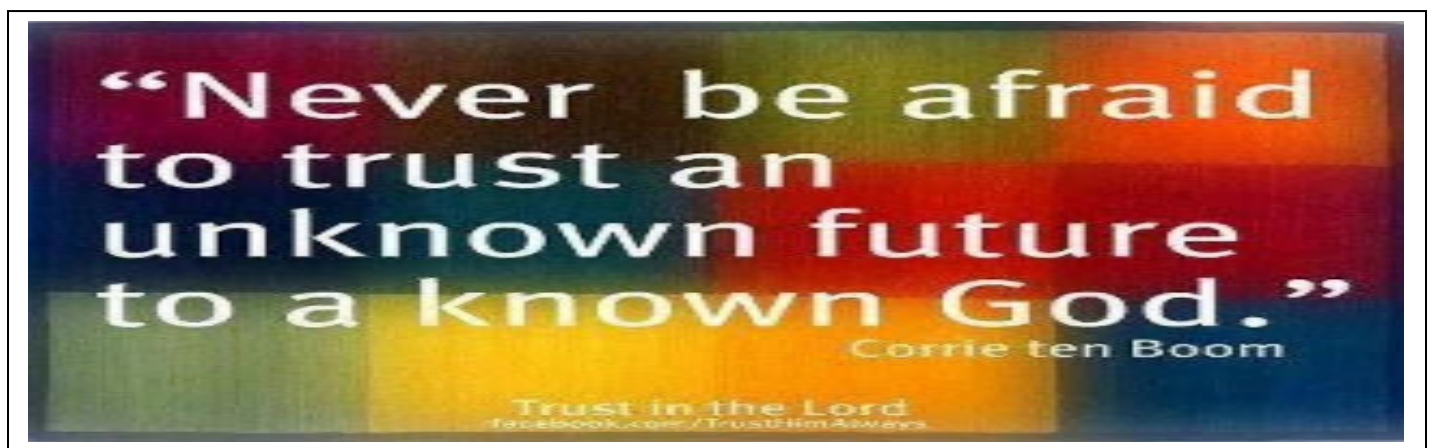
AND NOW THESE THREE REMAIN:
FAITH, HOPE & LOVE

DAY 3

2 Corinthians 9:8

And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need, and plenty left over to share with others.

We would not be responsible if we did not have some concern about our daily needs. We often have difficulty distinguishing between wants and needs but as we mature, I have found that we tend to be able to make do with much less than we once thought. I believe this is God's way of helping us maintain perspective and realize that he will always take care of us. When we come to this realization, I think it is important to remember the second part of the verse and share with others. I'm sure that if you have ever given to others you know that it is much more gratifying than to receive from others. If you have not shared with others lately, pray that God can help you find a way to do so and trust that he will provide and show you how.



DAY 4

The Cloud Above the Tabernacle

Read Numbers 9: 15-23

In this recount of the Exodus we read of the cloud that lead the Israelites. Can you imagine the frustration? When the cloud moved, you moved, and when the cloud stopped, you stopped. God's presence was in the cloud and the Israelite Nation was secure as long as they remained under the cloud. Where the cloud goes, you go. The cloud goes in a circle, you go in a circle. You make the decision, do you want freedom to go and go where you want, or do you want the security of God's presence? You cannot have both. Jesus said, "If any man serves me, let him follow me: where I am. There shall also be my servant. The servants of Jesus Christ follow him, ministering with him where he is.

DAY 5

Devotion/Testimony

“Be still and trust me.” I heard these words from Christ, our Good Shepherd, about 38 years ago. The instruction does not match scripture exactly, but as I believe it, Christ personalized the words for me and the event in my life that very day, hour, minute and second in which His instruction was needed for me. In reading Isaiah 26:3 (NKJV), it is close. “You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You, because He trusts in You.” God saved me physically that day in white water rafting with neighbors and confirmed with me a relationship in which I had not heard His voice before. Scripture became His living word for me that day and the many years that have followed.

DAY 6

Healing: Part One

Healing a Blind Man

²² ...And some people brought to him a blind man and begged him to touch him. ²³ And he took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village, and when he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, "Do you see anything?" ²⁴ And he looked up and said, "I see people, but they look like trees, walking." ²⁵ Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he opened his eyes, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. ²⁶ And he sent him to his home, saying, "Do not even enter the village." Mark 8:22-26

Why does Jesus tell this man not to go back to the village? Perhaps his home is there. Along with the people who loved enough to beg Jesus to heal him (vs 22). The answer is simple: Jesus is telling this man, and all who have ears to hear, 'You we're blind, and now you see. You had no sight, and now, you see Me. Don't go back to where/what I've led you from.'



DAY 7

Read Job 1: 6-22, Read Job 2: 1-10

Can you Imagine what it felt like to be in Job's shoes. Warriors, fire, and wind wiped out his fortune and killed his children. Then, his body was so covered with boils that he scratched at the inflamed skin with broken pottery. Had Job not believed in the Lord's faithfulness, he probably would have taken his wife's advice to just "curse God and die" (Job 2:9).

Job was being tested, and he didn't know why—nor did he ever find out the reason. Thanks to Scripture, we are able read the conversation between God and Satan, but the Lord didn't share those details with Job. Left in the dark, Job had to decide if his faith in God's goodness was enough to sustain him or would he turn away.

Job decided to trust God in the midst of tragedy (Job 42:2). He could have turned away from the Lord, as his wife suggested. He might have followed his friends' advice and racked his brain for some unconfessed sin. But neither of those actions would have been beneficial to his condition. Instead, Job chose to view everything as part of the divine plan, acknowledging the GODs right to do whatever He wanted for the glory of His name (Job 1:21).

Accepting the good that God sends our way is easy. Our challenge is to receive those things we don't want with a willing attitude and a teachable spirit. Chance is not part of the equation—nothing comes into our life except through the Lord's permission. Everything happens for a reason!

DAY 8

Zareth and I recently watched the animated movie, "The Prince of Egypt". It is a movie depicting God's calling of Moses to lead the Israelites out of slavery. Here he was a 'son' (or so he thought) of the Egyptian ruler with everything he could ever want. No worries, no needs. It was all at His fingertips...(as a friend of mine likes to emphasize)..BUT THEN GOD- wrecked his life entirely. More than most of us will ever experience even when God does go to work on us. The very foundation of what he knew to be reality dissolved as his true heritage was revealed to him and he started the journey God had planned for him.

As I'm sure we all know the story already (check out Exodus...and the rest of the Bible haha), my point is, God wrecking Moses' life was the best thing that ever happened to him. I know leading a newly freed nation and not being able to be closed to others the way we have our whole lives doesn't exactly correlate, but while watching this 'documentary' I couldn't help but think that the idea at the core of their story and ours is very much alike- God's got everything in His virus-free, always freshly washed for 20 second hands. We can't see it. We can't fathom it. But that's the beauty of faith- we don't have to. We just have to trust that the God we love and serve is leading us (His church) to something much better than what we thought we had before. So, when your life gets flipped upside down and doused in rubbing alcohol, I encourage you to lean more on Christ than ever before and keep the faith. I know some of us have been affected by our current affairs more than others, so the experience has been different. But like with every other problem we've had before these last few months, we've got A God who loves and cares very much for us and a church full of brothers and sisters to help us through it.

DAY 9

Read Philippians 1:21

Don't you sometimes wish we could live forever and not have to physically die? I know Heaven is a beautiful place. I know I can't even imagine it, can't even fathom it. I know it's far beyond the blessings I treasure here on earth.

My human heart can't make sense of something sweeter than the smell of a newborn baby. nothing as joyful as time with our children and grandchildren laughing till we cry at the things we see and experience and spending time with the one you love.

I've lost many people I love over the years - my Father who taught me to walk slow and love others and work hard, my Mother who gave me drive, personality and grit, my Grandparents who hugged and spoiled me, taught me respect and family, friends, coworkers, acquaintances and others from all walks of my life. I've also lost people in other ways; people who loved me through and through, who would change into people I didn't recognize, who'd break my heart and leave me feeling empty.

But in every lose, GOD has stepped up, comforted me and filled the void while growing the memories. To live forever here on earth seems like enough sometimes but we know as Christian there is more, so much more awaiting us in Heaven.

Heaven is a place where you don't wait long for anybody, a place where a thousand years feels like a day -. It's coffee, cookies and conversation. It's no more goodbyes. It's people who've fallen made perfect, wrongs made right, hearts made whole. Heaven is a second chance and Heaven is everything we love plus a thousand, million things we can't even begin to understand.

Heaven is seeing God's face with the faces of those you love. It's a place of more than we can imagine. (see 1 Corinthians 2:9)

I'm so glad that we have a Savior who loved us more than enough, a God who loves us more than enough to see past what we can imagine and prepared a place for us where we can live forever.

DAY 10

Two Kinds of Time That We Experience

The New Testament was written in Greek and uses words specific to that day and time. Words have a unique way of shaping our thinking and the words for “time” are helpful to understand. In the backdrop of the Greek language stands Greek mythology. In that culture there were two gods associated with the two different kinds of time, which roughly correspond to the Greek words “chronos” and “kairos.”

“Chronos” corresponds to regular cycles, and “kairos” corresponds to progressive flows.

Chronos is clock and calendar time, measurable and predictable, recurring in known cycles. Kairos is experienced time, which is nonrecurring and not as predictable, but it flows.

Kairos is quality time, such as when we talk about having a good time together, finding the right time to say something sensitive, or looking for the right time to make an investment.

In some Greco-Roman mosaics, the god Chronos is depicted as a man turning a zodiac. In early works, he is the personification of time emerging from primordial chaos. In more modern times, he has become Father Time, the old, wise-looking man with a long gray beard whose curved scythe was originally a curve of the zodiac circle.

The god Kairos was the youngest son of Zeus. He is believed to be the spirit of opportunity. Aesop, in his fables, describes Kairos as running swiftly; he is bald except for a lock of hair on his forehead, which must be grabbed from the front. Kairos can be grasped only as he approaches. Once he has passed you, not even Zeus can pull him back. Opportunity is the brief moment in which things are possible.

Believe it or not, people in bible times understood these stories alongside the bible and how those words related to them. What the bible does is takes the concepts of “chronos” and “kairos” and repurposes them into God’s Story for God’s purposes.

In the New Testament, chronos generally refers to a span of time akin to a calendar measurement. In contrast, the earliest sense of the word kairos is the “decisive or crucial place or point.” Here, kairos is also used for specific and decisive points in history and in an individual’s life. A “kairos” moment was a God appointed moment designed to further His purpose as a critical place in history. Jesus’ life and ministry were a “kairos” moment, filled with small “kairos” events leading up to His final “kairos” moment involving His death, burial and resurrection.

Could we consider what we are experiencing right now a defining “kairos” moment that God is using for His purposes in our lives? What is special about this moment that He wants us to pay attention to?

FAITH • HOPE • LOVE

always protects never fails does not envy

Day 11

Martha and Mary

³⁸ Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. ³⁹ And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." ⁴¹ But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, ⁴² but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion (rightly), which will not be taken away from her." Luke 10:38-42

Martha is worried about being a good host. She wants to serve. That's a good thing. However, Jesus is there and He's speaking. The Gospel is not about what we can do for God, but who Jesus is and what He has done for us: *He's* serving. This story says many things, but the main point for us is this: Don't choose what is important over what is essential...I imagine Jesus being gentle with Martha in tone. Look how she comes to Him later in His ministry in John 11:20-27...That said, Jesus is talking, via His word. Listen. If you can hear Him, remove every distraction. And if He says your name twice (pursuing conviction) then it's time to wake. He will be gentle to lead you on as you come to Him or come back to Him (see Matthew 11:28-30). Be every day at the Lord's feet as He speaks Himself into your faith and becomes our life. This is the most privileged of places. Believe.

"The biggest battle you will face in life is your daily appointment with God. Keep it, or all other battles will become bigger." Ravi Zacharias

Day 12

See Isaiah 46:10, Exodus 7:3 and Matthew 10:29-31

Here is a string of quotes from Charles Spurgeon regarding the Sovereignty of God. When you put them together, this is what you get:

"There is no attribute of God more comforting to His children than the doctrine of Divine Sovereignty. Are you afraid of the earthquake? No, I rejoice to know that I have a God that can shake the world. Trust in Christ despite it all, for He can hush the hurricane to slumber and lay the storm to sleep (Matthew 8:23-27). Huge as the universe is, God has complete power over it as you have the ball you toss in your hand (Only without risk of dropping it.) To submit to a Creator who is too wise to err and too good to be unkind should not be too hard. Blessed be God, our calamities are matters of time, but our safety is a matter of eternity. If Christ shall be King of kings and Lord of lords, let me be nothing."

At times I demonstrate by my assertion of thoughts and behavior that I feel the need to be the king that Christ already perfectly is? Ask Him, who has the power to sovereignly change you at the deepest level to do that very thing. And know that if you delight in asking this that He indeed is already at work there. Rejoice in His kingship. Praise you, Lord Jesus, for you are King and I am not; You are perfect and by Your perfection I am being perfected. (Rm 12:1-2, James 1:25)

"Why pray if God is sovereign, you ask?...why pray if He isn't?" Michael Horton

DAY 13

Love and Faithfulness

Read Psalm 85: 10-13

Only in the death of Jesus Christ do we find a perfect blend of Love (mercy) and Faithfulness (truth). You cannot have justice without judgement. The violation of God's commands demands justice and that justice was satisfied by Christ death on the cross. Christ's death allowed God to be merciful toward us sinners. As you relate to others you must maintain a balance between mercy and truth. The Lord softens truth with a good deal of mercy.



We must, I must, deal with others the same way our Lord deals with me, a great deal of mercy and truth.

DAY 14

Proverbs 13:20

Walk with the wise and become wise; associate with fools and get in trouble.

As a parent we are always concerned about our children and whom they associate with. We never want to see them hanging with the “wrong crowd”. I know that my parents had the same concerns. No matter what age you are, those you are around influence you. I’m sure we have all made bad choices and suffered the consequences for those decisions.

The important thing to remember is that it is ok to mess up, but we should always learn from those mistakes. I think that could be a good definition of a wise person; one who learns from their mistakes.

Likewise, I think we could also define a fool as one who does not learn from their mistakes. A life phrase I often reflect on is: Learn from the mistakes of others, you don’t live long enough to make them all yourself.

As you read this short devotion reflect on whom you “walk” with and also what affect you might also have on them?

Day 15

Christian String-Theory: why we need others. See 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12

***The image of God.** We are *together* in the fact that all of humanity has been made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). This is one thing we all have in common in the midst of our diversity – a universal truth. But we, Christians, all *belong* because we have been remade in the image of Christ. We aren't merely *together*, because of God we **belong**. We are a unique, gathered people among all scattered peoples. In Christ we have been found, united *by* His blood, *for* His glory *with* each other. Christ is our common, connecting link. "*I am the vine, you are the branches.*" Jn 15:5

Jesus now lives in His church – we need each other to know Him more.

***Perspective.** Others see things that we can't see because our strong views give us tunnel vision. If you look up from this for moment you can see as far as your surroundings allow. The Lord, who sees all, knows our limited *view* (1 Cor 13:12). Also see Proverbs 27:6

***Help.** Others can do things that you can't do because you were "*fearfully and wonderfully made*" in the times and place you're in to be a unique servant of the Lord, for the Lord for His people. You serve them by being what they aren't. And they serve you the same. Yes, iron sharpening iron means there will be sparks at times, but what's the alternative? Coldness and dullness. God is in us, working on us with each other.

"*If you want to go fast, go by yourself. If you want to go far go with others.*" We don't use people to get to where we want to be, but we go as one body who are all being led by the same God. Our God sees fit that we need Christ alone for salvation, but He also sees fit that we need each other to walk in that salvation. This is Christian String-Theory. We are not islands or lone wolves. We're people who all hurt when one of us hurts and rejoice in the Lord together, belonging to Him. And though we will let each other down at times, we love each other.

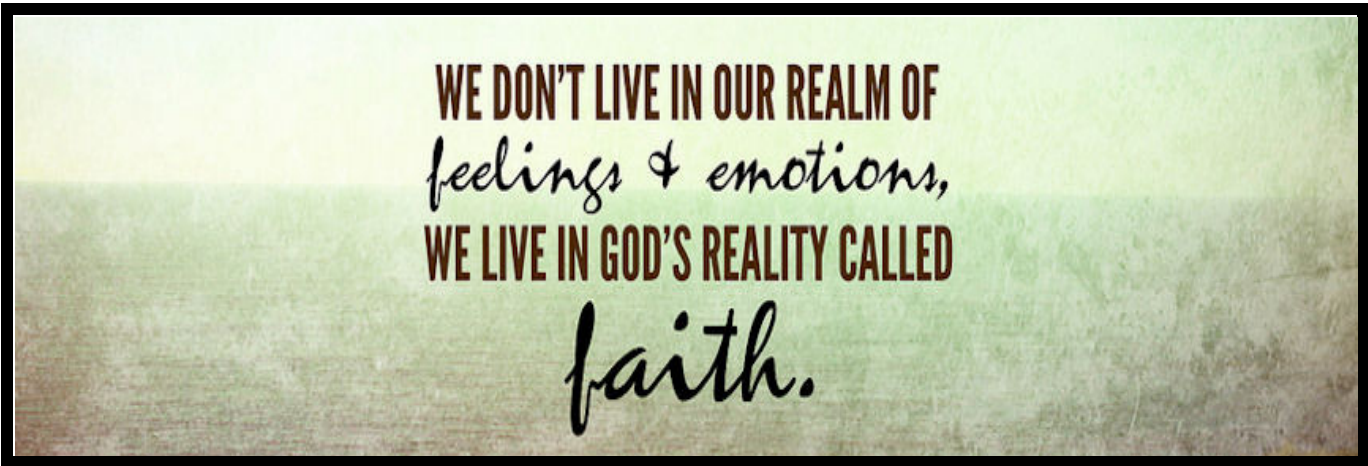
God didn't make us to be independent, but dependent on Him. This shows in how we need each other.

(Thank you, Pastor Leonard for teaching us this.)

DAY 16

A number of years ago I was in a band in California. Seeing how God worked through it was amazing, but one of the coolest parts about it was that our bass player was 100% blind. Josh was born blind in one eye and an unfortunate event wound up taking the vision from his other at a young age. Rather than giving up he put his trust in Christ and wound up accomplishing more than most of us ever aspire to. He played the bass (very well I might add), is a multiple degree black belt and has even added surfing to his big list of hobbies.

It's amazing what even the tiniest amount of faith in our God can enable us to do. We only have to open ourselves to Him. He'll give us a taste of what life with Him is like and then nothing is impossible (Philippians 4:13). But of course, it doesn't come easy, it takes perseverance on our end. When we lose a loved one, or a job, or get hit in the face with a nun-chuck or stand up on a wave we can't see in the middle of a giant ocean without any sense of visual location. We can see it in the Bible from Noah to the friends who dropped the buddy through a roof (Genesis 6, Mark 2)- no matter what obstacles come in front of us, faith in Christ will guide us to the good HE has planned for us. GOD is bigger than our problems and HE WILL get us through them.



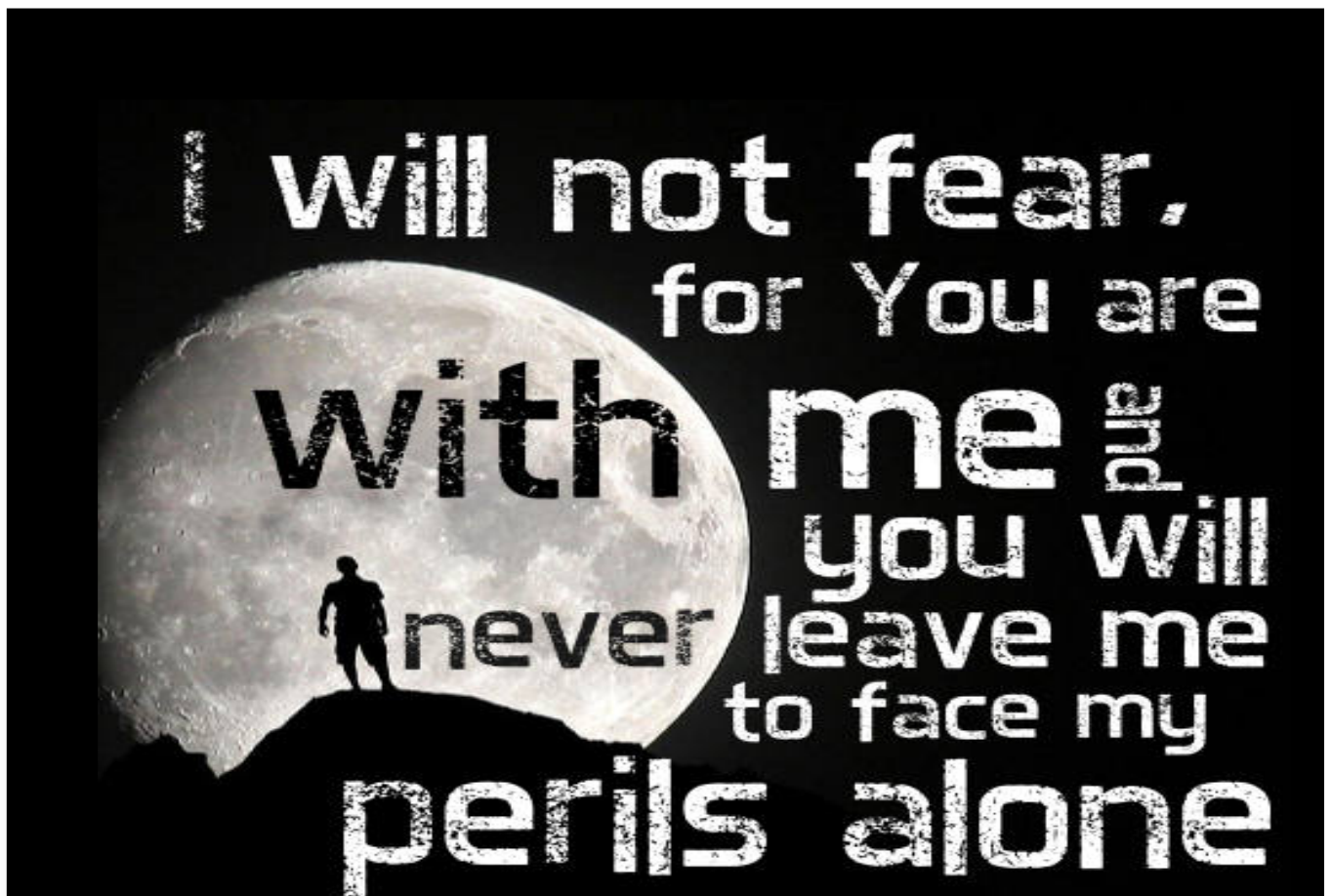
WE DON'T LIVE IN OUR REALM OF
feelings & emotions,
WE LIVE IN GOD'S REALITY CALLED
faith.

DAY 17

FEAR. - anxiety caused by the unknown.

Read 2 Cor. 11:3

Even Paul expressed fear of the disciples being led astray by deceit and lack of faith. We might look at his comments as concern but he himself said that he was afraid of their thoughts being changed regarding the simplicity and purity of their devotion to Christ. During these times that we are not accustomed to let's put aside our fear of virus and concentrate on our Saviors love for each and every one of us. Help us Lord to convey your compassion to all people we pray.



DAY 18

Devotion/Commentary

Please read Matthew 6:25-34 and Luke 12:22-32. April and May are the months that I enjoy looking for trilliums blooming in the Ohio woods. They are of the lily family, hiding under leaves until they rise from the dead with three leaves and a bud that opens with three petals and three more smaller leaves. Being near Easter makes me think of Christ's resurrection and the Triune God we love.

Matthew 6:28-29 says we do not need to worry; the lilies of the field are greater than Solomon's best dress clothes. The sight of these flowers in abundance is very calming and a reminder that God is looking after us.

P.S. Trilliums are along the Leetonia-Lisbon bike trail between mile markers 4 and 6 and you may find the Father through Christ. John 14:6 says, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

DAY 19

Faith - Confidence in the testimony of others

Read Col. 1:21-23

Many times in each of our lives we have questioned our individual faith usually during uncertainty. Paul's words remind us as he stated to the Colossians that Christ is our reconciler. That even though formally alienated and engaged in evil deeds our Lord has reconciled us to the father through his blood.

Lord we ask your continued direction in our lives as we seek daily to glorify your name. Help us to provide to others the testimony of your word and to give them the confidence we have in your saving grace. Amen

FAITH

is not believing that God can
it is knowing that He will.

DAY 20

“Jesus answered her, ‘If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.’”

John 4:10

Gardening is in the air. Flowers are blooming. Grass is growing. People are scurrying to find the right seeds and plants for their gardens. But all of this requires water, lots and lots of water. Much like the flowers and plants, we ourselves need water. We need a continual supply of water every single moment of our lives. We need to draw from Jesus and His strength will see us through the trials and tribulations of life. Let God water your soul every day you seek Him and drink from the living water.

A photograph of a waterfall in a dense forest. The water is white and frothy as it falls over dark, moss-covered rocks. The surrounding vegetation is vibrant green, with ferns and other plants visible on the forest floor and on the rocks. The scene is peaceful and serene.

"Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"

John 7:38

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Day 21

Fearlessness - without fear or thought of consequences

Read Acts 4:19-24

Most of us remember the old saying- No Fear, Know Jesus. As we've outlined the last devotions of Fear, Faith and Fearlessness we can see many of the biblical followers of Christ and how they were able to lead and minister to others by a fearless attitude of faith in our Lord. Search for yourself today and find an example of a fearless leader and understand their faith and convictions.

Lord we pray today that as believers that we might have a fearless approach in spreading your word. Too many times we are held back by our own misunderstanding and don't see the people we can minister to. Help us put aside arrogance and self-righteousness to reach the ones that need your forgiveness. In Jesus name we pray. Amen



DAY 22

Healing: Part Two (See *Healing: Part One* and read together with Pt 2)

It's the same a chapter before in Mark 7:31-37. Jesus separates a deaf man with a speech difficulty from the crowd (much the same as he separates this blind man from the village & much the same as He still separates us from the world) and does what only He is capable of and, *"Immediately his ears were opened, his speech difficulty was removed, and he began to speak clearly."* The same goes for us and the nonsense we talked before we had the knowledge of the truth to proclaim. Imagine being blind or deaf or mute and Jesus i.s the first one you saw, heard and experienced and how profound that first moment of sight would be regardless...would you be able to talk about anything else?

***Jesus is still removing our infirmities so that we who can see, hear and speak might behold, listen and proclaim.

Also see John 9:1-7 (It wasn't the pool that healed this one, but he believed in Jesus and he was healed...)

Side Note: In a culture that was superstitious about contact with the 'unclean' Jesus touches the undesirable. God gets His hands dirty without getting dirty and instead makes them clean.

"You give life that is worth the loss of mine."
Citizens, song *Relent*



**WHEN GOD TAKES AWAY SOMETHING
FROM YOUR HAND, DON'T THINK HE'S
PUNISHING YOU. HE IS MERELY EMPTYING
YOUR HAND, FOR YOU TO RECEIVE
SOMETHING BETTER. HAVE FAITH.**

~ JUSTICE CABRAL

DAY 23

Life's crazy, rarely easy and almost always out of our control. And you know what, PRAISE GOD it's not in my control. I can't even control myself at the buffet. And when I do try to control things it rarely, if ever, goes the way I'm trying to get it to. So, I whole-heartedly believe there is nothing better than to leave it in the hands of our all-powerful Savior who can speak galaxies into existence. So, pray how He taught us to pray-

Matthew 6:9-13: ...'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one.'

You don't have to know a lot of fancy words or have a lot of Bible knowledge to pray. It's a conversation with your Heavenly Father- one that He's already given us the script to. We just have to be earnest when we do it and know that what we want and what He has planned for us is rarely the same thing. His way is ALWAYS better.



DAY 24


Love, Wrath...Love

See: James 2:13, Romans 8:28, Psalms 30:5, 2 Peter 3:7,
1 John 4:8

Because “*mercy triumphs over judgment*” and “*God works all things together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purposes*,” then God loves His people with a love that sovereignly prevails beyond the wrath that destroys the universe. God *is* love and *has* wrath, but, “*God is love*.”

The end is the never-ending beginning for us, “*who love God and are called according to His purposes*.”

Remember in times of fear: ‘who is Jesus? He’s GOD and He’s got me.’ Repeat often...



The Lord is merciful and
compassionate, slow to get
angry and filled with
unfailing love.

- Psalm 145:8 NLT

empowermentmomentsblog.com

DAY 25

Rivers do not drink their own water:
Trees do not eat their own fruit:
The sun does not shine on itself and flowers
Don't spread their fragrance for themselves.
Living for others is a rule of nature.
We are all born to help each other.
No matter how difficult it is
Life is good when you are happy; but
Much better when others are happy because of you.

Pope Francis

We are called to serve and not be served. Jesus came to Earth to serve people. He preached, baptized, healed, washed the feet of his disciples and died all to serve others and save us. He gave of his life to save ours. He did not think of himself and his wishes. Approach each day with a smile because you are a child of GOD. You are promised eternal life. No more pain, no more suffering, no more disease. It should be our life's goal to give more than we receive and do so with a cheerful heart. Do we really believe that? Do we believe we should happily give to others our time, our bounty and our money? Look back at the poem – the rivers don't drink their own water, trees don't eat their fruit, the sun shines on everything but itself. They are unselfish and give of themselves to others. Rejoice because we are blessed by the love of Christ. Pray that GOD touches your heart and allows you to continue to give cheerfully unto others so that they also may know the love of Christ.

Have a great day and be blessed!

DAY 26

A Season For Everything

The strange moment we find ourselves in has for many thrown life out of balance. The interesting thing is though, we find no instruction about “balance” in the Bible. There is a famous poem crafted by King Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, that portrays instead a “rhythmic” approach to life—Ecclesiastes 3:1-8.

In fourteen pairs of opposites, Solomon covers a wide range of human activity. Twenty-eight times, the word “time” is repeated as King Solomon makes the point that God gives us rhythms in which we are to live—each a bit different, yet appropriate to its unique season.

Take a moment and reflect on these words, they describe a time (season) for everything:


There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven:
a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot,
a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build,
a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance,
a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain,
a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away,
a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak,
a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.

Although it is common to hear Solomon’s poem used to validate the notion of life in balance, it actually doesn’t. Solomon is not saying to hold all activities in balance in a given season, but to realize that different seasons call for different activities, different rhythms. For instance, when he writes, “There is . . . a time to be silent and a time to speak,” he’s not suggesting that we try to balance speaking and silence. Rather, Solomon is saying there are times to speak up and times to be silent—each in its own season and rhythm. What time or season do you think God has us in right now?

How do you think a “season” compare to a “kairos” moment?

Of the four seasons of the year, what season does May 2020 best compare to?

What do you think God is up to in the season we are going through right now?



"FOR I KNOW THE PLANS
I HAVE FOR
YOU," DECLARES THE
LORD, "PLANS TO
PROSPER YOU AND NOT
TO HARM YOU, PLANS TO
GIVE YOU HOPE AND A
FUTURE.

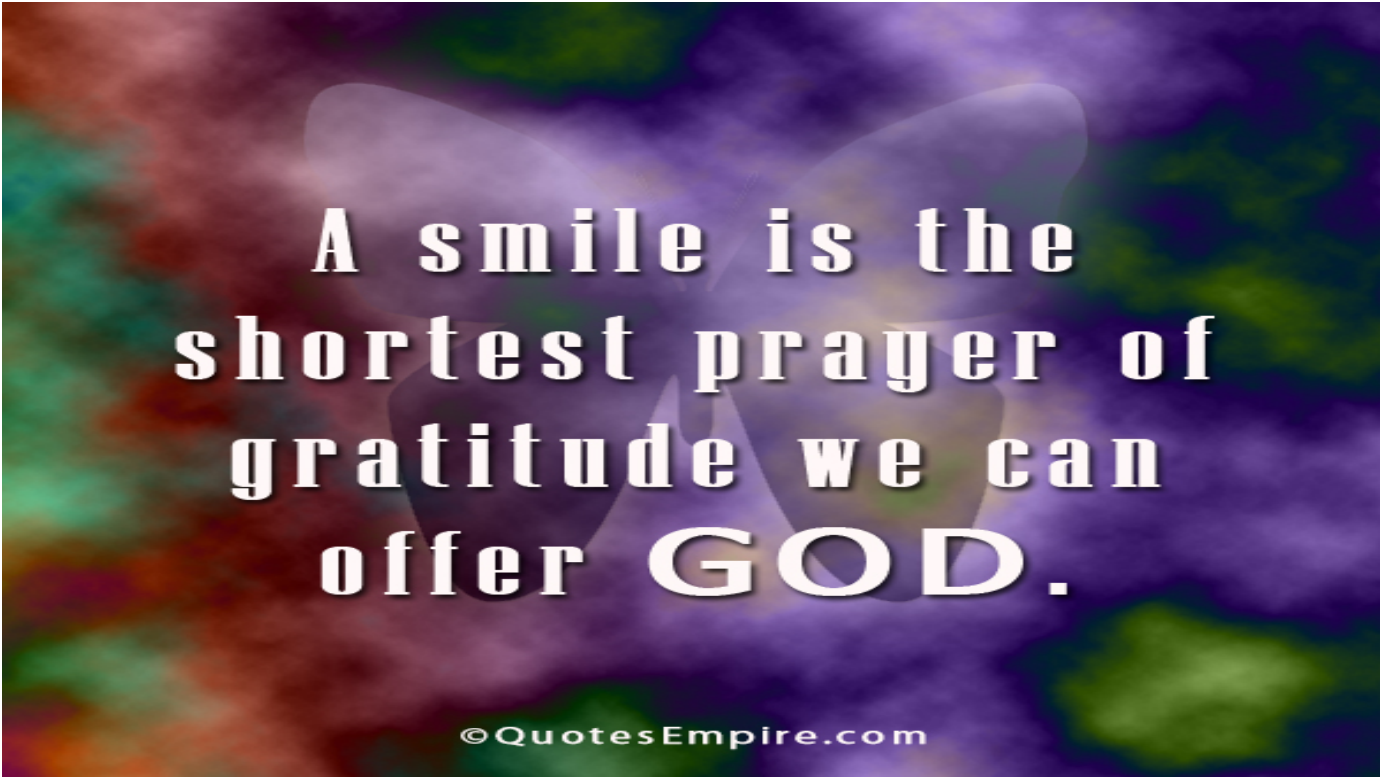
—JEREMIAH 29:11

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Day 27

"God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me." Genesis 21:6

When was the last time you laughed? They say laughter is the best medicine. Laughter is a blessing from the Lord. It helps us get through some of the darkest times in our lives. We become closer with people around us. It is how we celebrate moments of joy. Along with love and a smile, laughter is a universal way of communication. It causes happiness and joy which is an important part of our daily lives. So today as you go about your life, smile bigger and laugh harder. Appreciate the things that make you laugh and that bring you great joy.



**A smile is the
shortest prayer of
gratitude we can
offer GOD.**

DAY 28

Proverbs 21:5

Good planning and hard work lead to prosperity, but hasty shortcuts lead to poverty.

As a young teenage boy, I was fortunate enough to have a young married couple lead our youth group and take a vested interest in myself and another friend. One summer evening, they invited us to dinner at their house and the next morning we would work for them on their farm painting hog barns. We enjoyed their company and the sweet corn picked hours earlier. The next day started with another great meal and it was off to work.

As the day progressed, we started to act more like the teenagers we were, and our work reflected it. It was apparent to the farmer and he pulled us aside to let us in on a saying that his father had taught him. I can still hear him saying. "My dad always told me that if a job is worth doing, it's worth doing right." Those words have remained with me for my entire life and I hope I have been able to teach my children the same.

God made us to work and we honor him when we do our best.

DAY 29

Devotion:

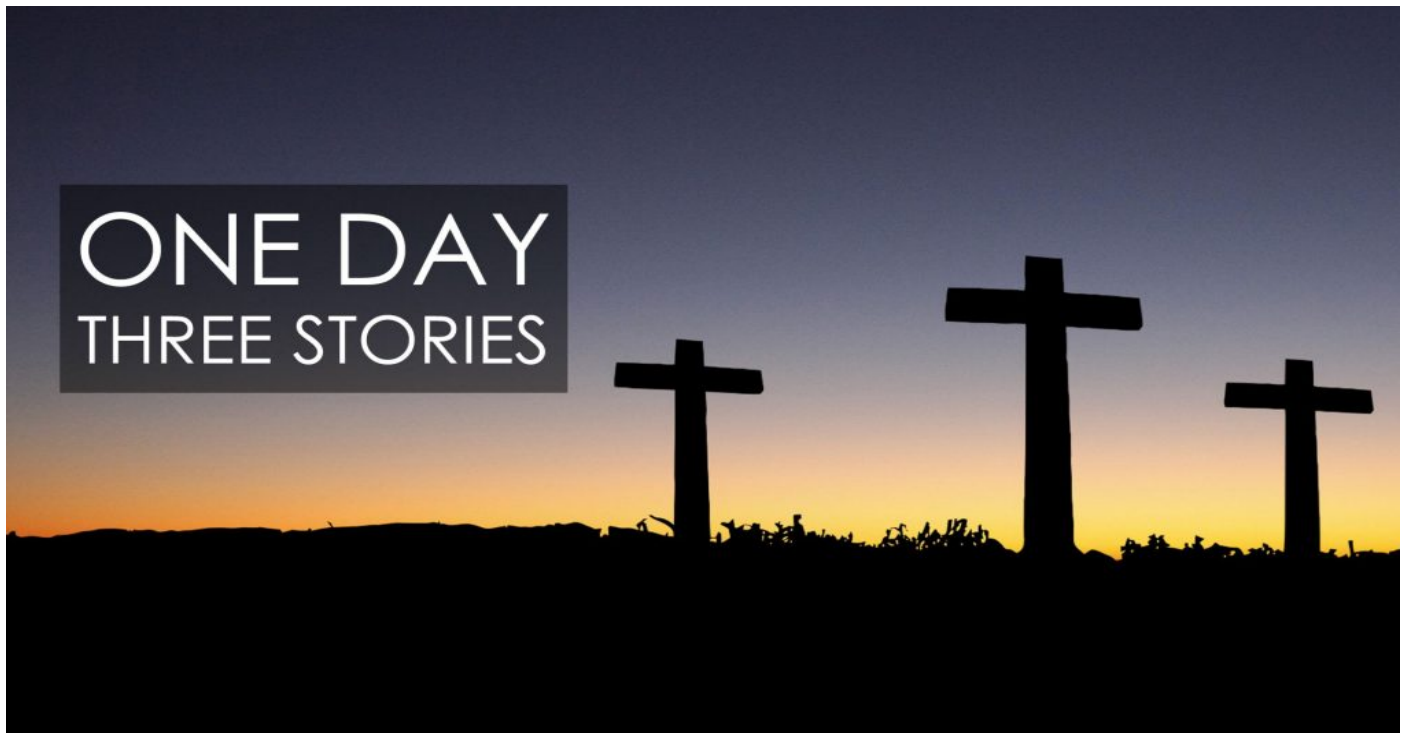
Please read and refresh yourself with Jesus' conversation with the woman at the well in John 4:6-30. In the conversation, Jesus knows all of her sins and reveals the answer is near. She spoke of the differences of Jewish worship in Jerusalem and Samaritans in another. Jesus says the time is coming for worship in Spirit and in Truth – nothing to do with location or structure. It shall become a matter of “heart.” Later in John 14:6, Jesus answers His apostles that “I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life.” Some translations use the capitals and I believe it fits best that way. Faith in Christ leads to receiving the Holy Spirit. Christ is Truth, and relationships are restored with the Father so that we may worship as Jesus promised the woman at the well.

DAY 30

Jesus Saves

Read Luke 19: 1-10

The word “save” is a beautiful word filled with emotion. Few words thrill the soul like the word “saved.” Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. The word “save” becomes offensive to many people. They resent hearing it because it implies that they are in danger and need saving. Others live in danger and do not know it. Such people need saving and don’t know it. Never lose your thrill when hearing the word “saved.” And never be shy about telling others the Good News. When Jesus said He came “to seek and to save the lost” he meant that there are two kinds of people in the world: those that know they need saving, and those that don’t know. We are to go out and share the Good News to all peoples.



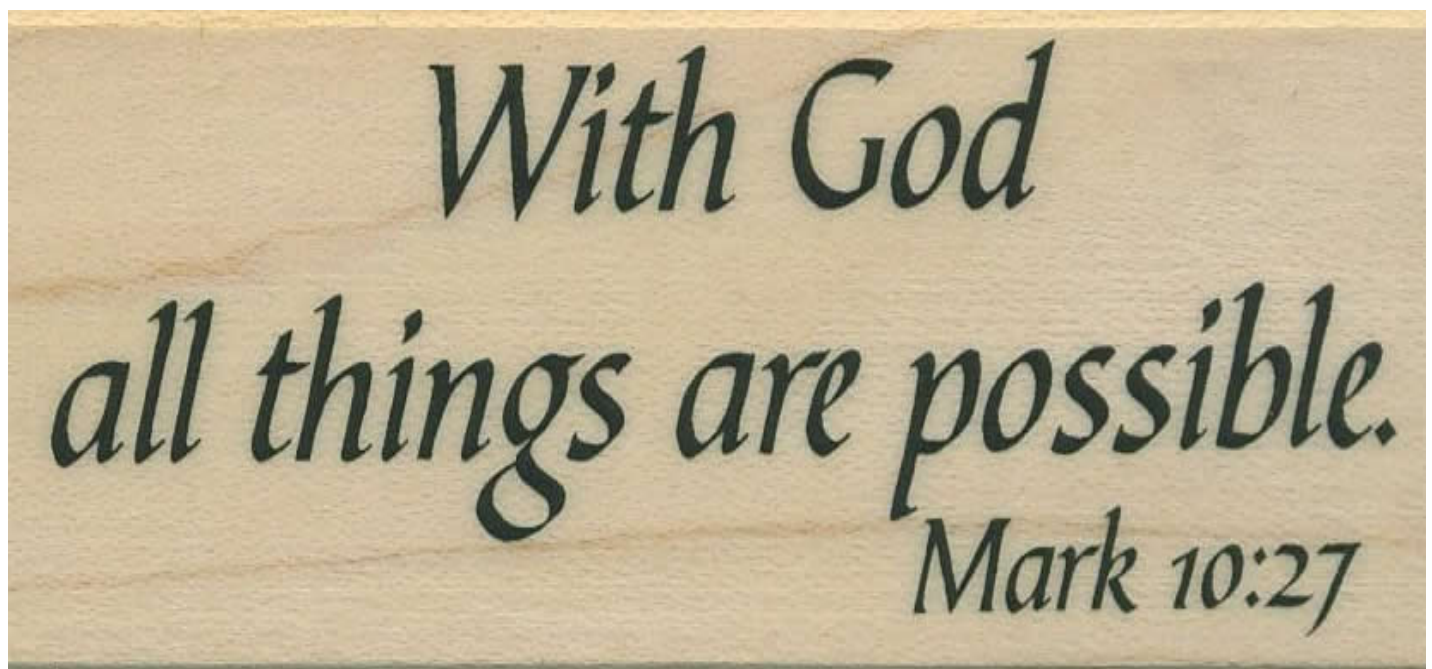
Day 31

Matthew 19:26

Jesus looked at them and said, "Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But with God everything is possible."

How often have you told yourself that things are impossible? Being a realist, I often struggle with the actual and the possible. It is easy to accomplish the things you know you can do but how often do you challenge yourself with things you are unsure of? Many times, I think we put off things we are not confident in only to find we only wasted time worrying for nothing.

The next time you have doubts in yourself or need that extra push to take on the impossible, ask God for help and guidance and don't be surprised when he removes the "im" and makes things possible.



DAY 32

Devotion/Testimony

Looking at the parable of the laborers in the vineyard, Matthew 20:1-16 was Christ's response to Peter in verse 19:27. About 26 years ago, I had repeated dreams/visions of working in a vineyard cultivating and trimming. I prayed for understanding as remembering dreams was not normal to me. The vision progressed until I was at the end of a row near a fence and saw my wife stop and tell me she would help soon but had errands to run. The answer to my prayer of understanding occurred one night sleeping in a chair in my wife's hospital room as she was fighting ovarian cancer. God's voice was heard by me, "She needs saved, introduce us." These words led to more prayer and an evening when I was able to remind Mary Lou of a request she made to a doctor, "Can you give me a new body?" I told her, "Only Christ can give you a new body." Whether God calls someone early or late in life to receive His grace, the glory of their salvation is His.

DAY 33

Discerning the Times

King Solomon used a Hebrew word for “time” that refers to more than chronological time; it suggests an occasion or a season of time—what in Greek would be a “kairos” moment.

Rather than seeking an artificial balance, Solomon is challenging us to live full-out in each and every season:
when it is time to love, love with all your heart;
when it is time to hate injustice, hate it passionately.
when it is time to mourn, mourn fully.
when it is time to dance, dance with everything you’ve got. Live full-out.

The poem encompasses the most momentous events of human life—its beginning and end, its times of creative and destructive activities, its private and public emotions. *These are not times we choose but ones we accept.* Kairos seasons. People do not decide when to heal, weep, laugh, mourn, lose, love, hate, or be in war or peace. These are occasions in which people find themselves, and they can only respond to them. All that mortal humans can do in the face of these times is to be open to them.

There is no balance to be struck between birth and death, planting and uprooting, weeping and laughing. Instead, when we live our lives in rhythm, we’re free to give ourselves fully to every kairos season. We are not to be born and die, plant and uproot, weep and laugh in balance at the same time, but in rhythm at different times.

Further, Solomon’s point is not for us to manage our lives so that we balance activities in any one season; instead, we’re to flow with life through differing seasons, each carrying its own unique emotions and activities. These kinds of human rhythms are part and parcel of kairos seasons.

The Bible says “The men of Issachar understood the times.” (1 Chronicles 12:32). Living well involves having the wisdom to know the times and having the faith in God to accept that our times are in his hands (see Psalm 31:15). From God’s point of view, in light of eternity, all times are “beautiful” or “appropriate” (see Ecclesiastes 3:11).

The writer of Ecclesiastes concludes that meaning in life can be found by seeking to “fear” (honor and obey) God and to enjoy life. We are to accept what God has given and rejoice in his gifts. With such an approach, we can replace despair and frustration with contentment.

Based on Solomon’s observations, if we live in harmony with God’s rhythms, we can discover more peace, fulfillment, joy, and hope. It is not so much that there is a correct time to do everything as it is that if we are living in rhythm with God’s timing, life will not be meaningless.

Everything will be beautiful or appropriate in its time, even difficult experiences... dare I say, even the COVID19 experience!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

OUR FATHER

WHO ART IN HEAVEN,
hallowed be your name,

YOUR KINGDOM COME,
YOUR WILL BE DONE,
ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD.

and forgive our debts,

AS WE ALSO HAVE FORGIVEN OUR DEBTORS.

AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION,
BUT DELIVER US FROM THE EVIL ONE;



MATTHEW 6:9-13

for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.