



2026 Weekly Devotions

Week of: June 15th - 21st

Sermon: June 14th



SMYRNA BAPTIST CHURCH
building community ◊ equipping believers ◊ serving Jesus

June 15

Isaiah 46:9-10; Exodus 35:2

As we step into another week of Points to Ponder, I am reminded of a truth unfolding in our text and the following chapters that encourage my heart. You may recall that in Matthew 6:10 Jesus taught His followers to pray with this request in mind: "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." All that God had revealed to Moses about His plans concerning the construction of the tabernacle could be traced to the mind of God in heaven. It was delivered to Moses and now in our chapter for this week and especially in Chapter 36, we see that God's will in heaven was being carried out on earth.

Dear ones, this is a truth that should encourage us as we rest in the sovereign hand of God at work in our world today performing and completing all that His heart intends. Knowing that He is always good, that He is love, that He is perfect and infinitely wise and just, and that all of His decisions are for His glory and our complete joy gives me peace in tumultuous times and assurance that all is well. Isaiah wrote, "...for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose'" (Isa. 46:9-10). He designed it in heaven and saw to it that it was brought forth on earth.

Now, I want you to see it is no accident that Exodus 35 begins with a reminder of sabbath rest. Ponder today the fact that construction is about to begin on the tabernacle in which Almighty God is going to dwell on earth among His people and the first reminder of a rule to follow is that of sabbath rest. Why is this? Well, I think it is because of a spiritual reality that is often overlooked and forgotten. Friend, before we are ready to truly work for the Lord, we must have rested in the Lord. You see, for you and me as Christians, our Lord's Day, day of rest, is the first day of the week not the last. Everything we do in service to the Lord throughout the week should flow from the relationship that we have nurtured before we begin.

Another way that we could say this is that before we bring our offerings, sacrifices, and services to Him, we should first receive from Him. From Him we get strength, wisdom, grace, and ability to perform what He is calling us to. I discovered a verse this week in sermon prep that I honestly have never really thought much about. In 1 Chronicles 22:9 it says, "Behold, a son shall be born to you who shall be a man of rest." This is a word to King David concerning the birth and work of his son Solomon. David has just been informed that he would not be permitted to build the temple but that the honor would fall to his son because David had been a man of war and blood shed while Solomon would be a man of peace and rest. We must find our rest in Him prior to our service to Him. All of the amazing construction that was carried out by Solomon and the workers came from a place and time of rest.

June 16

Isaiah 58:3-14

Let's see if I can make sense of what I have on my mind for this point to ponder today. I pray that you will "get" what I am trying to communicate to you. Notice in the 3rd verse of Exodus 35 it says, "You shall kindle no fire in all your dwelling places on the Sabbath day. Certainly, that pertains to not cooking and that sort of thing, but could there be more to that prohibition. I find it interesting that God would say that. Why that extra little reminder that they were not to kindle a fire?

It is likely pointing to the reality that if they were going to truly commit themselves to a Sabbath, then they were not to consider their own personal comfort, as in warmth, or fleshly desires. In our day of fleshly ease and self-gratification, it is too normal to give God a nod while we honestly continue to be far more concerned with our own comfort, pleasure, desires, and priorities. My point today is that if we are going to genuinely dedicate ourselves to the Lord, it cannot be a half-hearted gesture but a complete surrender.

I get so irritated by people who act like they have given God so much and that they have tried wholeheartedly to follow Him in total obedience when in fact, they have given Him lip service and mediocre devotion at best. The frustrating part of that for me is to have to listen to their criticism of biblical truth, a rejection of pastoral counsel, or doubt that God's ways are true and valid. The truth of the matter is that they have NOT actually obeyed as they should, nor have they implemented biblical principles and statutes in all areas of life such as marriage, parenting, and finances.

Turn your attention to the 58th chapter of Isaiah to see what I am attempting to say. Beginning in the 6th verse, Isaiah writes concerning what a real "fast" is in the eyes of God. People of today sound so much like the folks mentioned in 58:3-5. They are people who pretend to have given God an honest "try" but who are still seeking their own wellbeing and pleasure (v. 3). A real fast, and real devotion will lead to what is described in verses 8-12. Please, please, please read this and pray about what I am writing about today. This is no lite matter friend. You must stop thinking that God is not holding up His end of the deal when you have failed to truly seek Him with you whole heart, mind, body, and soul.

I believe that Isaiah 58:13 provides more insight into Exodus 35:3. Note that Isaiah says that in order for the observance of the Sabbath, in this particular case, to be genuine and effective in stirring the heart of God, we must be willing to stop seeking our own pleasure even as we say we are seeking Christ. The opposite of going after your own pleasures and delights under the guise of pursuing Christ is to truly take delight in Him. If this is indeed true in your heart and mind, then you will be willing to lay down your own comfort and pleasure as you find your comfort and pleasure in Him. Only then should you have any thought of experiencing God like the person described in Isaiah 58:14 or Psalm 1:3-4.

June 17

Colossians 3:1-5; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15

One more point to ponder on this subject this week. To be certain that we grasp the intentions of my heart in these first 3 points to ponder, I want to turn to a familiar passage found in Colossians 3. There Paul wrote that we should seek things above (heavenly), where Christ is and that we should set our minds (our affections and priorities) on things above and not on the things of this earth (vv. 1-2). Since we claim to have been born again, have died to self and now live to Christ, it is necessary that our lifestyles, choices, and behavior give clear evidence of this reality in our lives.

Paul then admonishes the Colossians, and us today, to put to death fleshly habits, desires, and tendencies. I want to emphasize once more the fact that if you are going to experience the privileges of being in the New Covenant with God through Christ and enjoy the amazing glory of God as He shines through the person of Christ revealed to us by the Holy Spirit, then you are going to have to get serious about putting to death immoral and impure passions, covetousness, and idolatry in your life. We must take up the cross of Christ and willingly die to self if we are to experience life in Christ here on earth now.

How can we reach the point of dying to self or as Paul put it in Colossians 3, "To put to death these things in us?" Consider today the statement that God inspired Paul to write to the Corinthians in his second letter to them. He wrote, "For the love of Christ compels (controls) us...that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for Him who for their sake died and was raised" (2 Cor. 5:14-15). From a grammar standpoint, this could be the love that we have for Christ or His love for us that compels us.

I believe that in the context, Paul is contemplating what Christ has done for us, so I would conclude that the love that controls us is His love for us. Of course, it stands to reason that His love for us and the incredible redemptive realities in His love evoke in us a love for Him. The implication is that His amazing love "controls" my behavior and "compels" me to willingly put to death the sin that would otherwise plague my life. So, my point is that we need to arrive at the place where we have considered the truth that He died for us and rose again, and we will conclude that it is wise and reasonable to deny self and serve Him.

How do we set out minds on things above and not the things of this earth on a regular basis? We do so by learning to meditate on Him and His Word. We pray that the Holy Spirit would illuminate His truth and lead us into all truth as He glorifies Christ in our eyes, mind, and heart. As this occurs, we will find that it is much easier to lay down control of our lives and surrender to His Lordship over us.

June 18

Acts 2:42-47

The previous 3 days of our “points to ponder” were written to help us make sense of what is to follow for the rest of the week. God made His plan known to Moses and he in turn communicated it to the Israelites. The materials from which the tabernacle was made were to be provided by the voluntary offerings of devoted hearts. Moses wrote, “And they came, everyone whose heart stirred him, and everyone whose spirit moved him, and brought the Lord’s contribution to be used for the tent of meeting, and for all its service, and for the holy garments. So they came, both men and women” (Ex. 35:21-22). I counted 7 times in this one chapter that some version of this statement was written. The Spirit moved in the hearts of the people, and they responded worshipfully through sacrificial giving.

I cannot emphasize enough that God did not rely on unwilling donors who had to be begged, brow beaten, or manipulated in any way to generate the resources necessary for the construction of the tabernacle. They gave spontaneously, freely, joyfully, and from a mindset of privilege to be able to give to the Lord. Dear ones, it appears to me that we are to leave the work of making a heart willing to the Holy Spirit. I believe that we can all agree that what the Holy Spirit did in the hearts of the people proved to be far more effective than any manmade manipulative approaches or external pressures. Note in Exodus 36:5-7 that the people gave more than was necessary for the task God called them to.

A New Testament equivalent to what we see in Exodus 35 can be found in Acts 2. After the Holy Spirit had been sent from heaven to fill the hearts of believers just as Jesus had promised, the effects of Pentecost are realized, and the people surrender their lives to Christ as Lord and Savior (Acts 2:37-41). Notice the impact and fruit produced in their lives as a result of being captured by God’s grace and mercy. Just as the Spirit moved the people in Exodus 35 to give freely and generously, He does the same thing here in Acts 2. The people are genuinely changed and clearly compelled by Christ’s love to serve Him.

Church family, I want you to think a bit today about how foolish it would be to believe that you can receive Jesus as Lord of your life, to have the Holy Spirit indwell your very being, and not be changed by this reality. For all who have never noticed a change of heart or who have never felt a strong sense of gratitude for being saved in spite of your wretched sin, I need to tell you that something is wrong. God, who raised Jesus from the dead, is at work in the lives of all who belong to Him. Let’s look again in our chosen text for today.

Paul wrote that the people who were truly saved devoted themselves to discipleship, fellowship, praying, and worshipping together as family (v.42). They quickly became enamored with the Lord and found themselves standing in awe of Him (v.43). This transformation led to a sense of unity and commonality that manifested itself in a willingness to sacrifice for the wellbeing of one another (vv.44-45). Notice that they were willing to sell their possessions and give from their resources for the advancement of God’s Kingdom and to care for each other. The same thing happened in Exodus 35 and should be happening today.

June 19

1 Corinthians 15:58

What we have discussed thus far this week is that there is a relationship between two things before us. First, there is the resting in Christ and secondly, the bringing of an offering unto the Lord. The offering is from the outflow of a heart stirred up by the Spirit. As we rest in the Lord, understand this is synonymous with learning to delight in Him. The natural result will be the affections that are drawn out of us toward Him.

You see, it is a redeemed people who have seen the glory of God who are devoted to His cause. Giving and serving Him is not a mere duty, but a privilege and a great joy. As I wrote earlier in the week, “We are constrained by His amazing love for us.” John wrote in 1John 4:19, “We love Him because He first loved us.” I hope that you will find that nothing moves your heart like seriously meditating on the love and grace of God as it is now revealed through the Lord Jesus our Mediator, Intercessor, Savior, and Friend.

Let’s add another step to reveal how God works in the hearts of His people. For the truly redeemed, there is a rest found in Christ, a desire to freely give of our resources to Him, and thirdly, active work in service to Him (Ex. 36:2). I think we can surmise that acceptable service to God can only proceed from those who have been born again. This must lead to delighting ourselves in the Lord and proper affections flowing from us unto Him. It is only then that we truly abound in the work of the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58).

Take a look at the verses that precede 1 Corinthians 15:58. Paul talks about Christ’s victory over sin, death, and the grave. As you read through chapter 15, the hope is that you will be encouraged and motivated to faith and obedience. In response to the indicatives (truths) of the chapter, we should execute the imperatives (obedience). Paul does not call us to obedience without providing wonderful grounds to support such action. The point I am making here is that the work performed in response to the relationship with Christ flowed from the same relationship from which the willingness to generously give came.

Sometimes people are guilty of “working” in the church in their own strength and from a place or reason other than love for the Lord and His salvation granted to them. When we work from restless energy, from a legalistic desire to earn His favor, or even from fear of the Lord if we don’t, we are merely producing “bricks” under the whip of a cruel taskmaster. Work can be accomplished that is neither joyful, pleasant, or blessed by God.

As I close this point to ponder today, I want to make mention of the fact that all of God’s people had a place in this work. We read in Exodus 35 that the men **and** women gave and served (35:22, 25-26). We also read that the “leaders” led the charge in sacrificially giving to the work (v. 27). This was a joint effort that required all of God’s people to exercise their specific callings and giftedness in accomplishing what He had prepared for them to do.

June 20

1 Corinthians 11:1

I closed yesterday's devotion, mentioning the leadership who gave to the construction of the tabernacle (v.27). It is important that those whom God has appointed to be in positions of leadership lead well and do so by example. Paul said to the Corinthians these words, "Be imitators of me, as I imitate Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1). This is not motivated from arrogance or a false sense of perfectionism. Keep in mind that Paul referred to himself as "chief of sinners" (1 Tim. 1:15). It is important to understand that we should not have a false sense of piety by which we pretend that we are so aware of our sin that we feel we have no place to encourage others to follow Christ and strive for obedience as we are. No, we are not perfect, but I hope dear ones that areas exist in your life where you really are following well and living exemplary.

I imagine that some would judge King David harshly for what he revealed in 1 Chronicles 29:2-5, but you should not. David is sharing what he has freely given to encourage others to do likewise. He is sharing his own love and devotion for God and His house in hopes that his example will show that he is not asking anyone to do what he is not already doing. Note that in verse 2 of that passage David said, "I have provided for the house of God, so far as I was able." Friends, we will all have different abilities and resources based on what God has entrusted to us. You give in accordance with what you have and don't worry about what your neighbor is or is not able to do.

I hope that you have realized after my being a pastor here at Smyrna for twenty-five years, that I have never asked you to do anything that I and my family was not willing to or already doing. Whether it has been working in the yard, cleaning up in the kitchen or bathrooms, performing some maintenance on the buildings, or giving sacrificially, we have stepped up to the plate to serve; Pastor Bobo and his family has as well.

Note that our desire to serve, to use our abilities for His glory, or to give from our resources all flow from a personal relationship with the Lord. I truly believe that we found a treasure worth more than anything the world has to offer and there is nothing that we would not give up to be sure we know and are known by the Lord Jesus. Friend, I hope that I can say honestly to you today, imitate me as I imitate Christ and that you are willing to do so. Follow me in Bible reading and study. Follow me in taking advantage of discipleship opportunities. Follow me in preparing your heart to worship and come to Church on Sunday morning ready to fellowship joyfully and worship wholeheartedly. Follow me in giving sacrificially and consistently to the ministries of the church. Follow me in being a family man. Follow me as I follow Christ.

Am I doing any of these things perfectly? No unfortunately I am not. BUT I am pursuing the Lord and striving to be more like Him as we go. I am leaning in and utilizing the means of grace He has made available to all of us. Your leadership here at Smyrna invites you to follow us on the road to obedience, sanctification, and glorifying our great God and Savior the Lord Jesus Christ.

June 21

Psalm 23:1

I have written this week about our generosity in giving and our willingness to serve flowing from a personal and intimate relationship with the Lord that captures our hearts and causes us to treasure Him above all else. Today we will wrap up this week of “Points to Ponder” by delving in a bit deeper into just how incredible His love for us is and why we should be “blown away” by redemption.

Here at Smyrna Baptist, we believe that our salvation is unmovably certain and completely secure. This is absolutely true in part because both the Father and the Son are in full agreement with the redemptive plan that saved us and are totally satisfied with the conditions and promises of the New Covenant. The conditions that had to be satisfied by Christ have been, and the Father has accepted the Son’s offering. According to the plan of God, we are kept by a sure, almighty, and faithful hand. Paul wrote, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ/God (Rom. 8:35)? No one can disannul the covenant that was established between the Father and the Son.

Friends do you understand that Jesus had to live a perfect and sinless life because He had to fulfill all the requirements of the Law for righteousness in order to make us righteous (Rom. 5:19)? He did this and the Father accepted it. He also bore all the punishment which our sins merited (Gal. 4:4). He suffered, died, and rose again indicating that the Father was satisfied that all necessary conditions to save us were met. If that wasn’t enough to capture our hearts, He chose to make us partakers of *His merited* salvation.

He accomplished bringing us to salvation and to glorification by declaring the gospel to us, regenerating us, granting us faith, promising to preserve us, to resurrect us from the dead, and to usher us safely to heaven. My point is that the execution of this great work of redemption rested upon His shoulders (John 6:39). My goodness dear ones, have you stopped to consider the Godhead’s incredible plan to save us, their commitment to it, and what that means for our eternal security and preservation? These truths about our Lord and Savior have captured my heart. What about you?

You and I serve Him today because we have come to love Him not to earn what He has already won for us. The redeemed do not need to merit our own salvation because Jesus merited it for us. We don’t have to add anything to it because all of the heavy conditions were laid upon Christ. He bore the punishment; He fulfilled the law; He keeps us safe. AND, all the merits of Christ extend to us, and all of His graces are ours: We are adopted as His children, justified, sanctified, preserved, and will be glorified. May we join the Psalmist with this declaration, “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Your Name give glory, for the sake of Your steadfast love and Your faithfulness” (Ps. 115:1).

We are safe because of the covenant that exists between the Father and the Son. How safely we can surrender all things to Him, and rest as we confess, “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want” (Ps. 23:1) and “Blessed are they who trust Him” (Ps. 2:12).