

Sunday January 1, 2017, New Year's Day

Matthew 2:11 (NIV) On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

On this New Year's Day we go with the Magi to Bethlehem to where the baby Jesus has been born and join with them worshipping God's love, provision, and goodness. Our human response to God's great love is worship and awe, and the giving of our best gifts for God to use to transform the world. God draws all people to provide for one another the means to live into our faith in Jesus Christ!

What gift is God asking you to share in this New Year? Today will you chose to begin this New Year by opening your heart to Jesus Christ and being God's gift?

May your New Year begin in worship of Jesus Christ and the transformation of your heart and life!

Monday January 2, 2017

Isaiah 42:6 (NIV) "I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles."

One of the roles of a Prophet was to be a mouthpiece for God speaking to God's people. May the words of God spoken through the prophet Isaiah speak to us at the beginning of this New Year: That we were created to be in covenant with God and a light to all people!

Do you rely upon God's promises? Today will you trust God to hold your hand, to keep you faithfully, and to guide you to be a light to others?

May you walk faithfully into this New Year hand in hand with God trusting God to shine through you!

Tuesday January 3, 2017

Psalm 29:4, 11 (NIV) The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is majestic. The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace.

The Psalmist teaches us that God is powerful and majestic throughout this psalm and then concludes the psalm with the affirmation that God gives strength to God's people and blesses them with peace. As God's people we experience powerful storms that are overwhelming in our lives but we are not overwhelmed by them because of the great love God has for us, filling us with the strength we need and placing peace within our hearts!

When has God's powerful presence given you strength? Today will you let go of fear in the midst of the storms in your life and accept God's gift of strength and peace?

May you trust fully today in God who is capable of creating peace for you in the midst of the storm!

Wednesday January 4, 2017

Acts 10:34-35 (MSG) Peter fairly exploded with his good news: "It's God's own truth, nothing could be plainer: God plays no favorites! It makes no difference who you are or where you're from—if you want God and are ready to do as he says, the door is open."

God's good news is not a private thing, it should explode out of us as we share God's truth with others. God's love is available to every person who desires a relationship with God and are willing to live a joy filled loving life. The door is always open!

Are you ready to explode with the news of God's love? Today will you walk through door and fully embrace God's love for you?

May Peter's good news be your good news today: You are loved by God and the door to relationship is open!

Thursday January 5, 2017

Ephesians 1:17 (NIV) I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.

The Apostle Paul is teaching us to pray for one another and ask God to give spiritual gifts. The gifts of wisdom and revelation enable the receiver to discern and know God more intimately because God is revealing God's self to the seeker. With wisdom we come to know who we are and that we belong to and are dependent upon God for all of life!

Do you pray boldly for others and yourself? Today will you accept your spiritual gifts so you may know God better?

May you pray boldly today and receive God's spiritual gifts to grow in relationship with God!

Friday January 6, 2016 Epiphany

Matthew 2:1 (KJV) Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem.

Today is Epiphany, twelve days after Jesus' birth, a day when wise scholars came from the east to reveal Jesus' birth to king Herod and the religious leaders of Jerusalem. The season of Epiphany is an invitation for each of us to engage in the holy work of revealing Jesus, God with us, to the world!

How are you a light showing others Jesus? Today will you accept your sacred role as a wise one revealing and shining a light on Jesus to those who don't know him?

May you be an Epiphany light for others today so they may know Jesus!

Saturday January 7, 2017

Matthew 3:13 (NIV) Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John.

Following the Magi's visit the gospel of Matthew touches upon Joseph taking Mary and Jesus to Egypt until king Herod died and then moved the family to Nazareth at God's direction, then we jump to the adult Jesus coming to be baptized by John. Jesus began his ministry by first being baptized. We begin our Christian lives with baptism as well!

Do you remember your baptism? Today will you strive to live into your baptism vows?

May you remember today that Christian life and ministry begins with your baptism!

Sunday January 8, 2017 Baptism of the Lord Day

Matthew 3:16-17 (NIV) As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a

dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

Jesus was baptized by John to fulfill the Scriptures but it was so much more as he emerged from the water and the Holy Spirit dove from heaven and anointed him. God spoke, and declared Jesus as God's beloved Son with whom God was well pleased. Jesus modeled for us the transformation that happens at baptism when we are received into a new Spirit and Love filled relationship with God!

When do you most often sense God's Holy Spirit in your life? Today will you remember your baptism and welcome anew the anointing of the Holy Spirit and God's love in your life? (If you have never been baptized I urge you to find a pastor to explore with you becoming baptized and entering fully into a life with Jesus Christ!)

May you be empowered today by the Holy Spirit diving on you with God's words of love, relationship, and affirmation ringing in your ears!

Monday January 9, 2017

Isaiah 49:1 (NIV) Listen to me, you islands; hear this, you distant nations: Before I was born the Lord called me; from my mother's womb he has spoken my name.

The Prophet speaks to us of how God calls to us all of our lives even before birth speaking our names, shaping our identities, claiming us as beloved children with a mission in the world. God gives each of us gifts and talents to be used to improve the lives of others and call them back into relationship with God. In God's eyes each of us is worthy as God's child!

Do you hear God speaking your name? Today will you embrace your identity as God's child, deeply loved, and work to live into your ministry?

May you hear God's call in your life today and respond with joy!

Friday January 13, 2017

1 Corinthians 1:2-3 (NIV) To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his holy people, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul greeted the church in Corinth and us as those who have received healing, wholeness, and grace from God through Jesus Christ. When we call upon

Jesus to be the Lord of our lives with our whole hearts the power of God flows through us in amazing ways. This relationship is not earned by us but is the freely given gift of God that gives our lives ultimate meaning, purpose, and love!

Have you heard God's invitation to be a holy person? Today will you say "Yes" to Jesus as the Lord of your life and accept the power God gives to transform your life?

May you hear Paul's greeting today as an invitation for you to call on Jesus and accept God's gifts for you!

Saturday January 14, 2016

John 1:32-34 (NIV) Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' I have seen and I testify that this is God's Chosen One."

John the Baptist had become well known as a holy man who practiced the spiritual disciplines he preached and was revered as a spiritual teacher. John spoke with all of his authority to identify Jesus as God's Chosen One who baptized with the Holy Spirit. May we heed John's testimony and place our trust in Jesus Christ the one who gives us the Holy Spirit!

Does God direct you to share your knowledge of Jesus with others? Today will you trust the testimony of John and become a follower of Jesus Christ?

May John direct your attention and heart to Jesus Christ, God's Chosen One, who baptizes with the Holy Spirit!

Sunday January 15, 2017

John 1:37-39 (NIV) When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?" They said, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?" "Come," he replied, "and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him.

John the Baptist was with two of his disciples when Jesus walked by and he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!" The disciples immediately began following Jesus wanting to find out for themselves who he was, and Jesus invited them to come and see for

themselves. Jesus invites us too to come and spend time with him and grow in a life changing relationship with God's Chosen!

Have you heard Jesus' invitation to follow him? Today will you accept Jesus' invitation to spend time with him?

May you respond to Jesus' question of "What do you want?" as an invitation to life transforming relationship!

Monday January 16, 2017 MLK Jr. Day

Amos 5:24 (NIV) But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never failing stream!

Martin Luther King Jr. often quoted this passage from the Prophet Amos as a call to faithful reliance upon God in the midst of the trials of racial profiling and rampant social, cultural, and economic injustice. This passage is a source of strength and hope whenever God's people lose their way and break their covenant with God. It is when we trust in God's providence and work with God, that justice rolls like a river and righteousness never fails!

How do you honor MLK Jr.'s legacy? Today will you choose to let God work through you as a source of justice and righteousness in your community?

May the witness of prophets like Amos and MLK Jr. empower your journey with God to let justice roll and righteousness never fail!

Tuesday January 17, 2017

Psalms 27:4-5 (NIV) One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord and to seek him in his temple. For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock.

The Psalmist leads us in seeking what is most important in this life, a relationship with God at the center of our lives. Troubles will find us, however when our hearts and lives are in God's hands then we are given the strength, protection, and comfort we need to overcome all that transpires with abiding love!

What do you seek from God? Today will you seek to be fully in God's loving presence and allow God to anoint and fill your life with Holy living?

May the Lord our God be your safe dwelling place today and always!

Wednesday January 18, 2017

Psalm 27:7-8 (NLT) Hear me as I pray, O Lord. Be merciful and answer me! My heart has heard you say, "Come and talk with me." And my heart responds, "Lord, I am coming."

The Psalmist leads us today in speaking to God with all of our emotions, our doubts and fears as well as our faith and joy. Because of the things we are going through there will be times when we feel distant from God but the assurance we have is that God is always as close as our heart beat. Take courage from the Psalmist and pray with an open heart about everything in your life with God!

Do you hear God inviting you to conversation in your heart? Today will you respond to God like the Psalmist and speak your emotions in full confidence that God wants to hear everything?

May you feel empowered today to speak freely of your whole life and all of your emotions to God in prayer!

Thursday January 19, 2017

1 Corinthians 17-18 (NIV) For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with wisdom and eloquence, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

The Apostle Paul redirected the attention of the faithful in Corinth from arguing over whose baptism was most prestigious to focusing upon the power of the cross of Jesus Christ to claim and redeem their lives. The Word of God transforms an instrument of shame and death into the means of our salvation and is a symbol of God's redeeming power in our lives!

What do you focus on in your life? Today will you seek God's promises of salvation in the power of the cross of Jesus Christ?

May your focus today be upon God's power through the cross of Christ!

Friday January 20, 2017

Matthew 4:12, 17 (NIV) When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he withdrew to Galilee. From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

Jesus' public ministry began after John the Baptist was put in prison, and he left home in Nazareth and went to live in Capernaum on the shore of Galilee. Jesus called all people to examine their lives, acknowledge where their thoughts and habits led them away from a healthy life with God, and then to make changes immediately, because God's kingdom is near. Jesus extends this same urgent call to us today!

Where in your life do you need to repent? Today will you respond to Jesus' call and do the work of examining and changing your life to be in alignment with God's love?

May Jesus speak his words of repentance and grace into your life today and may they bring great blessing and transformation to you!

Saturday January 21, 2017

Matthew 4:19-20 (NIV) "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." At once they left their nets and followed him.

We read this account of Jesus calling his first disciples and we wonder at what we would do if we were one of the fishermen. Would we leave our livelihoods and families behind to follow Jesus? I give thanks for the countless numbers of disciples who have responded to Jesus' call through the centuries and have followed him!

How have you responded to Jesus' call in your life? Today will you will you take seriously your calling to fish for people in Jesus' name?

May you hear and respond today to Jesus as he calls you to a new life as his disciple!

Please pray for all those who have left behind jobs, families, and community to become pastors and missionaries!

Sunday January 22, 2017

Matthew 4:23 (NIV) Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.

Jesus called disciples to "Come, follow me" and then went throughout the region of Galilee teaching and healing. The Gospel of Matthew is written so that Jesus' call is a living invitation to each person who hears or reads. An invitation to engage in Jesus' ministry of connecting to others and sharing the fruits of the kingdom of God!

Do you hear Jesus calling you to experience new life? Today will you give your heart to Jesus and join him in living the good news of the kingdom and experience the power of healing in his name?

May you respond to Jesus' call today and experience first hand the good news and the healing it brings!

Monday January 23, 2017

1 Corinthians 1:25 (NIV) For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

Paul's letter to the church in Corinth to address issues of people segregating themselves by class, ethnicity, social status, and ability to argue convincingly, addresses issues we still struggle with in and out of the church today. Paul clearly puts forth for all of us the truth that God is totally beyond our human capacities of wisdom and strength. We are all loved and treasured for who we are in God's eyes not who we think we ought to be!

Do you need Jesus' help to stop comparing yourself to others? Today will you let go of trying to be seen as wise by others and accept God's love in Jesus Christ?

May you experience peace and joy today by letting go of the need to be wise in human eyes and embracing God's love for you!

Tuesday January 24, 2017

Micah 6:8 (NIV) He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

This verse is the conclusion of a lively exchange between God and the prophet Micah where God first speaks of how God has issues with how ungrateful the people of Israel have been and Micah asks how extravagant should the people's response be. God declares that what is needed is walking with God in humility and being people who act with love and justice!

Do you set up barriers to a relationship with God? Today will you allow yourself to simply be with God as a person of humility, love, mercy, and justice?

May you find peace of heart today by simply being your true self with God!

Wednesday January 25, 2017

Psalm 15:1a-3 (NIV) Who may live on your holy mountain? The one whose walk is blameless, who does what is righteous, who speaks the truth from their heart; whose tongue utters no slander, who does no wrong to a neighbor, and casts no slur on others.

The Psalmist teaches us how we are transformed as we learn to be people of faith and grace. We live in covenant with God and our neighbors doing what is right, speaking truthfully from our hearts, building up our character and one another. The life of faith is about living Gods love so we become God's love!

How are you doing in living faithfully? Today will you accept God's loving invitation to grow in faithful living?

May you grow today in righteousness as you strive to speak from the heart words that uplift and share God's love!

Thursday January 26, 2017

Matthew 5:1-2 (NIV) Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them.

Jesus has been teaching and healing, and crowds of people are coming from everywhere to experience Jesus. So he climbed up on a mountainside and sat down in Rabbinic style and began to teach everyone how to be people of faith. Jesus begins by teaching about the attitudes that we must grow into in order to become his disciples!

What are you bringing to Jesus? Today will you center yourself in God's love and grow into being Jesus' disciples?

May you receive healing and wholeness today from resting in God's Word!

Friday January 27, 2017

1 Corinthians 1:21 (MSG) Since the world in all its fancy wisdom never had a clue when it came to knowing God, God in his wisdom took delight in using what the

world considered dumb—preaching, of all things!—to bring those who trust him into the way of salvation.

The Apostle Paul teaches that our preconceptions and worldly wisdom often blind us to knowing and being in relationship with God. Paul tells us to stop trying to label and quantify God, and instead take delight in God's self revelation through Jesus Christ crucified on a cross to save each of us who believe in his power to cancel our sins and restore our relationship with God!

Are you ready to let go of your preconceptions about God? Today will you embrace God's wisdom in Jesus our Christ, trusting him with your heart, mind, and soul, and walk into the way of salvation?

May you see and hear God's wisdom in Jesus Christ today and trust him to lead you into the way of salvation!

Saturday January 28, 2017

Matthew 5:5-6 (MSG) You're blessed when you're content with just who you are—no more, no less. That's the moment you find yourselves proud owners of everything that can't be bought. You're blessed with you've worked up a good appetite for God. He's food and drink in the best meal you'll ever eat.

I love how Eugene Peterson has translated the Beatitudes, he especially captured Jesus' teaching that helps us avoid comparison, envy, and greed when we know and accept who we are as God's child. The second part of this teaching is that true blessing comes when we hunger for God. Together these produce peace and joy in our lives!

What is the level of peace and joy in your life? Today will you ask Jesus to help you accept yourself as loved by God and seek to love God with all your heart?

May you experience today being content with being 'you' and receiving God's amazing Love!

Sunday January 29, 2017

Matthew 5:8 (MSG) You're blessed when you get your inside world—your mind and heart—put right. Then you can see God in the outside world.

The Beatitudes are cumulative, meaning that each one builds upon the ones that came before. As we live into each of the Beatitudes as individuals and community our

relationships with God and one another grow. When we can see God at work within us we have the right lens to clearly see God at work in others and throughout the world!

Where do you see God? Today will you put your inside world in God's order and see God in others?

May you come alive today as you live into the Beatitudes and your potential as God's beloved child!

Monday January 30, 2017

Isaiah 58:6-7 (NIV) "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?"

The Prophet Isaiah is functioning here as the mouthpiece of God speaking to the people about how true fasting is not lip-service on one day a year but a choosing of practices that break the yoke of injustice, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, providing shelter, and caring for family. God's words are just as timely for us in the 21st century who seek to follow Jesus to care for those who are most in need in our communities!

What kind of fasting do you do? Today will you choose to follow Jesus in fasting from injustice and acting with justice and compassion?

May your words and actions today follow your trust in Jesus and his ongoing work of breaking the yoke of injustice!

Tuesday January 31, 2017

Psalms 112:4-5 (NIV) Even in darkness light dawns for the upright, for those who are gracious and compassionate and righteous. God will come to those who are generous and lend freely, who conduct their affairs with justice.

The Psalmist wrote this psalm to encourage God's people to be faithful and loving even in the midst of challenging times. When we live fully as God's beloved people we bring the light of God to difficult circumstances by the graciousness of how we conduct ourselves, the generosity in which we give of our time, talents, and treasures, and how we work compassionately for those experiencing injustice!

How are being a light in the darkness for God's people? Today will you seek to be God's gracious, compassionate, and generous servant?

May your thoughts and actions show God's love, compassion, and generosity to others today!

Wednesday February 1, 2017

1 Corinthians 2:4-5 (NIV) My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power.

The pharisee Saul, persecutor of Christians, had been struck down in his arrogance by the power of God, and he was filled with the power of the Holy Spirit and transformed into the Apostle Paul, passionate follower of Jesus Christ. Paul knew that words of human wisdom would lead people away from God and that what the Corinthian people needed was a firsthand experience of the Holy Spirit to be the foundation of their faith in Jesus. We too need the Holy Spirit to ground our faith in God's power!

What is the foundation of your faith in Jesus Christ? Today will you ask Jesus to fill you with the Holy Spirit and ground your faith in God's power?

May the power of the Holy Spirit fill you today and empower your faith as a passionate follower of Jesus Christ!

Thursday February 2, 2017

Matthew 5:13 (MSG) "Let me tell you why you are here. You're here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth. If you lose your saltiness, how will people taste godliness? You've lost your usefulness and will end up in the garbage."

This is Jesus' first teaching following the Beatitudes where he declares to his disciples and followers, "You are the salt of the earth." Sodium chloride, salt, is stable and never loses its flavor, and Jesus teaches that we are to be his flavor bringing out God's glory everywhere we go. Jesus gives meaning, purpose, and holiness to our lives!

Are you salt-seasoning bringing out God-flavors in others? Today will you invite Jesus to be the salt-seasoning of your life and give you meaning and purpose?

May you embrace your earth saltiness today and bring out the God-flavors everywhere you go!

Friday February 3, 2017

Matthew 5:14 (MSG) Here's another way to put it: You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill.

Jesus spoke boldly to his disciples and followers about their new way of being in the world. They are to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world, it is impossible for human beings to see color without light. Our mission is to be Jesus' light with boldness so the world will see and know God's love!

Who has been Jesus's light in your life enabling you to see God in technicolor? Today will you live boldly being Jesus' light so others can see the beauty of God?

May you embrace today Jesus' call for you to be his light in world enabling others to see the colors of God's love!

Saturday February 4, 2017

Matthew 5:16 (NIV) In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Jesus teaches that it is his light that shines through us bringing the gospel to life, drawing people to him. Archbishop William Temple is quoted as saying, "The church is the only organization on earth that exists for those who are not its members." We are called by Jesus to carry his light to where people are experiencing darkness!

How is your Jesus shine? Today will you seek to shine with Jesus' light everywhere he leads you?

May your life shine brightly with Jesus' light today and every day!

Sunday February 5, 2017

Matthew 5:17 (NIV) "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them."

As Jesus taught his disciples he made it very clear that God had sent him to lead by fully living the covenant of God's Laws and fully living the relationship with God that the Prophets proclaimed. Jesus invites us to fully live with him by being the salt of covenant and the light of right relationship with God. It is a high calling that requires us to fully trust Jesus as we set aside our own agendas and follow him!

Do you do what is easy or what is right with God? Today will you commit yourself to following Jesus and living in covenant with God?

May you trust Jesus today to lead you into eternal life as salt and light in God's covenantal love!

Monday February 6, 2017

Deuteronomy 30:15-16 (NRSV) See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the Lord your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess.

Moses was delivering his final teachings to the Hebrew people to prepare them for life in the promised land across the Jordan, a life he would not be joining them in. He emphasized in the strongest terms the stark difference between living in covenant with God and the rapid diminishment of life without God. We too have a choice today and every day, I urge you to listen to Moses and choose life with God!

Do you make a conscious choice to live with God every day? Today will you choose to love and live in fellowship with God?

May your choices today honor God and be filled with abundant life!

Tuesday February 7, 2017

Deuteronomy 30:19-20 (NIV) ...Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the Lord is your life...

Moses is aware that his people will be presented with all kinds of choices and temptations when they leave the desert for the promised land, and he urges them to choose God. We too are often overwhelmed with options and choices (just look at the options on every grocery shelf!) but Moses simplifies it for us. When we choose to love God and listen and hold fast to God we make the best choice and find life, belonging, purpose, and love for ourselves and our children!

What do you do when overwhelmed with choices? Today will you consistently choose God and welcome the blessings God lovingly places in your life?

May you experience peace of heart and mind today as you choose God over the temptations of the world!

Wednesday February 8, 2017

Psalm 119:1-2 (NIV) Blessed are those whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the Lord. Blessed are those who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart.

The beginning of the longest Psalm points to the Psalmist's teaching that the way to be blessed is to seek the Lord with all our heart and to live God's law. This Psalm is an amazing work of poetry that grounds us in God's love found in God's commandments as it works its way through the Hebrew alphabet with each verse starting with the same letter in each section. The care and joy of the Poet is the care and joy we need to take in our relationship with God and living God's Word!

Do you experience freedom and joy living in God's Word? Today will you join the Psalmist in delighting in a living relationship with God that uses all of your creative gifts?

May you experience God's Law today as loving boundaries that give you freedom to express your best self!

Thursday February 9, 2017

1 Corinthians 3:6 (NIV) I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow.

The Apostle Paul was explaining to the church people in Corinth that God is the true source of spiritual growth and that he and Apollos as spiritual teachers are God's servants. This is an apt reminder for us in the 21st century that we may have beloved pastors and spiritual guides whom we revere, but we can not love them more than we love God. Good pastors and shepherds direct their people to love, trust, and depend upon God!

Do you have a pastor who directs you to God? Today will you trust that God is growing you spiritually with love?

May you honor today your spiritual teachers and give glory to God who is the source of your faith, growth, and love!

Friday February 10, 2017

Matthew 5:23-24 (NIV) Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

Jesus was speaking about the dangers of deeply held seething anger that festers in the soul and causes harm to self and others. He teaches that we can not be in a good relationship with God when we are holding this kind of anger within us. We must work things out with other people releasing our grievances and anger so that we can once again love God and others with an open heart!

Do you hold onto hurt and anger against others? Today will you ask Jesus to give you the strength and courage to release your pain and receive his reconciliation and healing?

May your heart be made whole and loving today as Jesus helps you to release anger, hurt, and pain!

Saturday February 11, 2017

Matthew 5:37 (MSG) In making your speech sound more religious, it becomes less true. Just say 'yes' and 'no.' When you manipulate words to get your own way, you go wrong.

Jesus was very clear and direct about how people should use language to speak truth and to not embellish and manipulate others. He knew how easily we deceive ourselves by how we use words to reframe our thoughts and lead ourselves astray. To live as people of faith is to follow Jesus' example of being clear, direct, and simple with 'yes' and 'no!'

Have you listened recently to the words you speak? Today will you be mindful of the words you speak and seek to be clear and direct in all you say to God and others?

May your words today reflect your faith in Jesus and his practice of being clear and direct in all he said!

Sunday February 12, 2017

Matthew 5:17 (NIV) "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them."

Jesus spoke early in his 'Sermon on the Mount' about his identity and purpose. His was and is the Messiah, the one who is the embodiment of God's Law and the teachings of the Prophets.

Jesus teaches us to see the heart of God, the way for us to focus upon God's heart, and live holy lives in God's heart!

Whom do you see when you look at Jesus? Today will you open your eyes to see and know Jesus as the embodiment of God's love for all of creation?

May you be filled with wonder today as you encounter Jesus the fullness of God's everlasting love for you!

Monday February 13, 2017

Leviticus 19:1-2 (NIV) The Lord said to Moses, "Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: 'Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy.'"

This passage speaks to our relationship with God, that we, the beings God created in God's image, are to be holy because God is holy. Then Moses spoke to God's people about how they are to honor and respect God and one another as people of justice, integrity, and love. We too are to be people of justice, integrity, and love as we live into what it means to be holy in the image of God!

Are you mindful of being holy when you make decisions? Today will you seek to be holy by making choices to act with justice, integrity, and love?

May your thoughts and actions today, and every day, show that you are made in the image of our holy God!

Tuesday February 14, 2017 Valentine's Day

1 John 4:7 (NIV) Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.

God is love, a truth revealed to us throughout the holy Scriptures, and in the teachings, life, death, and resurrection of God's son Jesus Christ. God is the source and wellspring of love, kindness, and compassion. We show that we know God whenever we love others through our words and actions!

How are you showing God's love? Today will you be God's love and kindness to every person you encounter?

May you be God's valentine today to every person you encounter so they too will know that God is love!

Wednesday February 15, 2017

Psalm 119:37 (NIV) Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word.

The Psalmist offers us wisdom in asking God to help us keep our eyes and hearts away from distractions so that we can focus on what is most important, living in God's Word with God. Distraction and wandering eyes are not just a modern malady but have been a constant struggle with God's people. Whenever you find yourself distracted by internet ads and other worthless things follow the Psalmist's advice and ask God to help you refocus!

Do your eyes lead you away from God? Today will you be mindful of how everything you see can be a reminder to thank and praise God?

May you trust in God's Word today and call upon Jesus to refocus your wandering attention back to God!

Thursday February 16, 2017

1 Corinthians 3:10-11 (NIV) By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul was a wise teacher and evangelist as he shared the wisdom of building a Christian life. The foundation of being a Christian is always Jesus Christ. Each teaching, tradition, and spiritual practice must have congruity and integrity with Jesus as we build a true life as his follower!

Who are the wise builders in your Christian life? Today will you examine with a critical eye and test the building practices of your life in Jesus Christ and make sure of their integrity and congruity with Jesus?

May your Christian life and identity be built upon the firm foundation of Jesus Christ!

Friday February 17, 2017

1 Corinthians 3:16 (NIV) Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst?

The Apostle Paul has a powerful message for the Corinthians and us, as he points out that we individually and collectively are God's temple, and God's Holy Spirit chooses to live in us. This is a reminder that our bodies are important and we need to take excellent care of them because God dwells in us, the people, not in buildings. We are a whole of body, heart, mind, and soul bearing the image of God!

What does it mean to you to be God's temple? Today will you take care of your whole self, including care of body, heart, mind, and soul because you are chosen and loved by God?

May you cherish and honor today our God who lovingly chooses to live in us!

Saturday February 18, 2017

Matthew 5:38-39 (NIV) "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also.

Jesus' teachings were radical for his time and unfortunately for our time too. His call to discipleship asks us to not retaliate when someone affronts us, insults us, or offers bodily harm. As children of God and followers of Christ we are called to live lives of loving forgiveness and grace, and to rely fully upon God because we can not do this by ourselves!

How are you at forgiving others or yourself? Today will call on Jesus whenever you are tempted to hit back or slam another person because you experience offense and ask for the grace to forgive?

May Jesus give you strength and courage today to change your responses to others and offer forgiveness!

Sunday February 19, 2017

Matthew 5:43-45 (NIV) "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

Jesus reminds his hearers of the conventional wisdom of the day and then adds the little word 'but' that changes everything. He teaches us that love is not exclusive but encompasses the evil and good, and that when we encounter those seeking to harm us

to transform enmity through love and prayer. When we live and act like Jesus we truly are God's children!

Are you conditional with your love and prayers? Today will you engage in the hard work of changing your perceptions of others and how you act towards them by embodying Jesus' message of radical love?

May you be today a child of God by radically loving neighbors and enemies alike as Jesus did!

Monday February 20, 2017

Exodus 24:12 (NIV) The Lord said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain and stay here, and I will give you the tablets of stone with the law and commandments I have written for their instruction."

Moses was called by God to climb a mountain, be alone in God's presence, and receive God's commandments for Moses and God's people. This was a moment of transition for God's people and for Moses' leadership as he received the vision and mission for leading the Hebrew people. Mountaintops offer us an opportunity to spend quality time with God, and receive perspective on what God is calling us to do and be, as individuals and communities!

Have you had a mountain top experience with God? Today will you set aside time and space to clear your heart and mind to experience God anew and receive vision and direction for your life?

May you listen today for God's invitation to spend Holy time alone with God!

Tuesday February 21, 2017

Exodus 24:17-18 (NIV) To the Israelites the glory of the Lord looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain. Then Moses entered the cloud as he went on up the mountain. And he stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

The Israelites had remained on the plain below the mountain where they could see the glory of the Lord when Moses climbed and then waited six days for God's invitation to come to the summit. Moses went into the cloud that appeared to be fire and spent forty transforming days in God's presence learning and becoming holy. God invites us to leave our normal environments to spend formational time alone with God to grow and learn to become holy!

Do you have a special place where you spend quality alone time with God? Will you open your schedule book today and make appointments to spend special time alone with God each week?

May you answer God's invitation today to come away to a special place and spend quality time with God!

Wednesday February 22, 2017

Psalm 28:7 (NIV) The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him.

This is one of David's Psalms that he wrote when he was in the midst of adversity. Yesterday afternoon my Eye Dr. gave me news I had been fearing as my eyesight has been diminishing, I have Glaucoma, but it can be treated with daily eyedrops so I won't lose my vision. This morning this verse spoke of my joy and praise of God as I trust my whole self to God's amazing care and love, and I invite you to make this verse your verse too!

What fear do you need to let go of and trust to God? Today will you pray Psalm 28:7 and experience God's amazing help and joy in your life?

May the Lord be your strength and shield today as you trust your heart, receive help, and experience joy!

Thursday February 23, 2017

2 Peter 1:20-21 (NIV) Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

The Apostle Peter wrote to early Christians to encourage them in their faith and to explain how God reveals God's self through the prophecy of Scripture. Prophecy is not about telling the future but speaking about the present reality of God's will being active in our lives. The Holy Spirit continues to work in and through us speaking God's truth!

How does Peter's explanation affect your understanding of the prophets in the Scriptures? Today will you open your heart and mind to the work of the Holy Spirit in your life?

May the Holy Spirit open your heart and mind today to God's Word!

Friday February 24, 2017

Matthew 17:1 (NIV) After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves.

Previous to this hike Jesus had told his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem where he will be killed and raised to life on the third day, and Peter had been rebuked by Jesus when he tried to dissuade him from this course of action and Jesus had told him that he was focused on human concerns not God's concerns. Jesus was leading Peter, James, and John to a place where they could experience the presence of 'God in Jesus' in a profound new way. We too, need to be led by Jesus to a place away from our everyday life to experience 'God in Jesus' in a profound new way!

Do you tend to focus on human concerns rather than God's concerns? Are you going to follow Jesus today and trust him to bring you into the presence of God?

May your trust in Jesus lead you to a life changing encounter today with God!

Saturday February 25, 2017

2 Peter 1:16-17 (NIV) For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

Peter was explaining that he and the other apostles of Christ were not following any clever script but speaking powerfully from their lived experience with Jesus and God glorifying Jesus in their presence. Peter is a wonderful example to us that simply speaking of Jesus and how he has changed our lives in our own words can be life transforming and bring others into relationship with Jesus!

What are your life transforming experiences with Jesus? Today will you share in your own words what Jesus has done to change your life?

May Peter inspire you today to speak of God's love at work through Jesus in your life!

Sunday February 26, 2017 Transfiguration Sunday

Matthew 17:5-7 (NIV) While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well

pleased. Listen to him!" When the disciples heard this they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. But Jesus came and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid."

Peter, James, and John had just witnessed Jesus shining with his true inner glory, in conversations with Moses and Elijah (the superstars of Hebrew faith), and been enveloped by the presence of God and heard God speak to them about Jesus. Little wonder why they were overwhelmed and afraid, but in the midst of their fear, the hand of God in Jesus reaches out to touch and reassure them. Jesus is always ready to reach out and give us courage!

When are the times in your life Jesus has touched you? Today will you see Jesus as God's loving hand reaching out for you?

May God's Glory revealed in Jesus Christ transform today your worries and fears into faith and assurance!

Monday February 27, 2017

Genesis 2:15-17 (NIV) The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die."

God placed the first human in the Garden of Eden to admire God's creation and to care for it with the freedom to eat from and enjoy everything except for one tree. God still desires for us to lovingly work and care for creation. And since Adam did eat of the tree of knowledge we needed Jesus to instill in us the knowledge of the good we are to pursue to live holy lives!

How do you handle temptation? Today will you seek Jesus' help and guidance to pursue God's goodness and lovingly care for God's creation?

May you fully rely upon Jesus today and always to choose good and care for God's earth and people!

Tuesday February 28, 2017 Shrove Tuesday

Psalms 51:10-11 (NIV) Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.

This Psalm of the penitent King David is traditionally used on Ash Wednesday to begin the season of Lent and the inner search for areas of ourselves that need radical change and growth. I begin this journey today as I burn the dried palm branches from Palm Sunday, which always flare up with a bright hot flame that leaves a deep black ash. The process of grinding the ash in a mortar and pestle into a fine powder is for me the work God does in us to transform the detritus of our lives into the dust of creative love!

What needs transforming in your life? Today will you pray for a renewal of your steadfast spirit and celebrate God's ongoing work of transformation in your life?

May you celebrate today God's invitation to transformation and renewal in your life through the Holy Spirit!

Wednesday March 1, 2017 Ash Wednesday

Psalm 51:1-2, 17 (NIV) Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.

The ashen cross we receive this day on our forehead is an outward sign of the inward plea and acknowledgement to God of our sins, the brokenness of our relationship, and the need for cleansing and healing. The Psalm guides us to be real with ourselves and God, to recognize that we can not fix it ourselves, we can not smooth things over and make them look pretty. What God wants is for us to break our pride, and break our hearts open to make way for God to heal us!

Do you remember that God created you from dust? Today will you acknowledge your mortality and sin, and the most important thing in the world is to be reconciled with God?

May you begin God's great work of healing you today as you break open your heart and ask God to cleanse you!

Thursday March 2, 2017

Romans 5:17 (NLT) For the sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul was explaining how Adam broke his covenant with God and how death was the consequence, but the amazing news is God's wonderful grace and gift of righteousness in Jesus Christ. For each of us who accepts God's gift of relationship in Jesus will be given the gift to overcome sin and death!

Are you ready to say 'Yes' to God's gifts? Today will you choose Jesus Christ and follow him into new and abundant life overcoming sin and death?

May you choose new life today in Jesus Christ and receive God's wonderful grace overcoming sin and death!

Friday March 3, 2017

Matthew 4:1-2 (NIV) Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted (tested) by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

Jesus was led from his baptism and affirmation from God by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to an extended time of focused prayer. He fasted not only from food but the normal busyness of life to search his soul and discern the mission and ministry to which God was calling him. The forty days of Lent are our wilderness time to fast from the myriad of things that distract us from a sustaining relationship with God!

From what does God want you to fast? Today will you commit to spending wilderness time with God fasting from overcommitment in order to discern God's loving direction for your life?

May you learn from Jesus today that discernment and a closer walk with God require fasting from your busyness!

Saturday March 4, 2017

Matthew 4:4 (NIV) Jesus answered, "It is written; 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

After 40 days of fasting Jesus was famished and the devil entices him to turn stones into food. Jesus resists temptation and lifts up that it is the word of God that sustains us, not just food. Temptations always lead us away from relationship with God, and we are so blessed to have Jesus' example and teaching to help us resist the enticing and rely upon the holy and true, God!

What tempts you away from relationship with God? Today will you call upon Jesus to give you the strength to resist temptation and seek to live in the word of God?

May Jesus be your guide and strength today to resist anything that seeks to replace the word of God in your life!

Tuesday March 7, 2017

Genesis 12:1 (NIV) The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you."

God spoke a word of invitation, change, and challenge into Abram's comfortable existence in his father's household. God has a way of speaking into our lives too, inviting us to journey deeper into faith by making substantive changes in our lives that cause us to be uncomfortable in the short term but lead us to a place where we are a blessing to others and we learn to fully rely upon God's grace!

Is God speaking to you a word of change in your life? Will you have the courage today to pay attention to what God is inviting you to change?

May you fully engage the practice of Lent today by listening to God's call to change your life!

Wednesday March 8, 2017

Psalms 121:7-8 (NIV) The Lord will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life; the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.

The Psalmist shares a profound truth of God with us in these verses. God keeps us, we are beloved by God, and God watches over our lives desiring love and goodness for us. This loving relationship is for today and forevermore!

Do you believe that you are God's beloved? Today will you choose to live into this loving relationship with God, trusting God wholeheartedly?

May you choose today to live wholeheartedly as God's beloved child!

Sunday March 19, 2017

John 4:25-26 (NIV) The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." Then Jesus declared, "I, the one speaking to you—I am he."

Jesus had an extended conversation with a woman at a well in Samaria that ranged from the practicality of drawing water from a well for a drink, to the woman's life, to

the 'here and now' offer of living water and Jesus' revelation that he is the Messiah. Jesus comes to offer himself to each of us to give us his living water of new life!

Do you recognize Jesus when he talks to you? Today will you open your heart and mind to recognize Jesus in the other you are speaking to and accept his gift of living water?

May you be totally open today to encountering Jesus and allowing his gift of living water to bubble up in you!

Monday March 20, 2017

1 Samuel 16:7 (NIV) But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

The Prophet Samuel had been sent by God to anoint a new king over Israel and he thought God would select the one who appeared most kingly. The wise writer of 1 Samuel teaches us that as God's people we learn to look past the outer appearance and see people's hearts as God does!

Do you make snap judgements based upon a person's appearance? Today will you ask God to help you take the time to look past another's appearance and see their heart?

May you practice godliness today by looking deeply into the heart instead of the appearance of each person you meet!

Tuesday March 21, 2017

Psalms 23:2 (NIV) He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul.

King David wrote this psalm drawing upon his days as a shepherd and his deep and abiding relationship with God. He encourages us to make time and space in our busy day to allow our Shepherd to care for us by bringing us to a place of rest and refreshment. Our souls, my friends, crave this renewal time!

When was the last time you rested with The Shepherd? Today will you accept the Shepherd's invitation to rest and renewal?

May you experience rest and renewal in The Shepherd's presence today!

Wednesday March 22, 2017

Ephesians 5:8-9 (NIV) For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth).

When we come into relationship with God through Jesus Christ our lives change in profound ways as we leave old habits, thought patterns, and ways of relating to others behind to live in Jesus' light and love. Living in light means we seek to know and be fully known by God with no secrets or shame to bind us, but have instead love, goodness, truth, and healing to make us whole!

Are you living in Jesus' light? Today will you ask Jesus to shine brightly within you healing the dark places within you?

May you live fully as a child of God's light today being set free by the truth of God's love for you!

Thursday March 23, 2017

Ephesians 5:15-16 (NIV) Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity.

The Apostle Paul urged all Christians to be mindful and careful of the choices we make in our daily lives. Lent is an excellent time to find opportunities to spend more time with God. Time spent with God is the wisest investment we can make with our lives!

Do you examine the choices you make? Today will you seek God's direction in prayer to make wise choices?

May you make the most of every opportunity God places before you today to live faithfully!

Friday March 24, 2017

John 9:1-3 (CEB) As Jesus walked along, he saw a man who was blind from birth. Jesus' disciples asked, "Rabbi, who sinned so that he was born blind, this man or his parents?" Jesus answered, "Neither he nor his parents. This happened so that God's mighty works might be displayed in him."

Jesus took every moment to teach his followers about God's grace and living in the kingdom of God, this conversation showed Jesus breaking the societal chains that

wrongly linked physical disability to sin, separation from God. Jesus teaches that every person no matter their ability or disability is loved and cherished by God!

Do you judge people who are differently abled than you are? Today will you fully embrace Jesus' teaching that all people are loved and cherished by God regardless of body and ability?

May you be empowered by Jesus today to break the sin of judgement and embrace God's all encompassing love!

Saturday March 25, 2017

John 9:5-7 (NIV) "While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means "Sent"). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

Jesus had stopped with his disciples next to a man blind from birth, and he knelt beside the man and made a paste with his own saliva, his holy essence, and placed it on the man's eyes. When the man listened to Jesus' voice and responded to his direction a miracle happened and he could see. When we allow Jesus to touch us with his essence, listen to his voice, and follow his words we too experience miracle and healing in our lives!

Have you heard and responded to Jesus speaking into your blindness? Today will you welcome Jesus' healing touch and loving directions to make you whole?

May you respond to Jesus today like the blind man and be made whole!

Sunday March 26, 2017

John 9:25 (NIV) He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!"

The Pharisees were upset because Jesus healed the eyes of a man born blind on the Sabbath and they questioned the man about Jesus. His testimony had integrity and power because it spoke of his lived experience of Jesus' healing love: "One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!" Jesus continues to enter into our lives opening our eyes to see God's healing and restorative love!

Where have you experienced Jesus' healing touch in your life? Today will you share the story of how Jesus touched and healed you?

May you experience today Jesus' amazing healing love and see the world with new eyes!

Monday March 27, 2017

Psalm 130:3-4 (NIV) If you, Lord, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness, so that we can, with reverence, serve you.

The Psalmist leads us in calling out to the Lord in our very real need for God to be at the center of our lives. We can trust that God forgives our many sins and failings, healing our relationship with God so that we may reverently serve God with our whole hearts!

Do you cry out to God in your need? Today will you open your heart and trust in God's forgiveness and desire to be in relationship with you?

May you give all your pain to God today, accept forgiveness, and serve God with a whole heart!

Tuesday March 28, 2017

Ezekiel 37:1-4 (NIV) The hand of the Lord was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor the the valley, bones that were very dry. He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" I said, "Sovereign Lord, you alone know." Then he said to me, "Prophesy to the bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord!'"

Ezekiel was given many dramatic visions by the Lord that spoke graphically of the condition of God's people, and was asked by God to speak God's words with the power of the Holy Spirit to enable the people to recognize their circumstances and return to a healthy relationship with God. When God gives us visions of what is and what can be, we too are given the power of the Holy Spirit to speak the 'Word of the Lord' to bring renewed life and relationship!

What has the Lord shown you? Today will you be open to seeing and hearing what God has placed on your heart?

Remember Friends, Jesus words: "Do not be afraid," and have the courage to live into God's vision for your life!

Wednesday March 29, 2017

Romans 8:6 (CEB) The attitude that comes from selfishness leads to death, but the attitude that comes from the Spirit leads to life and peace.

The Apostle Paul was very clear in this section of the letter to the Romans that the source of our life's focus has everything to do with the outcome of our lives. When we are Holy Spirit led then we have a fullness of life that fills us with God's peace!

What is the source the attitude you live? Today will you invite the Holy Spirit to lead you into life and peace?

May you choose to set your mind and heart on God today and be led by the Holy Spirit into new life and peace!

Thursday March 30, 2017

Romans 8:11 (NRSV) If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

This season of Lent has been forming and preparing us to live through the Holy Spirit as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul boldly declares that the Holy Spirit, is active within each of us when we put our faith in Jesus into action fully embodying his loving teachings and way of being into our everyday lives. Even if our bodies should fail and die, we have abundant life in God's Holy Spirit!

Has your Lent been changing you? Today will you invite the Holy Spirit to live in you and empower your faith in Jesus?

May God's Holy Spirit dwell in you and give you life today and every day!

Friday March 31, 2017

John 11:25-26 (NIV) Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

Jesus spoke revealing his power of life over death to Martha, whose brother Lazarus had died and been buried in the tomb for four days. Jesus assures us that when we believe in him and live into that belief we have life in him that never dies even when our bodies die, our life continues forever in him!

What do you believe? Today will you accept Jesus' promise of eternal life, and give your life into his care?

May you trust this day and every day that your true life is found in our Lord Jesus Christ!

Saturday April 1, 2017

John 11:33-35 (NIV) When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. "Where have you laid him?" he asked. "Come and see, Lord," they replied. Jesus wept.

Jesus knew that Lazarus had died and what he would do to resurrect Lazarus but he was deeply moved by Mary's grief (Lazarus' sister,) and the grief of those who had come with her. And he wept. Jesus has compassion for our pain and grief, experiences it with us, and wraps us in his healing love!

Do you invite Jesus to share your grief? Today will you remember to share all of your life with Jesus?

May you be assured today that Jesus has compassion for your griefs and celebrates your joys!

Sunday April 2, 2017

John 11:43-44 (NIV) When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

Jesus came to the tomb of his friend Lazarus, had the stone rolled away, and called in a powerful voice for Lazarus to come out of the tomb back into life. Jesus' voice restored Lazarus to life and commanded the gathered community to release him from the grave clothes that were restricting that life. When we heed Jesus' voice we too find new life within us and the need to shed the binding of our old life!

What binds you from freely living the life God calls you to? Today will you step out of your tomb and follow Jesus?

May the voice of Jesus speak powerfully today and call you into new abundant life!

Monday April 3, 2017

Psalm 118:4-5 (NIV) Let those who fear the Lord say: "His love endures forever."
When hard pressed, I cried to the Lord; he brought me into a spacious place.

The Psalmist speaks to us of the power of God's enduring love in the life of the faithful. When we are hard pressed in our lives we can cry out to God who is always listening, and in God's presence we find space to breathe and unpack our burdens and experience the loving support we need to see our next faithful steps!

Do you try to do everything yourself without God? Today will you trust God and cry out with your soul to be brought to the spacious place you need?

May you lean on God's everlasting love today and trust God to care for you with all of your burdens!

Tuesday April 4, 2017

Isaiah 50:4 (NRSV) The Lord God has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning he wakens—wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught.

The Prophet Isaiah speaks of our daily experience of being present with God who speaks into our lives and teaches us wisdom. When we listen deeply to God we are changed and our lives bear witness to this inner transformation that speaks to others, we are given the power to use ordinary words in ways that nurture and sustain the spirit of others!

Are your ears awake to listen to God? Today will you take time to listen deeply to the Word of God and let God direct the words you speak to others?

May you be a perpetual student of God's Word and speak today only words that bring hope and sustain the weary!

Wednesday March 5, 2017

Psalm 42:1-2 (NIV) As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?

The Psalmist poetically writes of the longing and thirst all of our souls have for the living God. As the sounds and scents of Spring fill our senses in this last week of Lent, we seek for signs of God like the deer seeking water. The marvelous thing that

Jesus invites us to find in the Lenten journey is that what we seek has been within us the whole way!

Where do you encounter God? Today will you leave distractions behind and in the silence find the living God for whom you pant already inside of you?

May you spend time in the sacred space you have been clearing in your soul this Lent and slake your thirst with the living God!

Thursday April 6, 2017

Psalm 31:14-16 (NIV) I trust in you, Lord; I say, "You are my God." My times are in your hands; deliver me from the hands of my enemies, from those who pursue me. Let your face shine on your servant; save me in your unfailing love.

The Psalmist leads us to understand that our whole life in all of its circumstances are in God's capable and loving hands. We are encouraged to trust the Lord, and speak of our joys and challenges and to seek to live always in the light of God's unfailing love!

Do you trust God with your whole life? Today will you echo the Psalmist and declare, "You are my God." and place your times in God's loving hands?

May you feel the light of God's love shining on you today as you fully trust God with all of your life!

Friday April 7, 2017

Matthew 26:37-38 (NIV) He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

Jesus had a lot on his heart and mind in the garden of Gethsemane and it troubled him, so he invited his closest friends to come and pray over and with him. Jesus modeled so much for us about a life of faith including the importance of friendships and having prayer partners!

Do you have prayer partners? Today will you invite a few close friends to pray with and for you as you grapple with things that are overwhelming in your life?

May the company and prayers of friends give you strength today as you lift your overwhelming concerns to God!

Saturday April 8, 2017

Matthew 27:19 (NIV) While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message: "Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him."

The Roman governor of Palestine, Pontius Pilate, was about to pass judgement on Jesus Christ, when his wife sent a message given to her in a dream from God. God communicates with us in a variety of ways including dreams and the words of those close to us. God then gives us the freedom to choose the way of the world or God's way of sacrificial love!

Are you hearing God speak in your life? Today will you adjust your attitude and actively look for God's love in action and listen for God's word in your life?

May you hear and see God's love in action in your life today and choose to be a person of positive change!

Sunday April 9, 2017 Palm/Passion Sunday

Matthew 21:8-10 (NIV) A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest heaven!" When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?"

Jesus traveled down the road making his entry into Jerusalem on the back of a humble donkey, while the crowds of people along the way shouted and proclaimed him with palm branches and spread cloaks. The city was stirred and the question that was asked was, "Who is this?" It is a question for us to answer as well this day, who is Jesus for us in our lives and the world we live in?

Who is Jesus? Today will you immerse yourself in the Holy Word and allow power of the Word to open and transform your heart and life as you answer the question: Who is Jesus?

May you embrace today God's unimaginably awesome love in the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, and be forever transformed!

Monday April 10, 2017 Holy Week

John 12:3 (NIV) Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

Jesus was dining with Lazarus, Martha, and Mary six days before the Passover when Mary performed an over the top expression of loving devotion. When Judas Iscariot objected, Jesus defended Mary, and reminded the disciples that he would not always be with them. This expression of love helps us to be open to God's mind blowing expressions of love for all of humanity and each of us individually!

How do you react to Mary's expression of love? Today will you open your mind and heart to take in more of God's unimaginably extravagant love?

May you be open, aware, and appreciative today of God's over the top love expressed through Jesus Christ!

Tuesday April 11, 2017

John 12:24-25 (MSG) "Listen carefully: Unless a grain of wheat is buried in the ground, dead to the world, it is never any more than a grain of wheat. But if it is buried, it sprouts and reproduces itself many times over. In the same way anyone who hold on to life just as it is destroys that life. But if you let it go, reckless in your love, you'll have it forever, real and eternal.

Jesus was speaking to his disciples and the crowd, teaching them about his imminent death and glorification, and how love is multiplied. His way of love may seem like death to the world but is in truth the source of eternal life and love for the transformation of the world. His way of love is never frozen in time and static, it is instead courageous, dynamic, ever growing, and transforming of our lives!

Do you like your life to remain the same or grow? Today will you have courage and let some things in your life die so that Jesus' love can grow in you?

May you be empowered today by Jesus to be courageous in living a life of dynamic love!

Wednesday April 12, 2017

Hebrews 12:1-3 (NIV) Therefore, since we are surrounded by such great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross,

scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

On this Wednesday of Holy Week we remember how Jesus transformed the cross from an instrument of shame and death into the symbol of faith and hope. The author of Hebrews reminds us that fixing our eyes on Jesus is the best way for us to persevere in throwing off the sin that entangles and not growing weary of seeking God's will in our lives!

Where do you find encouragement and perseverance in your faith? Today will you shake off the everything that hinders you in your life of faith and keep your eyes fixed on Jesus?

May Jesus give you heart and endurance today for your faith filled journey!

Maundy Thursday April 13, 2017

John 13:34-35 (NIV) "A new command I give you; Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

"Mandatum novum do vobis ut diligatis invicem sicut dilexi vos" is the Latin version of verse 34 and where the Maundy of this day comes from. At the last supper Jesus humbly and lovingly washed the feet of his disciples and instructed them to lovingly serve one another as he had shown them. We continue to live into this new command to show the world that we are Jesus' disciples by how we love one another!

How are you living into Jesus' command to "Love one another?" Today will you ask Jesus in prayer to open your heart to love others as He loves you?

May you be led by the Holy Spirit today to love and serve others as Jesus loves you!

Good Friday April 14, 2017

John 18:37-38 (NIV) "You are a king, then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." "What is truth?" retorted Pilate.

Pilate, the Roman governor, did not listen to truth, but had Jesus flogged and mocked by the soldiers with a crown of thorns, and then had him crucified, nailed to a cross between two criminals. After three hours when Jesus had fulfilled all the prophetic

words of the Scriptures he then said, "It is finished," and gave up his spirit. Jesus, God's truth and life of the world, gave himself as an ultimate sacrifice so that we would know the truth of God's redeeming love for each of us!

Are you listening to Jesus? Today will you let your heart be broken by the magnitude of Jesus' sacrifice for you and every human being?

May we join with uncounted millions of people today thanking Jesus for the Good News of his sacrificial love for us!

Holy Saturday April 15, 2017

Matthew 27:62-63 (NIV) The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. "Sir," they said, "we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise again.'

This day Jesus is in the tomb and those who had him killed are worried that he might still cause them problems and so they ask Pilate to secure the tomb with soldiers so nobody can steal the body and claim he's risen. Today we wait and wonder, what is God doing with Jesus? What is God doing with us? What should we be doing?

How are you preparing for Jesus' resurrection? Today will you ask God for patience and peace as God works miracles in your life?

May we wait with expectant hope today as God works miracles in the tombs of our lives to bring forth new life on the third day!

Easter Sunday April 16, 2017

John 20:17-18 (NIV) Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

He has risen! He has risen indeed! Mary Magdalene is the first witness of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, when he spoke her name, and in the sound of his voice recognized her Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus' command to Mary and to us is to share the overwhelming Good News of God's Love shattering the barriers of death and all that separate us from full relationship with God!

How does the Resurrection of Jesus Christ change your life? Today will Join Mary in spreading the awesome Good News, that Jesus is Risen?

May the Awesome Good News of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ be the first day of your new life in God's Love!

Monday April 17, 2017

Acts 2:22-24 (NLT) "People of Israel, listen! God publicly endorsed Jesus the Nazarene by doing powerful miracles, wonders, and signs through him, as you well know. But God knew what would happen, and his prearranged plan was carried out when Jesus was betrayed. With the help of lawless Gentiles, you nailed him to a cross and killed him. But God released him from the horrors of death and raised him back to life, for death could not keep him in its grip."

Peter is speaking powerfully to the folks in Jerusalem about Jesus' life, ministry, and their complicity in Jesus' death. What he is emphasizing is God's action in Jesus's life, ministry, death, and resurrection. God was and is active in Jesus and in each of us!

What is God bringing resurrecting in you? Today will you place your entire trust in God's saving love for you?

May we remember today that all of our life is lived in God's loving plan for us!

Tuesday April 18, 2017

Acts 2:31 (NIV) Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay.

Peter was paraphrasing King David who had spoken prophetically about his descendant the Messiah. Instead of seeing death Peter directs us to look with new eyes to where the resurrected Jesus is alive among us. Deborah Van Deusen Hunsinger wrote this in today's entry of the 2017 Upper Room Disciplines: "Instead of asking, "What would Jesus do," let us ask instead, "What is Jesus doing? Where is our living Lord among us? What glad purposes is God working out in ways that we simply do not see?"

I would encourage you friends to ponder Deborah's questions today and to look for what Jesus is doing in your life!

Wednesday April 19, 2017

Psalm 16:1-2 (CEB) Protect me, God, because I take refuge in you. I say to the Lord, "You are my Lord. Apart from you, I have nothing good."

The Psalmist leads us to use vibrant action verbs when we pray and to clearly ask for what we need God to do. In the asking we acknowledge that only God is capable of truly caring for our needs and providing all of the good in our lives. Be bold, honest, and passionate in your prayers, and hold nothing back from God because God holds nothing back in loving and providing for you!

Do you ask God for what you need? Today will you put vibrant verbs into your prayers and buckle your seatbelt as God responds?

May you pray from the heart today with holy boldness and expectation of God's loving response!

Thursday April 20, 2017

1 Peter 1:3-4 (NIV) Praise be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you.

The Apostle Peter was writing to Christians who were experiencing persecution. He reminded them and us that through Jesus Christ and his resurrection we have been reborn into a living hope, a sustaining relationship with God that is forever and real!

How do you experience the living hope in your life? Today will you let your life reflect your faith in God and the peace of knowing your inheritance is being safely held for you?

May you draw strength for your journey with Jesus today, from the sure knowledge of your inheritance in heaven!

Friday April 21, 2017

John 20:19-20 (NIV) On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

Easter evening and the disciples are fearfully gathered behind locked doors despite Mary Magdalene's testimony. The first thing Jesus does is offer them his peace, then

he shows them the scars on his hands and side so they will know that it is truly him. Jesus comes to us in our places of fear offering us his peace and relationship with the risen Christ!

Where have you seen Jesus in your life? Today will embrace the peace and new life Jesus offers?

May your life be transformed today as you accept Jesus' peace and his offer of friendship!

Earth Day Saturday April 22, 2017

John 20:21-23 (NIV) Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

Jesus gives his peace to his disciples and commissioned them to go into the world as God's emissaries of love, healing, and reconciliation. And then Jesus gave them God's breath of Holy Creative Life to empower the work of their mission forgiving sins and healing the earth. On this Earth Day we too are commissioned by Jesus and empowered by the Holy Spirit to forgive sins and heal and care for the earth and all life within!

Does the Holy Spirit guide your decisions of how you care for the Earth's resources? Today will you accept Jesus' commission to heal relationships and be an excellent steward of all life?

May your faith in Jesus and empowerment through the Holy Spirit guide your care of the Earth and others today!

Sunday April 23, 2017

John 20:29 (NIV) Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Thomas was one of Jesus' most courageous disciples, he was out in the community while the other disciples were locked in a room out of fear. Thomas asked to see the wounds that Jesus received and believed when Jesus showed them and declared, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus continues to offer himself for the healing of the world and we begin our personal healing when we believe in him!

What do you need from Jesus to believe in the resurrection? Today will you open your mind and believe in Jesus wholeheartedly?

May you be blessed today through your belief in Jesus and the power of his resurrection to heal all wounds!

Monday April 24, 2017

Acts 2:38 (NIV) Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Peter, as the leader of the Apostles, had preached a powerful sermon awakening his listeners to the need to radically change their lives, and they asked what they should do. He clearly laid it out for them, choose to live differently, die to their old lives and be raised to a new life in Jesus Christ through baptism, and receive forgiveness of sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Peter's path to discipleship is just as valid for us in the 21st century!

Do you choose Jesus Christ every morning when you wake up? Will you remember your baptism and what it means for how you will choose to live your life today?

May you choose the way of Jesus Christ today, being forgiven of sins, and made new through the gift of the Holy Spirit!

Tuesday April 25, 2017

Psalms 116:1-2 (NLT) I love the Lord because he hears my voice and my prayer for mercy. Because he bends down to listen, I will pray as long as I have breath!

The Psalmist speaks beautiful poetry of our living experience and love of the Lord as we share all of our life in prayer. The Lord listens and we join with the Psalmist praying as long as we have breath!

Do you pray throughout your days? Today will you let every breath you take be a prayer to our listening and loving Lord?

May your breaths be prayers sharing every part of your life with our Lord today and every day as long as you have breath!

Wednesday April 26, 2017

2 Corinthians 4:16 (NIV) Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.

The Apostle Paul was speaking of the hope we have in the resurrection of Jesus Christ that gives us courage in all circumstances of our lives. No matter what may happen in regards to family, finances, or physical strength we are being renewed in our spirits day by day through God's loving grace so that we may fix our gaze upon what is eternal and real!

What gives you courage each day to live fully? Today will you give thanks and glory to God for the renewal of your spirit?

May you fix your gaze upon God today the true source of our strength and courage for wholehearted living!

Thursday April 27, 2017

Psalms 116:16 (NIV) Truly I am your servant, Lord; I serve you just as my mother did; you have freed me from my chains.

The Psalmist is expressing deep gratitude to God for releasing him from his bondage and enabling him to freely serve God. Faith is often transmitted from one generation to another through mothers and grandmothers as they show God's love and share the stories of what God has done and is doing in their lives!

What are your faith stories? Today will you praise God for breaking your chains and faithfully serve God with an open heart?

May you reflect on and give thanks today to the people who showed you how to serve and love God!

Friday April 28, 2017

Lamentations 3:22-23 (NLT) The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning.

This wonderful affirmation of God's great love and faithfulness is tucked into the center the book of Lamentations to emphasize how powerful God's love is to overcome the sorrows and woes of the world. We have assurance from God that God's healing and redeeming love is waiting for us to discover anew every morning!

Do you look forward to God's love every morning with the same anticipation as your first cup of coffee? Today when things make you uptight will you pause, close your eyes, and imagine God's love filling you with delight like the scent of a fresh baked crescent roll?

May you live into this affirmation of God's never-ending love for you today and every day of your life!

Saturday April 29, 2017

2 Corinthians 12:9 (NASB) And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

Jesus spoke to Paul teaching him that the power of God's love is made perfect in each human being when we recognize our own limitations and weaknesses, and rely upon God's grace. This is a life-long process for us to let go of our agendas and strivings to do things our way, and to trust in Christ's grace to be more than sufficient for all of our needs. As we grow in trust of God the power of Christ grows within us!

Do you lean on Christ in your weaknesses? Today will you choose to strive for Christ instead of your own self interest and let his power grow within you?

Today may your weaknesses be the the entry point of Christ's grace working within you!

Sunday April 30, 2017

Luke 15:20 (NIV) So he got up and went to his father. "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him."

Jesus tells this story of a son who was lost, left his family, lost everything he thought was of value, and in the loss came to his senses and journeyed towards home. This is the third story in Luke 15 illustrating God's joy and celebration every time a lost soul begins the journey home, and how God hastens to greet that person with compassion and love. Our worth is found in God's overwhelming love for us!

Do you celebrate when you have found what you had lost? Today will you begin a journey home to God and accept God's overwhelming love for you?

May you believe and accept today God's loving relationship welcoming you home!

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Monday May 1, 2017

Luke 12:25-26 (NIV) Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?

Jesus is an amazing wisdom teacher. He directs us to not waste our lives, emotions, and energy focusing on things we cannot change, instead he teaches us to focus our selves on God, and the things of God. When our focus is on God in the present moment we become open to the bounty that is present around us and within us, and we experience the peace of God!

Are you a worrier? Today will you breathe deep, exhale your worries, and ask Jesus to guide your focus and attention to be in the moment with him?

May Jesus guide you today in setting aside your worries and joining him in God's loving empowering presence!

Tuesday May 2, 2017

Proverbs 29:25 (NIV) Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe.

The Writer of this proverb is sharing a profound wisdom with us about the nature of fear tripping us up and paralyzing our lives. This often happens when we are living for the approval of others rather than with integrity in our trust of God. The solution for fear is God's loving presence, as we grow in our trust and seek God then the fear melts away!

Which matters most to you God's approval or people's approval? Today will you take a step towards freedom and trust God over popular opinions?

May you experience freedom from fear and opinions today in God's loving embrace!

Wednesday May 3, 2017

Matthew 6:24 (NIV) "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."

Jesus teaches about the consequences of trying to split our devotion between God and the pursuit of worldly wealth. He guides us to understand that serving and loving God brings us a priceless gift of peace and wholeness that frees up our energy so that we can be creative and joy filled. God lovingly meets our needs with abundance!

Is your life filled with the stress of serving multiple masters? Today will you choose to love and serve God and receive healing for your heart and peace of mind?

May you choose God today and allow God to meet your needs and make you whole!

Thursday May 4, 2017

1 Peter 1:22-23 (NIV) Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart. For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

Peter wrote this passage for people who had come to believe in God through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. As we live into and are shaped by God's love we learn to love deeply from our hearts, where God resides within us. The power of this love rebirths us and enables us to bear the imperishable and living Word of God to a world in need of 'Good News!'

Do you love others deeply from the heart? Today will you welcome the living and enduring word of God to reform your heart and life?

May you be reborn in God's love today and bring God's Word to others through your loving actions!

Friday May 5, 2017

Luke 24:15-16 (NIV) As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognizing him.

On the day of Easter two followers of Jesus were walking to the village of Emmaus discussing everything that had happened to Jesus and what the empty tomb might mean while feeling deep sorrow and confusion. However, they were not alone, Jesus was walking with them listening and caring for them. This passage reminds us that Jesus is present and engaged with our lives even when we do not recognize he is with us!

Do you trust that Jesus is present with you? Today will you share what is on your heart with Jesus?

May you trust that Jesus walks with you throughout the day listening to and loving you!

Saturday May 6, 2017

Luke 24:25-27 (NIV) He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

The two companions on the road still do not realize that it is Jesus walking with them. Jesus proceeds to open their hearts and minds to see that he is known through all the Scriptures. Many years ago I was taught, the Scriptures read us as we read them, enabling us to have a dialogue and relationship with Jesus!

Do you read Scripture for information or formation? Or both? Today will you approach the Scriptures as a means of being in relationship with Jesus?

May you encounter Jesus today in the Holy Scriptures and be forever changed!

Sunday May 7, 2017

Luke 24:30-31 (NIV) When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight.

The companions on the road to Emmaus invited Jesus to join them and offered him hospitality which he accepted. Then at the table he made himself known to them as he

blessed, broke the bread, and offered it to them. We too know and experience Jesus when we offer hospitality and break bread together!

Where do you experience Jesus? Today will you welcome Jesus to your table and break bread with him?

May your eyes be opened today to Jesus' loving presence in your life and in the life of your community!

Monday May 8, 2017

Acts 8:55-56 (NIV) But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

Stephen was a man of faith who had been chosen to be a leader among the first Christians in Jerusalem after Pentecost. He was filled with God's grace and did much healing and good among the people and in the midst of being persecuted by the Jewish authorities had a vision that he shared of Jesus standing at the right hand of God. We learn from Stephen that when we invite the Holy Spirit into us, our lives are transformed in remarkable ways enabling us to participate in Jesus' work and giving us new grace filled eyes to see God's love!

Have you invited the Holy Spirit to fill you? Today will you choose to be Jesus' hands and feet in ministry?

May Stephen inspire you today to invite God's Holy Spirit to work in and through you!

Friday May 12, 2017

John 14:1 (NIV) "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me."

Jesus was comforting his disciples as they were becoming distressed as he was teaching them that he would be leaving them. Jesus comforts us too when we listen to him, trust him, and believe in him. It is when we listen, trust, and believe that our hearts are able to release our troubles and embrace his peace that is beyond all understanding!

Do you bring your troubles to Jesus in prayer? Today will you trust Jesus with your heart and embrace his comfort and care for you?

May you listen deeply to Jesus today and experience the peace he offers in exchange for your troubles!

Saturday May 13, 2017

John 14:5-6 (NIV) Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Jesus had told his disciples that he was leaving them and preparing a place for them in his Father's house and they already knew the way. When Thomas questioned Jesus, he stated this truth for all of us, he is the way and the truth and the life. Jesus not only teaches us about God, Jesus is the embodiment of God, and we have true life in and through him!

Do you know God through Jesus? Today will you pray asking Jesus to be your 'way, truth, and life?'

May you trust today that Jesus is your way, truth, and life in God!

Sunday May 14, 2017 Mother's Day

John 14:12 (NIV) "Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father."

Jesus shared with his first disciples that God the Father, who lives within him, was speaking and doing works through him. As we believe in Jesus, and trust that God is working in and through us, we too will embody God's love as we do Jesus' work of loving, healing, and teaching. This is the work we celebrate today as we honor all those embrace us with a Mother's love!

Do you believe in Jesus? Today will you embrace and embody Jesus' love and do the work of extending that love to all the 'Mother's' in your life?

May your belief in and love of Jesus be the source of all your works of love today and every day! Happy Mother's Day to all the Mom's in my life!

Monday May 15, 2017

Acts 17:22-23 (NIV) Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: "People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked

around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.

The Apostle Paul was on a mission in the heart of the Greek culture and spoke to the educated citizens of Athens on Mars hill, the center of their polytheistic worship. Paul teaches us that to reach people with the message of Jesus Christ we must first invest time and effort learning about them and their culture so that we can speak in words and images that they can connect to and understand!

Where do you find God among people of cultures different than your own? Today will you follow Paul's lead in learning about others so you can share God's love and Jesus Christ with them?

May you use all of your senses today to discern how God is guiding you to know others to share Jesus with them!

Tuesday May 16, 2017

Acts 17:24-25 (NIV) "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And he is not served by humans hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else."

The Apostle Paul, was speaking to a people who built innumerable shrines and idols to many gods, to make clear to them that the true God of the universe is beyond human comprehension, and gives all things life. We too need to hear in our technologically driven lives the call to be aware of the idols we have built with our human hands, and turn our attention to God who created everything and us with love!

Have the things and technology in your life become idols? Today will you be intentional about spending alone time, without your idols, with God and breathe in God's goodness and love?

May your heart and mind be refocused today on spending quality time with God!

Wednesday May 17, 2017

Psalm 66:8-9 (NIV) Praise our God, all peoples, let the sound of his praise be heard; he has preserved our lives and kept our feet from slipping.

The Psalmist invites us to speak aloud our praise of God and reminds us of how God has worked beautifully in our lives and kept our feet securely on the path. It is so easy for us in our busy lives to get distracted and lose our focus on God, so it is good news that God keeps track of us. Let us join today with the Psalmist and praise God!

When has God helped you keep your footing? Today will you thank God for preserving your life and giving you hope and focus?

May today be a wonderful day to praise God and walk securely in your faith!

Thursday May 18, 2017

Psalm 66:16 (NIV) Come and hear, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me.

The Psalmist is modeling for us a powerful and effective way of encouraging faith in other people through speaking about what God has done and is doing in our lives. Being vulnerable and sharing the story of God's redemptive power in our lives opens others to accepting a new life in God and claiming their own story!

When has the testimony of another person changed your life? Today will you celebrate God's amazing love in your life by sharing your story with others?

May the sharing of your journey in God's love today help others to claim and live their lives in God!

Friday May 19, 2017

1 Peter 3:15 (NIV) But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.

Peter is giving us excellent guidance for living faithfilled lives as followers of Jesus Christ. The foundation is holding Christ as the center of our lives, then everything we do or say flows from that center. Peter's advice is timeless when he says to share Christ with others with gentleness and respect!

Do you revere Christ as Lord in your heart? Today will you speak with gentleness and respect to all who ask you about your hope in Jesus Christ?

May your life be centered in Jesus Christ as you speak respectfully and gently to others about your faith today!

Saturday May 20, 2017

John 14:15-17a (NIV) "If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth."

Jesus was speaking to his friends and disciples about how to faithfully follow him. He said that we show our love for him by keeping his commands, and he is giving us the Spirit of truth to be our support and companion on the journey of faith!

Do you ask the Spirit of truth to help you? Today will you welcome the Holy Spirit's guidance in loving Jesus and following his commands?

May you embrace the advocacy of the Spirit of truth in living fully today as a disciple of Jesus Christ!

Sunday May 21, 2017

John 14:18-19 (NIV) I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.

Jesus was speaking to his disciples at the last supper after he had washed their feet giving them reassurance that he would come back to them and continue to nurture his love in them. That assurance of Jesus is not just for a select few individuals but for all people who love him and follow his commandments to love and serve others. It is in loving and serving that we the community of faith have life in him!

Are you active in a community of faith? Today will you reaffirm your love for Jesus and live into his commandments in your community of faith?

May you live into Jesus' promises today as a member of his community of active love in the world!

Monday May 22, 2017

Acts 1:3 (NIV) After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

Following Easter Jesus appeared to his disciples for forty days, he assured them that it was really him, and continued to teach them what they would need to know to carry on his work. In this time of transition, Jesus focused on being present with his followers and directing their attention to the central core of his life, bringing people into conscious intentional relationship with God!

Can you imagine being one of Jesus' disciples and experiencing his resurrected self? Today will you listen to Jesus and be intentional about your relationship with God?

May you be intentional about your faith today and ask Jesus to guide you deeper into the kingdom of God!

Tuesday May 23, 2017

Acts 1:4-5 (NIV) On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

Jesus was spending quality time with his disciples and instructed them to engage in holy waiting so they could receive God's gift of baptism in the Holy Spirit. Jesus shows us the importance of being present and receptive to God's presence. The true gift of holy waiting is spending quality time with God!

Are you impatient or do you see waiting as holy opportunity? Today will you look for the gift in opportunities to wait and use the time pray and open your heart to God?

May you be intentional today about using opportunities to wait as gifts of time to spend with God!

Wednesday May 24, 2017 Aldersgate Day

Psalm 70:4 (NIV) But may all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you; may those who long for your saving help always say, "The Lord is great!"

On this day in 1738 in a small chapel on Aldersgate Street in London, John Wesley experienced rejoicing and gladness in his heart as he realized God's love for even him. John and his brother Charles went on to try to renew the Church of England and ended up founding a new denomination, the Methodists. We are invited to live into the experience of the Psalmist and the Wesleys in seeking God with an open heart and rejoicing in that relationship!

When has your heart been strangely warmed by God's grace? Today will you join with other seekers of God's saving grace and proclaim: "The Lord is great!"

May your heart experience rejoicing and gladness today as you seek God's amazing love!

Thursday May 25, 2017 Ascension Day

Luke 24:50-51 (NIV) When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven.

On the day of his ascension Jesus led his disciples outside the city of Jerusalem and was taken up bodily into heaven as he blessed them. The response of the disciples was great joy and worship as they returned to Jerusalem praising God and waiting with anticipation for the gift of the Holy Spirit. May our response to Jesus be great joy and worship as he blesses and empowers us too!

How do you respond to transitions in your life? Today will you give Jesus a shout out and thank him for his love and gifts?

May we experience joy and wonder today as we remember Jesus' ascension!

Friday May 26, 2017

1 Peter 5:6-7 (NIV) Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

This is timeless advice and encouragement from Peter teaches us that the way through the trials and tribulations of our lives is to humbly hand ourselves over into God's care. It means letting go of our egocentric need to be in charge and fruitlessly trying to control the circumstances in our lives. Trusting in God, and God's loving care for us, enables grace to create new possibilities where we could only see dead ends!

What do you do with anxiety? Today will you breathe deeply of God's grace and throw your anxiety to God?

May you humbly cast all of your anxiety on God today and accept God's loving care of you!

Saturday May 27, 2017

Luke 24:48-49 (NIV) You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

Jesus had just given all of his disciples the same refresher course on what the Scriptures had to say about the Messiah that he had given to the couple on the road to Emmaus, and further he let them know what his expectations were for their ministry to all nations. However, before they headed out into the world to engage in this ministry it was vital for them to wait for the gift and power of the Holy Spirit. We too need to first be filled with God's power and gifting before we do work in Jesus' name!

Do you start each day in prayer? Today will you pause and breathe in the Holy Spirit and ask for God's guidance before you engage in your ministries?

May you be centered and soaked in God's living presence before you engage the world every day!

Sunday May 28, 2017

Acts 1:10-11 (NIV) They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

Jesus was taken bodily into heaven after he had given his disciples final instructions, and they stood there stunned until two angelic visitors spoke to them. God did not leave them standing there with their mouths hanging open but sent them the assurance they needed to take the next step in their transition from followers to leaders. God provides us with guidance to our next steps and assurance of God's love in the midst of our transitions too!

When has God provided guidance for you? Today will seek to be open to God's messengers and messages to you in the midst of the change and challenges in your life?

May Jesus' Ascension bring assurance of God's love and presence in the transitions of your life!

Monday May 29, 2017 Memorial Day

Ephesians 1:16 (NIV) I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.

The Apostle Paul's teaching to remember and give God thanks is especially poignant on Memorial Day as we remember those who have given their lives in service. Remembering and praying for others should be a daily practice and not just happen on Memorial Day!

Whom do you remember and give thanks for today? Will you take extra time today to pray for our Veterans, those who have given their lives and those still living, and their families?

May you honor, give thanks to God, and remember Veterans in your prayers today!

Tuesday May 30, 2017

1 Corinthians 12:12-13 (NIV) Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

The Apostle Paul was brilliant in using the metaphor of a human body and all its parts for everyone to understand that Christians have great variety but collectively make one unified body that is Jesus Christ. The diversity in our talents, spiritual gifts, culture, and selves enhance Christ. The unifying thread identified by Paul is the activating agency of the Holy Spirit!

Do you celebrate how the differences in gifting enhance your community of faith? Today will welcome the Holy Spirit and celebrate the amazing variety of people and gifts that constitute the body of Christ?

May you welcome today the gifting of the Holy Spirit and the beauty of diversity in Christ's body of believers!

Wednesday May 31, 2017

Psalms 104:30-31 (NIV) When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground. May the glory of the Lord endure forever; may the Lord rejoice in his works.

The Psalmist uses amazing poetry to create images in our hearts and minds of God's glorious loving creation of the cosmos and the earth and all life on and in the earth.

The Poet soars with the Spirit of the Lord as the Spirit creates new life and renews the earth. May we join the Psalmist in giving glory to God!

Do you give God awestruck glory for the miracle of drawing breath and being alive? Today will you choose to see the world with the wonder filled eyes of a small child and rejoice with God Spirit?

May you be created anew today in God's Holy Spirit and join all creation in rejoicing in God's creative love!

Pastor Scott Tyler

Dear Friends, I travel today to Annual Conference and will be resuming devotions on Sunday June 4, Pentecost. May the glory of the Lord shine brightly around and within you!

Sunday June 4, 2017 PENTECOST!!!

Acts 2:1-4 (NIV) When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit enabled them.

Jesus' disciples are all gathered together in prayer when God's gift of the Holy Spirit came roaring into their midst filling the house and touching and filling each person. The Holy Spirit enabled and activated spiritual gifts in each person, the first manifestation in those present was the gift of language, speaking of God's glory in the language each listener could understand, and thereby be transformed into becoming a disciple, knowing they are known and loved by God!

Do you know your spiritual gifts? Are you excited to be a member of Jesus' Spirit filled community and will you seek to use your spiritual gifts to glorify God and make disciples of Jesus Christ?

May you be powerfully touched and transformed by the Holy Spirit today empowering your spiritual gifts for the glory of God and the making of disciples of Jesus Christ!!

Monday June 5, 2017

Genesis 1:1-2 (NIV) In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

The first two lines of the Bible are incredibly rich and powerful as they start in the beginning with God creating the universe and the earth. Darkness is where God's Spirit hovers over the deep waters of creation awaiting God's desire to bring about new life and possibilities. The darkness is filled with God's presence and limitless potential!

Have you experienced God's Spirit at work in your darkness? Today will you draw strength from the image of the Spirit of God hovering in the darkness to bring creative potential to life in you?

May you find God's incredible presence in the darkness today and experience the joy of new creative life!

Tuesday June 6, 2017

Genesis 2:2 (NIV) By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

Genesis one is a wondrous account of God's work of creating our world, and God seeing that work as very good. Then God does something just as profound, creating holy rest, Sabbath, a special day to rest from work and simply be. In our overly busy lives we find ourselves exhausted and overextended because ignore the necessity of resting with God!

Do you identify yourself through your busyness or your time spent with God? Today will you ask God to reprioritize your life and make Sabbath time with God equal to being productive with God?

May you begin today to recreate your life by balancing work with resting in God!

Wednesday June 7, 2017

Psalm 8:3-4 (NIV) When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?

The Psalmist is awash in awe and wonder of all God's creation and in these verses is regarding the night sky in all of its glory and pondering deep existential questions about God's relationship with each of us. Because of our human made busyness we forget to bask in God's creation until some event like a widespread power outage takes us from our ordinary to experience God's extraordinary. When we let go of our preoccupation with our priorities: simplicity, wonder, and communion with God takes place!

Where do you go to bask in God's wonder? Today will you make plans to fast from electronics and to do lists, and wander in wonder with God asking the deep questions of your soul?

May you renew wonder in your soul today by leaving electronics and calendar behind and soak in the loving presence of God!

Thursday June 8, 2017

Psalm 8:5-6, 9 (NIV) You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor. You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet. Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

This marvelous Psalm of God's creative love leads us to wonder and praise with our whole being. Thanking God for this amazing world and our place in it as God's stewards caring for all of it as our sacred trust. As we praise God we remember to care for one another and all life!

Are you a consumer or do you strive to live in balance with God's world? Today will you breathe deeply and feel your connection to God and all life in our world?

May you reconnect to the earth today and let your whole being worship God!

Friday June 9, 2017

2 Corinthians 13:14 (NIV) May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

This blessing helps us keep in heart, mind, and practice that Jesus offers us the grace of reconciliation and redemption, the Holy Spirit is our companion that empowers our faith, and the love of God saturates, creates, and sustains the universe binding all together with divine love!

How do you feel when you receive this blessing? Today will you be mindful of being a disciple of Jesus Christ who embodies grace, love, and fellowship in all circumstances?

May you live fully into this triune blessing today of grace, love, and fellowship!

Saturday June 10, 2017

Matthew 28:18, 20 (NIV) Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. And teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Jesus assured his disciples of two very vital things for their life of faith and ministry. Jesus is God's authoritative presence and he promises to be always present with all who are his disciples. Jesus is alive and present to us today fully embodying the authority of God's creative love!

Do you daily rely upon Jesus to be present in your life? Will you claim Jesus' promises for your life and ministry today?

May your life be transformed today as you fully trust and rely upon Jesus!

Sunday June 11, 2017 Trinity Sunday

Matthew 28:19 (NIV) Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus commanded his disciples to go to all people and teach them by example in the way of becoming his disciple. Discipleship is a way of life, not a seminar class, and when people are ready baptize them into the loving creative family of God in the ancient Trinitarian formula that guides them into understanding that love is communal and empowering, and giving!

How do you know God's love in your life? Today will you embrace the way of love in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit?

May you be strengthened today in your life of discipleship in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit!

Monday June 12, 2017

Genesis 18:13-14 (NIV) Then the Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really have a child, now that I am old?' Is anything too hard for the Lord? I will return to you at the appointed time next year, and Sarah will have a son."

Abraham was one hundred and Sarah was ninety when God visited them in the guise of three travelers and told them they would have a son. Sarah had laughed at the idea, and God replied, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" When God places a vision or dream on our hearts no matter how far out it may seem, God will work through us to make it a reality!

Has God given you a vision? Today will you let go of your disbelief and welcome God to work in and through you to make miracles possible?

May you hear and believe God's Word in your life today and open your heart to live into a new future!

Tuesday June 13, 2017

Galatians 5:22 (NIV) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

The Apostle Paul wrote to encourage Jesus' followers to not lose heart but trust in the Holy Spirit to lead them in a more excellent way through the temptations and dead ends of daily life. Intentionally choosing to live in the way of Jesus produces the fruits of the Spirit in our lives which in turn improves the lives of others!

What fruits are visible in your life? Today will you embrace the leading of the Holy Spirit and become more fruitful?

May the fruit of the Holy Spirit be an amazing aroma in your life today that encourages others to become disciples of Jesus Christ!

Wednesday June 14, 2017

Psalm 100:2-3 (NIV) Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

The Psalmist issues a call to praise God with gratitude and let joy bubble up from our souls and express itself through song and worship. We experience this kind of gratitude and relationship with God when we live into the full knowledge of being lovingly created and claimed by God!

What kind of relationship do you have with God? Today will you claim your identity as God's beloved child letting gladness and joy be your guides?

May you live into a joy filled relationship with God today and express your gratitude with the music of your soul!

Thursday June 15, 2017

Romans 5:3b-5 (NIV) Because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

The Apostle Paul speaks from his intimate personal experience with suffering and God's redemptive love through Jesus Christ. Each of us experiences suffering and pain but it is where we place our hope that makes all the difference in our lives. When we embrace the gift of the Holy Spirit we receive the love and faith we need to live each day with grace!

Has suffering produced perseverance, character, and hope in your life? Today will you live fully from the heart and live into the love and hope God pours into your life?

May you embrace today God's gifts of Spirit, Love, and Faith to transform the suffering in your life!

Friday June 16, 2017

Matthew 9:35-38 (MSG) Then Jesus made a circuit of all the towns and villages. He taught in their meeting places, reported kingdom news, and healed their diseased bodies, healed their bruised and hurt lives. When he looked out over the crowds, his heart broke. So confused and aimless they were, like sheep with no shepherd. "What a huge harvest!" he said to his disciples. "How few workers! On you knees and pray for harvest hands!"

Jesus showed his disciples ministry in action: going to the places where people gathered, sharing good news, listening to their needs, healing disease and the deep hurts in heart, soul, and mind. As he looked at the crowds of people Jesus perceived that they had no direction or hope in their lives. He directed his first disciples and us to pray for more workers in this vast field of ministry, and to ground all of our efforts and works in God's amazing love!

Do you see the huge harvest in your community? Today will you get on your knees and pray for more workers, and answer yes to Jesus' call to serve?

May you follow Jesus today into the harvest and work to help the crowds know they are loved, and Jesus offers healing and direction for their lives!

Saturday June 17, 2017

Matthew 10:1 (MSG) The prayer was no sooner prayed than it was answered. Jesus called twelve of his followers and sent them into the ripe fields. He gave them the power to kick out the evil spirits and to tenderly care for the bruised and hurt lives.

Jesus had asked his followers to pray for workers to minister to the needs of the people. The prayer was answered, and Jesus authorized and empowered twelve followers to go to the people and minister to them in the same way he did. Jesus continues to call us to prayer and powerful ministries of healing, care, and transformation!

Do you hear Jesus calling you to pray and be sent in his name? Will you accept today the power and authority Jesus offers you to do his ministry?

Do not be surprised today when your prayers are answered and Jesus empowers you to heal and care in his name!

Sunday June 18, 2017 Father's Day

Matthew 10:5-8 (MSG) Jesus sent his twelve harvest hands out with this charge: "Don't begin by traveling to some far-off place to convert unbelievers. And don't try to be dramatic by tackling some public enemy. Go to the lost, confused people right here in the neighborhood. Tell them that the kingdom is here. Bring health to the sick. Raise the dead. Touch the untouchables. Kick out the demons. You have been treated generously, so live generously."

Jesus instructed his first disciples, and by extension us, to focus close to home and minister to the people in our communities in the personal ways that make all the difference in their lives. Often we mistakenly believe that we must do grandiose things to be a disciple, Jesus tells us that is not what he wants, instead we need to be fully ourselves sharing the gifts he has given us with our neighbors. This too is the essence of being a Father, generously and lovingly sharing ourselves with our children in a personal way that leads them to knowing God, and growing in health, love, and faith!

What are your aspirations as Jesus sends you? Today will you focus on reaching the people closest to you as Christ's loving and healing presence?

May you be generous today with the grace of Christ given to you and lovingly share it with those closest to you!

Monday June 19, 2017

Genesis 21:19 (NIV) Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. So she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink.

Hagar was in dire straits in the Desert of Beersheba with her son Ishmael at the end of her resources, and she wept. God responded with an angel who told her to not be afraid and that God was with her, it was then that she could finally see what she needed most. Often we too are blind to all that God provides in our lives until we stop relying on our own meager resources and trust God!

When has God provided what you most needed? Today will you let go of your fears and let God open your eyes to God's bounty already present in your life?

May your eyes be opened by God today to see all that God has provided for you!

Tuesday June 20, 2017

Psalm 84:10 (MSG) One day spent in your house, this beautiful place of worship, beats thousands spent on Greek island beaches. I'd rather scrub floors in the house of my God than be honored as a guest in the palace of sin.

The Psalmist uses extravagant descriptive language to help us realize how amazing and life transforming time invested in worshipping God can be. The Psalmist speaks from a perspective of having indulged oneself in leisure and loose living, and can speak with authority that closeness to God and being in God's service brings true meaning and fulfillment to life!

Does having all you want fill the God sized need in your life? Today will you seek to be close to God through worship and service?

May you find true meaning in your life today as you spent quality time with God!

Wednesday June 21, 2017

Psalm 86:4-7 (NIV) Bring joy to your servant, Lord, for I put my trust in you. You, Lord, are forgiving and good, abounding in love to all who call to you. Hear my prayer, Lord; listen to my cry for mercy. When I am in distress, I call to you, because you answer me.

This Psalm was written by King David as he expressed his utter trust and dependence upon God in all of his life circumstances. David models for us a faithful relationship with God, one where we share everything that happens in life knowing that God's love for us is real and eternal. God hears and answers us!

Whom do you put your trust in? Today will you bring your distress and your joys to God speaking your heart and trusting God hears and responds?

May your trust in God grow today as you call upon God with your joys and sorrows and receive God's abounding love!

Thursday June 22, 2017

Psalm 17:7-8 (NIV) Show me the wonders of your great love, you who save by your right hand those who take refuge in you from their foes. Keep me as the apple of your eye.

The Psalmist speaks eloquently of God's amazing love shown through the care given to those who trust and depend upon God for grace, strength, and rescue in the midst of life's challenges. The Psalmist asks God to be kept in the center of God's affection and care, as the apple of God's eye. Friends, we too share in the wonders of God's great love and regard, do not neglect to speak your heart and need to God in prayer!

Do you ask God to show you the wonders of God's great love? Today will you ask God to keep you 'as the apple of God's eye?'

May you have Holy Boldness today to ask God to keep you in the center of God's loving gaze!

Friday June 23, 2017

Matthew 10:37 (NIV) "Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."

Jesus demanded a high level of commitment and devotion from his disciples. The requirement is to place God at the center of our lives as the most important and

essential relationship for each of us. Out of our relationship with God flows the love and grace that enriches our relationships within our families and communities!

How does Jesus rank in the loves in your life? Today will you reassess your commitments and ask Jesus' help in making him first in your heart?

Today may all of your relationships be enriched by your love and devotion to Jesus Christ!

Saturday June 24, 2017

Matthew 10:38-39 (NIV) Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.

Jesus spoke bluntly about what true discipleship entails: It is taking all of who we are and committing ourselves to following him and letting go of being full of ourselves and our ideas of how the world should be. When we focus on Jesus and the love of God we find our true and eternal life, so much more amazing and connected than anything we could have conceived!

Are you ready to fully commit to following Jesus? Today will you bring all of you to a new relationship following Jesus, letting go of your old way of living for just you and embracing the way of the cross?

May you choose Jesus today over self interest and fully follow him into your new life!

Sunday June 25, 2017

Matthew 10:29-31 (NIV) Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

Jesus spoke to assure his disciples and all who followed him that God is Love, and God cares deeply about all of creation, especially people who were created in God's image. Jesus teaches us to never doubt or mistrust that we are loved beyond our capacity to imagine, and that love overcomes all fear and fear-filled life situations!

Are you ready to let Jesus dissolve the fear in your life? Today will you fully trust Jesus and accept the mind blowing love God freely offers you?

May your life change forever today as you accept in mind and heart God's never ending love and care for you!

Pastor Scott Tyler

Friends, I am embarking on a time of engagement with God away from church and my normal rhythms of life for the next week. I will resume writing and posting on July 4th. May God's never ending love enfold and bless you!

Tuesday July 4, 2017 Freedom Day

Galatians 5:13-14 (NLT) For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love. For the whole law can be summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

The Apostle Paul wrote these words of wisdom to the followers of Christ who are called to live in the freedom of God's love in a powerful way that leads to freedom for all of God's people. As we celebrate freedom in America today we remember that true freedom flows from God's love in Jesus Christ, that freedom is not about selfishness or greed, but instead shows itself through loving service to our neighbors!

How do you use your freedom? Today will you pray for your nation that all people may know the freedom of loving their neighbors as God loves us!

Wednesday July 5, 2017

Genesis 24:42 (NIV) "When I came to the spring today, I said, 'Lord, God of my master Abraham, if you will, please grant success to the journey on which I have come.'

Abraham's servant models faith and trust in God's providence and guidance. The servant had been sent to fulfill a task that was beyond his abilities to fulfill, so he called upon God, and in faith asked for what was needed. God desires for us to ask in faith for what we need to accomplish God's works in our lives!

How do you approach God sized challenges in your life? Will you exhibit the faith of Abraham's servant and pray for what you need today?

May all that you do today be bathed in prayer and praise to God!

Thursday July 6, 2017

Romans 7:25 (MSG) The answer, thank God, is that Jesus Christ can and does. He acted to set things right in this life of contradictions where I want to serve God with all my heart and mind, but am pulled by the influence of sin to do something totally different.

Even the Apostle Paul struggled with living out his faith serving God, he shared his experiences to encourage us. The conclusion Paul came to is that we can not live holy lives on our own, we need Jesus Christ to set things right and give us the strength that we don't have. Jesus was and is the answer to living a life abundant in God's love and grace!

Do you identify with Paul's struggles with sin and service to God? Today will you put your whole trust in Jesus Christ to redeem you and guide you through the contradictions of this world?

Friday July 7, 2017

Matthew 11:27 (NIV) "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one know the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

Jesus is assuring his disciples of the intimacy of his relationship with God and his willingness to share. The mark of being a true disciple is to be like the master in every way. Jesus invites us to not only know God but be in intimate relationship with God!

Do you just know about Jesus or are you in relationship with Jesus? Today will you follow Jesus and grow in relationship with God?

May you move from head knowledge to relationship with Jesus and God today!

Sunday July 9, 2017

Matthew 11:29-30 (NIV) "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Jesus's invitation is extended to each of us to walk with him and learn from the master how to fully love God and people the way he does. When we are yoked with Jesus he does the heavy lifting of our burdens and his love permeates our souls giving us rest and gently shaping us to be like him!

Are you ready to learn from Jesus? Today will you let Jesus lift the weight of the world from your shoulders and redistribute the priorities in your life?

May you gratefully accept Jesus' invitation today to be his apprentice and find rest for your soul!

Monday July 10, 2017

Genesis 25:22-23 (NIV) The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, "Why is this happening to me?" So she went to inquire of the Lord. The Lord said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger."

Isaac prayed to God for his wife Rebekah to become pregnant and she did, with twins, and they were so active in the womb she asked God about it. God told Rebekah that she would be the mother of two nations of people and the usual order of family life would be turned upside down. Isaac and Rebekah teach us to ask God for what we need and the wisdom to understand what God is doing through us!

Do you inquire of the Lord when you don't understand what God is doing in your life? Today will you pray and listen for God's responses to the events in your life?

May you be faithful in your prayers to seek God with your needs and for guidance to understand God's will in your life!

Tuesday July 11, 2017

Psalms 119:111 (NIV) Your statutes are my heritage forever; they are the joy of my heart.

In the verses just before, the Psalmist speaks of the suffering experienced in his life and how God's Word has guided and sustained him. And here proclaims that God's Word is the source of joy in his heart and life. When we engage God's Word we enter into relationship with God that becomes our heritage forever and the true source of joy in our heart and life!

Do you spend time in God's Word every day? Today will you chose to claim your heritage and joy by engaging in relationship with God through study and formation in God's Word?

May you join the Psalmist today in a life of joy in God's Word that sustains in all life circumstances!

Wednesday July 12, 2017

Isaiah 55:6-7 (NLT) Seek the Lord while you can find him. Call on him now while he is near. Let the wicked change their ways and banish the very thought of doing wrong. Let them turn to the Lord that he may have mercy on them. Yes, turn to our God, for he will forgive generously.

The Prophet speaks urgently about seeking God's help to change our thought patterns and actions. We are also directed to live in this very moment, not putting change off to some nebulous future time. This moment is where we live and our lives are transformed by our merciful and generous God!

Where do you seek God? In this moment of reading these words will you ask God to change your life, your priorities, your thoughts and actions to be in alignment with God's will?

May you continually seek God in every moment and live a transformed life!

Thursday July 13, 2017

Romans 8:11 (CEB) If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your human bodies also, through his Spirit that lives in you.

The Apostle Paul taught that living a self-centered life was not pleasing to God. Instead a God centered life is one that is lived with the Holy Spirit within us, the same Spirit that raised Jesus Christ from the dead, giving us new life too!

What is the center of your life? Today will you choose to invite God's Holy Spirit to take up residence within you and guide you to grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ?

May you choose today: God as the center of your life and experience the life transforming power of the Holy Spirit!

Friday July 14, 2017

Matthew 13:1-3 (NIV) That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed."

Jesus responded to the needs of the people gathered by the lakeshore by putting out in a boat so they could all see and hear him. Then he taught about the kingdom of God using simple stories that they could relate to their own life experiences. Jesus shows us that simple clear teaching that connects to persons' life experiences is a very effective way of sharing God's wisdom!

What is Jesus teaching you? Today will you make sure that you are being clear and connecting to the people with whom you share the Good News of Jesus Christ?

May you learn from the Master today and communicate God's love in a way that connects to another's heart!

Saturday July 15, 2017

Matthew 13:18, 20-21 (NIV) "Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away."

Jesus was taking his disciples beneath the surface levels of the story of the sower who spread seed across a variety of soils. He spoke here of a person who neglected to root their new found faith in the daily disciplines of discipleship: developing a sustaining relationship with God through study, prayer, worship, fellowship, and accountable support. When we work with God to develop deep roots no troubles or persecutions can overcome our faith!

How rooted are you in your faith? Will you work with Jesus today to strengthen the roots of your faith in God?

Today may the word of God that you received with joy, grow deep roots through discipleship and love!

Sunday July 16, 2017

Matthew 13:23 (NIV) "But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

Jesus explained what happens when the seed of God's Word comes into the life of a person who hears and understands that it is life changing and worthy of all their efforts. That person is transformed by God's Word in powerful ways that bring God's love to life in the world around them!

What kind of soil do you have? Today will you embrace the changes that God's Word is bringing about in you?

May you seek to hear, understand, and be transformed by the seed of God's Word and produce an abundant yield of love in your life!

Monday July 17, 2017

Genesis 28:15 (NIV) "I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

God was speaking in a vision during the night to Jacob, a young man on the run from the wrath of his older brother Esau who desired to kill him because Jacob had stolen his birthright. In the vision God identified God's self as the God of his fathers Abraham and Isaac, and by extension the God of Jacob, with the assurance that he will be watched over and see God's promises fulfilled. God desires a personal relationship and will be with each of us wherever we go too!

Have you unexpectedly encountered God? Today will you live into the promises of God's presence and love in your life?

May you claim God's loving promises for your life today!

Tuesday July 18, 2017

Genesis 28:16-17 (MSG) Jacob woke up from his sleep. He said, "God is in this place—truly. And I didn't even know it!" He was terrified. He whispered in awe, "Incredible. Wonderful. Holy. This is God's House. This is the Gate of Heaven."

Jacob awoke from an amazing vision of angels going up and down from heaven, and God speaking to him of how he would be a blessing to all humanity. Little wonder that Jacob was so overwhelmed as he realized that God was present in the midst of his ignorance and he went through the emotions of terror to awe, and truly believed. Jacob's revelation of God being present in his life is our revelation of God being present right now in our lives!

Do you have awe filled experiences of discovering God in your life? Today will you take seriously that God is present with you, and treat the place where you are as holy ground?

May you know in your heart and soul today that God is truly present with you!

Wednesday July 19, 2017

Psalm 139:7 (NIV) Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

King David, the Psalmist, speaks to a foundational truth of our existence, the intimate relationship God has with each of us. God is everywhere we go, loving us, desiring for us to be in loving relationship with God. David points out for us that it is we who run away from relationship, not God!

Do you try to hide from God? Today will you stop and accept that God loves you with all of your glorious imperfections and desires for you to get over yourself and love God?

May you accept today the truth that God loves you exactly the way you are in this moment!

Thursday July 20, 2017

Romans 8:16-17 (NIV) The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

The Apostle Paul teaches of the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives that breaks our bondage to fear and sin and makes it possible for us to be adopted into God's family as Christ's siblings. Being siblings of Christ makes us different than others in the world and open to experiencing suffering and the joy of God's love. Through the Holy Spirit we are assured of our identity as children of God and our destination in God's glory!

What is the Holy Spirit doing in your life? Today will you embrace the work of the Holy Spirit and claim your identity in God's family?

May the Holy Spirit testify today with your spirit to your true identity as Christ's sibling!

Friday July 21, 2017

Matthew 13:24-25 (NIV) Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away.

Jesus's parables were designed to discomfort and make his listeners grapple with truths they would prefer to ignore and not deal with. This parable has us grappling with the reality and presence of evil and sin in the world, and in our lives. Jesus teaches us to recognize evil and to seek God's guidance and power to address it!

What do you try to ignore and avoid in your life? Today will you ask God for wisdom and strength in dealing with your weeds?

May you seek the kingdom of heaven today as you do the hard work of addressing the sin and evil in your life!

Saturday July 22, 2017

Matthew 13:36 (NIV) Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field."

Jesus' disciples show us their humanity and willingness to seem foolish in his eyes by asking questions when they are not sure they understand what he is teaching. We also learn here that Jesus answers questions when asked in quiet settings away from the crowds. We too should be bold to ask Jesus to clear up the confusion we have with his teachings!

Do you ask questions of Jesus when you are confused? Today will you find quiet places away from the crowds to seek Jesus' wisdom for your life?

May you be bold today in asking Jesus the questions needed to bring understanding in your life of faith!

Sunday July 23, 2017

Matthew 13:41, 42 (NIV) "The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their father. Whoever has ears, let them hear."

Jesus' parables always strongly encourage us to listen and respond with changes in how we live. As he interpreted the parable of the wheat and weeds to his disciples he let them know that there truly are eternal consequences to the choices they make in this life. Jesus desires us to seek his help so we may shine like the sun in the kingdom of our father!

What is Jesus calling you to hear today? Will you listen today to Jesus with an open heart and let him guide you in making changes in your life?

May you listen deeply to Jesus today and hear him lovingly guide you in making choices that make you shine in the kingdom of God!

Monday July 24, 2017

1 Thessalonians 5:19-22 (NIV) Do not quench the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good, reject every kind of evil.

The Apostle Paul was a wise teacher of the life of faith, encouraging those who listen in ways of growing in knowledge and love of God. He taught that we should embrace the life and gifts of the Holy Spirit, but that we need to use discernment to test prophetic words to ensure they are from God and promote God's good will in our lives. If something is not in alignment with God's love then we need to release it from our lives!

How do you discern what is and is not of God? Today will you test any new revelations in your life by sifting them through the filter of God's love revealed in the Scriptures?

May the Holy Spirit be alive in you today and guide you in discerning God's love and will in your life!

Tuesday July 25, 2017

Romans 8:26-27 (NIV) In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

The Apostle Paul speaks to the reality of our human condition, to our spiritual blindspots, our exhaustion of heart, mind, and body. When we don't know what to pray, the Holy Spirit, who knows us intimately prays and intercedes for us. The Holy Spirit constantly guides us in the way of God's loving will for our lives!

Do you welcome the Holy Spirit into your life? Today will you ask the Holy Spirit to show you your blindspots and how to pray for wholeness?

May your heart be open to the incredible work of the Holy Spirit in your life today!

Wednesday July 26, 2017

Romans 8:38-39 (MSG) I'm absolutely convinced that nothing—nothing living or dead, angelic or demonic, today or tomorrow, high or low, thinkable or unthinkable—absolutely nothing can get between us and God's love because of the way that Jesus our Master has embraced us.

The Apostle Paul had experienced unbelievable things serving God, incredible joys and hardships: things that should have killed him, so he could speak credibly and from the heart about God's love. Really listen to Paul's description of how God's love overcomes every obstacle possible and believe that when we are embraced by Jesus and give our heart and life to him, we experience the only true assurance in life, God's love for us!

How do you experience God's love? Today will you embrace and count on God's love for you being forever real and unshakeable!

May you fully accept and live into today God's eternal love for you!

Thursday July 27, 2017

Matthew 13:31-32 (NIV) He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches."

Jesus taught that God's presence and love grows from the tiniest of seeds within us to something magnificent that benefits others. The ways of God flourish in the ordinary soil of our lives when we take time and effort to cultivate a life with God welcoming the changes that love brings!

Are you planting seeds of God's love in your life? Today will you cultivate your relationship with God through quiet time in prayer?

May the tiny seeds of God's kingdom love take root in your life today!

Friday July 28, 2017

Matthew 13:33 (NIV) He told them still another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough."

Jesus told stories to expand our minds to help us to begin to grasp the enormity of God's quiet subtle work in our lives. Like the enormity of mixing a little bit of yeast into a massive amount of flour so completely that it will slowly be transformed into a dough that can be used to create the bread of life. The kingdom of heaven touches and reaches into every part of our lives!

What is God mixing into your life? Today will you welcome the kneeding hands of God working the yeast of love into every part of your life?

May you experience 'the kingdom of heaven' today like tiny grains of yeast leavening (transforming) your life!

Saturday July 29, 2017

Matthew 13:44 (NIV) "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field."

Jesus' story of a man finding a treasure and recognizing that it is worth more than everything he had in his life, is what happens when we encounter the kingdom of heaven, it reorients all of our priorities. Like the man in the story we have the opportunity to choose to take action and experience God's joy when we make God the center of our lives!

When have you encountered the treasure of God's love? Today will you choose to take action and make God the center of your life?

May God be the treasure and joy of your life!

Sunday July 30, 2017

Matthew 13:47-49 (NIV) "Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous."

Jesus taught that we live in a world with all kinds of people with all kinds of temperaments. How we live our lives in relationship with God, and care for others really matters. Living faithfully in the kingdom of heaven in the 'here and now' means releasing the compulsion of judging others to God and embracing loving action!

Do you struggle with being judgmental? Today will you listen to Jesus and chose to follow him in the way of sacrificial love?

May you chose today to live in loving relationship with God and others!

Monday July 31, 2017

Genesis 32:24 (NIV) So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak.

Jacob was returning home with his family and possessions, and he had sent everyone on ahead while he remained behind. In his solitude Jacob wrestled through the night with God. When we separate ourselves from relationships and things we then can focus upon God and our relationship with God, and wrestle with who we are and whom we shall be!

Have you had long nights of wrestling with God? Will you find space and take time today away from your daily life to be with God and work on you?

May you realize the necessity today of spending undistracted time alone with God, and make it happen!

Tuesday August 1, 2017

Genesis 32:26-28 (NIV) Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered. Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome."

Jacob wrestled with his identity and with God all night long and he held on with tenacity asking to be blessed. The blessing Jacob received was the recognition that he had with hard work and God's grace changed from being the trickster to a man of integrity, and received a new name, Israel. From Jacob we learn to be tenacious as we grapple with God and to be bold in our prayers, then we too will find ourselves transformed in the blessing!

Are you bold or timid as you pray? Today will you be inspired by Israel and wrestle with God asking for blessing?

May your prayers for blessing today be bold and life transforming!

Wednesday August 2, 2017

Psalm 17:6 (NIV) I call on you, my God, for you will answer me; turn your ear to me and hear my prayer.

The Psalmist is totally confident of God's love and care. The Bible teaches us that God desires for us to pray and depend upon God for our needs. Often we are hesitant to speak to God not wanting to bother God, instead we are invited to speak with boldness!

Do you call on God? Today will you be bold with the Psalmist and engage open heartedly with God in conversation?

May you be encouraged by the Psalmist to speak boldly to God what is in your heart today!

Thursday August 3, 2017

James 1:19 (NIV) My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.

James, the brother of Jesus, wrote to teach and encourage all followers of Christ. This teaching, if we embody it, builds community and virtue as we truly value the other by listening deeply, pausing and praying about our words before we speak, and letting the Holy Spirit work in our hearts so we do not react with anger and instead honestly consider the words of others!

Are you aware of what is in your heart when you speak? Today will you allow James to guide your faith life by listening quickly, speaking slowly, and seeking peace in your heart?

May the Holy Spirit guide your words and actions today so you embody James' teaching!

Friday August 4, 2017

Colossians 4:2 (NIV) Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

Paul wrote a letter from prison to the faithful in Colassae to remind them of the essentials of being followers of Jesus Christ. Christians are people of prayer: As we pray we discover that all of life is the subject of prayer, and we see God's loving presence through Jesus Christ in all people and circumstances, and this enables us to be people of love and gratitude!

What do you devote yourself to? Today will you let every experience and encounter be subject matter for spontaneous prayer and connection to God?

May you experience today the wonder and delight of talking to God about everything!

Saturday August 5, 2017

Matthew 14:13-14 (NIV) When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

Jesus left the area in which he had been teaching to find a solitary place upon learning about the death of his cousin, John the Baptist, but discovered a crowd of people waiting for him. Jesus had compassion and God's healing love flowed through him. God always knows what we truly need and provides, sometimes it's the presence of others and their needs to draw us out of potential self pity and self doubt, and to draw upon God as our source of healing and love!

How do you react when others show up when you are seeking solitude? Today will you choose to pause and ask God, "What's up?," before you react?

May you follow Jesus' lead today and act with compassion when others intrude on your solitude!

Sunday August 6, 2017

Matthew 14:16-18 (NIV) Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered. "Bring them here to me," he said. And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people.

Jesus showed the disciples what to do with their anxiety, fear of scarcity, and fear of inadequacy. You bring what you have to Jesus, give God thanks and glory, and God's power transforms our meager resources into an abundance of blessing for others. Jesus instructed all of us disciples to trust in him to give us what we need to minister to others in his name!

What do you do with your worry and anxiety? Today will trust Jesus to lovingly receive you as you are and transform you into an abundance of blessing?

May you become a blessing to others today as you bring yourself to Jesus and allow his love to turn your scarcity into God's abundance!

Monday August 7, 2017

Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV) Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

The Wise Teacher who composed this proverb speaks to the heart of finding peace in our journey with God. Peace flows from a heart relationship of trust not head knowledge and our limited understanding. When we trust God with our hearts, love grows, and we are led on paths that brings peace, joy, and fulfillment!

What do you value most in your journey with God? Today will you chose to trust God with all your heart and lean on God to make your paths straight?

May you make the choice today to let go of stress and trust God with all your heart!

Tuesday August 8, 2017

Matthew 7:24-25 (NIV) "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the the rock."

This passage comes at the end of the sermon on the mount where Jesus taught the crowds and disciples how to live faith-filled lives in community and how to grow in relationship with God. When we engage in the practices of prayer, generosity, Love, and trust in God we find ourselves in a relationship that sustains us no matter what storms attempt to overcome us!

Is your life built upon the rock of God? Today will you take time to examine the foundations of your life and engage in the practices that build relationship with God and God's people?

May you heed Jesus' words today and live into a sustaining relationship with God!

Wednesday August 9, 2017

Ephesians 4:22-24 (NIV) You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

The Apostle Paul was a wise teacher with a deep understanding of the challenges we experience as we change our lives to fully live into our faith in Jesus Christ. He knew that we must change our attitudes and replace our old desires with the desire for God's love and to embrace our new identity as beloved children of God. Change is hard work, and we are blessed to have the Holy Spirit empowering us to become righteous and holy!

How are you doing with your changes? Today will you lean into the work of 'putting off' your old self and fully embrace the new you?

May the Holy Spirit give you strength today to continue letting go of your old self and living into the new righteous you!

Thursday August 10, 2017

Romans 10:9-10 (NIV) If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

Paul is preaching a powerful message on how to move into a deeper faith and relationship with Jesus Christ. It begins in our heart as we truly believe Jesus is God's son sent to love and save us. Our words and actions come out of what we believe, and when heart, mind, and body are in sync with God's love for us, we experience new life in Jesus Christ!

Do you speak from the heart? Today will you respond to God's great love believing in Jesus Christ with your whole heart and declare that he is the Lord of your life?

May you experience the wonder today of an amazing relationship with Jesus Christ as you declare your love and trust in him!

Friday August 11, 2017

Matthew 14:22-23 (NIV) Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. After he had dismissed them, he went up on the mountainside by himself to pray.

Immediately following the feeding of the five thousand Jesus sent his disciples back across the lake in the boat, and sent the crowds home. Then he finally went up on the mountain to pray without interruption and receive renewal from quality time with God. Jesus shows us that it's important to spend quiet time with God away from distractions and others!

How do find renewal time with God? Today will you follow Jesus' example and be very intentional about creating quality time alone with God?

May you be inspired by Jesus today to disengage from your busy demanding life and rest in God's loving arms!

Saturday August 12, 2017

Matthew 14:25-27 (NIV) Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

The disciples had been battling a headwind and waves all night after a long day of ministry with Jesus, they were exhausted. When they dimly saw Jesus coming towards them their minds could not process and they experienced great fear, but Jesus immediately let them know it was him and to not be afraid. When we are feeling overwhelmed and exhausted in the midst of the storms of life Jesus comes to us to give us courage and strength through his divine presence!

Have you met Jesus in the storm? Today will you take courage and call out to Jesus to be present with you in your circumstances?

May the loving presence of Jesus banish your fears and give you courage today!

Sunday August 13, 2017

Matthew 14:28-32 (NIV) "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?" And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down.

Peter had the courage to step out of the boat in the midst of the storm and walk towards Jesus on the water, but he let the wind and waves distract him and he lost his focus on Jesus, and began to sink. However, Peter knew whom to call upon for salvation and Jesus immediately reached out and saved him. We learn from Peter that when we keep our focus on Jesus he empowers us to overcome fear to do what he did!

Whom do you focus on? Today will you learn from Peter to focus on Jesus and follow his Word in your life?

May you remember today that focusing your heart and attention on Jesus empowers you to follow his Word!

Monday August 14, 2017

Genesis 45:7 (NIV) But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

Joseph was speaking to his brothers who had years before sold him in slavery to the Egyptians and had at that moment discovered that he was now powerful in Egypt and held their lives in his hands. Joseph had let God heal his hurt and resentment of his brothers, and had recognized God's agency at work through him to preserve life. God works in and through every circumstance in our lives to transform hurt into redemption and reconciliation!

Do you hold onto hurts that God desires to heal? Today will you choose to see how God has been at work to transform the difficult episodes of your life?

May you embrace today the healing God desires for you to experience in your relationships!

Tuesday August 15, 2017

Psalms 15:8 (NIV) Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.

The Psalmist teaches that God can be trusted at all times with all of our lives. When we stop holding back and truly pour our hearts out to God something marvelous happens, we experience God as our loving refuge. God desires to provide loving balance, meaning, and restoration in the midst of our hectic lives!

Where do you place your trust? Today will you pour out your heart and share your hopes, dreams, and struggles with God?

May you embrace God today, your wonderful refuge, with everything in your heart!

Wednesday August 16, 2017

Psalm 133:1 (NIV) How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head.

The Psalmist speaks to the blessings of God's anointing when God's people live and work together seeking God's will. Prayer for living together in the unity of God's love is truly needed right now in the midst of the profound polarization happening in our communities. Our God works mighty miracles of love when we wholeheartedly pray!

Do you pray for loving unity among God's people? Today will you add prayers for unity as part of your daily prayer life?

May you experience God's anointing today as you pray for God's people to live together in unity!

Thursday August 17, 2017

Philippians 2:9-11 (NIV) Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The Apostle Paul taught that the name of Jesus has power to change our lives and the world to the glory of God. Jesus invites us to call his name in every circumstance of our lives to deepen our relationship with him and to receive his peace and strength!

Is Jesus Christ the Lord of your life? Today will you speak to Jesus calling his name in the midst of the lows and highs of your day?

May the name of Jesus be in your heart and on your lips today!

Friday August 18, 2017

Matthew 15:10-11 (NIV) Jesus called the crowd to him and said, "Listen and understand. What goes into someone's mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them."

Jesus responded to people insistent that everyone follow their rules by being clear that living with integrity is to follow God's rules. He emphasized that the words we speak show the status of our hearts and our faith. What we say and how we say it has great power to either cause harm or build up God's kingdom!

Are you mindful of everything you say? Today will you seek to speak words that reflect Jesus' love and build up others?

May you seek God's love in your heart before you speak today!

Saturday August 19, 2017

Matthew 15:25-27 (NIV) The woman came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said. He replied, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs." "Yes it is, Lord," she said. "Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table."

A very persistent Canaanite woman came to Jesus to get help for her daughter and would not take 'No' for an answer. She drove the disciples nuts and successfully debated with Jesus. The Canaanite woman is a marvelous teacher for us in how to be faithfully persistent in seeking Jesus' healing for our loved ones!

Do you ask Jesus for what you need? Today will you choose to be faithfully persistent as you speak to Jesus about the needs in your life?

May you have the faithful boldness of the Canaanite woman today as you speak to Jesus!

Sunday August 20, 2017

Matthew 15:28 (NIV) Then Jesus said to her, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed at that moment.

Jesus spoke to the woman who had broken down cultural barriers to receive healing for her child, "you have great faith!" She showed her faith as her great love for her child and persistence in seeking healing from Jesus acknowledging that he was Lord of her life. Healing flows when our lives show great love and persistence in relating to Jesus!

How does your love show? Today will you be persistent in your loving faith filled relationship with Jesus Christ?

May you receive healing in your life today as you show your love and faith in Jesus Christ!

Monday August 21, 2017

1 Kings 8:23 (NIV) "Lord, the God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below—you who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way."

King Solomon, known for his wisdom, proclaimed and worshipped God. Our God keeps a covenant of love and desires for us to be wholehearted in following God's ways. When we lovingly follow God ways we experience each day with awe and wonder, the ordinary and the eclipsed days are filled with God's unending love!

Do you always trust God's love? Today will you observe and delight in the wonders of God's world, and take caution to not stare into the sun without proper eye protection?

May you continue today wholeheartedly in God's way of covenant love!

Tuesday August 22, 2017

Isaiah 12:2 (NIV) Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The Lord, the Lord himself, is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation.

Isaiah leads us into a process of growing in relationship with God, one where we learn to let go of fear as we grow in trust and discover that God is not only our strength but is our song, the music of our life. The process leads us from being tentative about the idea of God being our salvation to being in an embodied relationship where God is our salvation, the ground of our being!

How do you let go of fear and embrace trust in God? Today will you explore the song of God vibrating in your soul?

May you sing boldly today the song that is God dissolving fear and building strength in your soul!

Wednesday August 23, 2017

Romans 12:1 (MSG) So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for God.

The Apostle Paul teaches that faith filled living is not about doing huge heroic things but is instead about embracing what God is already doing in our lives. What God desires is our awareness of God's love present and active within us in all that we do. We are people of faith when God is our center and we trust the Holy Spirit to guide our decisions and actions!

Do you ask God to help you every day? Today will you ask God to keep you continually aware of God's love active within you?

May God help you today to be the living embodiment of God's amazing love!

Thursday August 24, 2017

Romans 12:2 (MSG) Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.

As people of faith we are called to live with focus and intention upon God and God's desire for our lives rather than going along with what everyone else is doing. When we focus on God, marvelous transformation happens within us that permeates our whole being as we are able to recognize God's love and direction which brings out the best from us!

Are you intentional about your faith life? Today will you fix your attention on God so you can quickly respond to God?

May God's maturity grow within you today as you focus on God and live with faith filled intentionality!

Friday August 25, 2017

Romans 12:3c (MSG) The only accurate way to understand ourselves is by what God is and by what God does for us, not by what we are and what we do for God.

The Apostle Paul is sharing the wisdom of a mature lived faith. When we try to understand ourselves by our own accomplishments we distort ourselves and God. Instead true knowledge and identity flows from God's love and grace in our lives!

Where do you derive your identity? Today will you stop trying to be a child of God through your actions and live into your true self by embracing God acting through you?

May you know yourself today as God's beloved and work with God instead of for God!

Saturday August 26, 2017

Matthew 16:13-15 (NIV) When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

Jesus is lifting up here the differences between speculation about him and truly knowing him. He asks each of us this question of who he is in the context of our lives. Jesus' question directs us to move from speculation about him to a life transforming relationship with him!

How do you answer Jesus' questions? Today will you move out of your head and into your heart as you answer Jesus' questions?

May your relationship with Jesus deepen today as you reply to his questions!

Sunday August 27, 2017

Romans 12:6 (MSG) So since we find ourselves fashioned into all these excellently formed and marvelously functioning parts in Christ's body, lets just go ahead and be what we were made to be, without enviously or pridefully comparing ourselves with each other, or trying to be something we aren't.

The Apostle Paul uses the analogy of Christians being parts of Jesus body and that we derive our true meaning from the whole body of Christ not from ourselves. Each of us has been blessed with gifting that is needed by the whole body and we build the body of Christ when we are using our gifts as ourselves. Paul encourages us to find fulfillment in simply embracing being ourselves!

Do you struggle with comparisons and trying to be something you are not? Today will you let go of trying to be cool and discover the joy of being 'YOU' as God made you?

May you experience the joy today of being the marvelous 'YOU' in Christ's body with no comparisons!

Wednesday August 30, 2017

Exodus 3:3-5 (NIV) So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up." When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am." "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."

God sent an angel to get Moses' attention and then spoke to Moses about removing his sandals so the soles of his feet would be in contact with the holy ground. God invites us to use our senses to spark our curiosity and sense of wonder but cautions us to encounter the Holy with reverence. We are asked to make ourselves vulnerable to fully encounter God's loving presence!

How does God spark your sense of wonder? Today will you let your curiosity lead you to encounter God with vulnerability and reverence?

May your soul be rejuvenated today as you reverently stand on holy ground in God's presence!

Thursday August 31, 2017

Romans 12:9-10 (MSG) Love from the center of who you are; don't fake it. Run for dear life from evil; hold on for dear life to good. Be good friends who love deeply; practice playing second fiddle.

The Apostle Paul speaks to us about the center of the Christian faith, Love. Love is so much more than an emotion, it is the way of life in God's kingdom, it is how we live with authenticity and cling to the good. Love is the core of good relationship and it guides us to follow Jesus with humility in our hearts!

Are you loving from the center of who you are? Today will you ask the Holy Spirit to increase your capacity to live fully in Jesus' love?

May you live fully today 'the way of love' as a genuine disciple of Jesus Christ!

Friday September 1, 2017

Romans 12:20-21 (MSG) Our Scriptures tell us that if you see your enemy hungry, go buy that person lunch, or if he's thirsty, get him a drink. Your generosity will surprise him with goodness. Don't let evil get the best of you; get the best of evil by doing good.

The Apostle Paul has wise counsel for how to live a life of love in action. It's easier to be loving to people we like but Paul tells us for love to be whole we must be able to be loving to the people we dislike, the ones who irritate us or feel like enemies. When we act loving to all people we bring God's best out in ourselves and others!

How do you respond to poor behavior in others? Today will you pause before you respond to others and seek the Holy Spirit's help in doing good?

May you be generous in expressing God's loving action with all the people in your life today!

Saturday September 2, 2017

Matthew 16:23-24 (MSG) But Jesus didn't swerve. "Peter, get out of my way. Satan, get lost. You have no idea how God works." Then Jesus went to work on his disciples. "Anyone who intends to come with me has to let me lead. You're not in the driver's seat; I am."

Jesus had just explained to the disciples what would happen to him in Jerusalem, and Peter had freaked out, so Jesus had to set them all straight on who was the master and who were the students. Peter is not alone, we too try to be in control and tell Jesus what we want him to do. Learning to let go of our need to control and let Jesus lead us is foundational to life in the kingdom of God!

How are you doing with keeping Jesus in the driver seat? Today will you choose to let Jesus lead and follow him with all your heart?

May you get yourself out of Jesus' way today and follow him with your whole heart and life!

Sunday September 3, 2017

Matthew 16:25-26 (MSG) Don't run from suffering; embrace it. Follow me and I'll show you how. Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, my way, to finding yourself, your true self. What kind of deal is it to get everything you want but lose yourself? What could you ever trade your soul for?

Jesus offers a very different way of being in the world, a way of discovering one's self by focusing the energies of our love, compassion, and care on others. In the face of devastating disasters such as the massive flooding in Nepal, India, and Texas we

have opportunity to find our true selves by sacrificially helping others. When we are willing to enter the suffering of others and help, then we are truly following Jesus!

Do you struggle with how you follow Jesus? Today will you examine your goals and test them with what Jesus calls you to do?

Today may you find your true self by following Jesus into the suffering and helping of others!

Monday September 4, 2017 Labor Day

Psalm 127:1 (NIV) Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain.

The Psalmist shares the wisdom that our labor only has true meaning when we are working with God. A day when we take time away from our regular labor is a wonderful opportunity to examine and reflect upon the quality and purpose of what we do and how we do it!

Do you labor with God, or for yourself? Today will you reflect on your labors and prayerfully seek God's guidance in how you should labor?

May you have fruitful conversations with God today about your work for God's kingdom!

Tuesday September 5, 2017

2 John 1:5-6 (MSG) Permit me a reminder, friends, and this is not a new commandment but simply a repetition of our original and basic charter: that we love each other. Love means following his commandments, and his unifying commandment is that you conduct your lives in love. This is the first thing you heard, and nothing has changed.

The Apostle John writes pastorally to guide his congregations and us to remember God's character and how we are called to function and be as God's people. The guiding principle is to act and be loving to all people. John tells us that when we live God's commandments we are walking in love!

When do you need reminders to be loving? Today will you express love by holding students and teachers in your prayers as the new school year begins?

May you remember today that love is the guiding principle of our being and doing as God's people!

Wednesday September 6, 2017

John 15:5 (NIV) "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

Jesus spoke these words to his disciples to reinforce how to live fully as people of faith through dependence on him. When we live fully connected to Jesus our lives are filled with the fruits of the spirit and we have resilience for all the obstacles we encounter in daily life. However, our ability to thrive apart from Jesus is limited to our own finite resources, but in Jesus we are filled with God's infinite love!

Looking at your faith life when have you struggled and when have you thrived? Today will you trust Jesus to nourish your life into fruitfulness?

May you depend fully upon Jesus today for the fruitfulness in your life and spirit!

Thursday September 7, 2017

Romans 13:9-10 (NIV) The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not covet," and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

The Apostle Paul wrote this as a pastor showing the way to live holy lives in community. John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, explained Paul's teaching this way: Do no harm, Do all the good you can, and keep in love with God. We love God as we live lives of love and care with all people!

Where do you struggle with being loving? Today will you ask Jesus for forgiveness where you have fallen short and for grace to live fully into his command to "Love your neighbor as yourself?"

May you experience all people as your neighbor today as you seek to live into God's command to love!

Friday September 8, 2017

Romans 13:11 (MSG) But make sure that you don't get so absorbed and exhausted in taking care of all your day-by-day obligations that you lose track of the time and doze off, oblivious to God. The night is about over, dawn is about to break. Be up and awake to what God is doing! God is putting the finishing touches on the salvation work he began when we first believed.

Paul is urging us to not sleepwalk through life getting so absorbed and consumed by the stuff of each day we lose touch with God and forget about our faith lives. Wake up!! Open your eyes to see the marvels and wonders of God in the smallest details of your life, and give thanks!

When do you find yourself spiritually sleepwalking in your life? Today will you refocus your awareness on what God is doing in your life?

May you respond today to Paul's call to wake up, give God thanks for the smell of the coffee, and look for God's loving activity throughout your day!

Saturday September 9, 2017

Matthew 18:15 (NIV) "If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over."

Jesus was teaching his disciples how to lovingly be in community when there was conflict. The first step is to privately speak with the person causing conflict in a caring way to let them know the effects of their behavior on the life of the community. Often things can be resolved if there is an early intervention in a loving way so the individual can perceive the larger vision of themselves as part of a greater whole!

Do you seek Jesus' guidance when you are in the midst of conflict? Today will you take courage from Jesus to use words of loving accountability to heal conflict?

May you be courageously loving as you speak words of accountability today to bring healing in relationships!

Sunday September 10, 2017

Matthew 18:19-20 (NIV) "Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."

Jesus taught with authority that our words and actions in community when filled with his divine presence have the power to transform relationships and change the world. When we prayerfully call upon Jesus and ask the Holy Spirit to guide our thoughts and actions we find ourselves in alignment with God's will and desire, and we experience God's wonders!

Do you spend time in prayer with others? Today will you join others calling upon the name of Jesus to protect the people in the path of Hurricanes Irma and Jose, and in the path of the Western wildfires?

May you gather today in communities of faith calling upon Jesus to guide your prayers to align with God's will to heal relationships bringing wholeness and peace!

Monday September 11, 2017

Philippians 4:12-13 (NIV) I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

The Apostle Paul spoke from personal experience of the incredible ups and downs and storms of life. He shares a lifeline for each of us, our relationship with Jesus Christ gives us the strength and presence to have peace in every circumstance of our lives. Let us join in praying for our sisters and brothers in every place touched by terror, storm, wind, earthquake, and fire, that each of them may be sustained by the love of Jesus Christ!

Where do you experience peace in the ups and downs of your life? Today will you speak the name of Jesus and let his strength flow through you?

May the love and strength of Jesus Christ fill and sustain you with his peace in all circumstances today!

Tuesday September 12, 2017

Exodus 14:21-22 (NIV) Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the Lord drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided, and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left.

God led the Israelites out of Egypt to the edge of the sea and provided a barrier behind the people so that the pursuing Egyptian army was kept at a distance, then God had Moses hold out his hand over the sea and the waters parted providing a way forward for God's people. In all times God is fully present with us, especially during the night when it feels like an army is bearing down on us. God always provides a way forward, but we must take courage from God's love to walk between the walls of water into new life!

When has God walked with you through the water? Today will you trust in God's ever-present love for you and take courage to walk in the way God is opening for you?

May your trust in God overcome the fear of leaving your past and walking into your new life with God and God's people!

Wednesday September 13, 2017

Romans 14:1 (MSG) Welcome with open arms fellow believers who don't see things the way you do. And don't jump all over them every time they do or say something you don't agree with—even when it seems that they are strong on opinions but weak in the faith department. Remember, they have their own history to deal with. Treat them gently.

The Apostle Paul taught the church to welcome believers at all stages of maturity in their faith journey. How we comport ourselves in response to new people in our faith communities makes all the difference to whether they grow and build the body of Christ. Treating people with gentle respect models how Jesus treated the people he met, taught, and healed!

How do you react to folks with strong opinions? Today will you welcome fellow believers who don't see eye to eye with you into your community with open arms and open hearts?

May you live into Paul's teaching today as you welcome new people into your faith community!

Thursday September 14, 2015

Romans 14:7-8 (NIV) For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

The Apostle Paul addressed what it means to become part of the body Christ in Christian community. When we become followers of Jesus Christ we live for Jesus and our lives are expanded beyond anything we could have previously imagined. This belonging removes fear of death because living and dying we are in relationship with Jesus and that gives everything eternal meaning!

What do you live for? Today will you relinquish fear and embrace the amazing relationship Jesus offers to transform your life?

May you experience today the amazing peace and joy of living for Jesus Christ!

Friday September 15, 2017

Romans 14:4 (NIV) Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

The Apostle Paul speaks a timeless wisdom about not judging other people and reinforces that message throughout this section of his letter to the Christians in Rome. The only worthy judge of people is God, who loves each and every person. Only God knows and is able to activate our true potential and capacity for being people of love and grace!

How are you doing with releasing your desire to judge back into God's hands? Today will you be mindful of your thoughts about others, and ask Jesus to guard your heart against being judgmental?

May God grant you the grace to perceive each person today with nonjudgmental love!

Saturday September 16, 2017

Matthew 18:24-25 (NIV) Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times."

Peter once again has spoken something that we have all struggled with, how often should we forgive someone who has harmed us. He tried to be generous by using the number seven while at the same time limiting how much he needed to forgive. But Jesus gave an impossibly huge number teaching us that forgiveness is about how we embrace God's grace and embody that grace in our relationships with others!

Do you struggle with forgiving? Today will you stop counting and embrace Jesus' teaching that Holy living embodies forgiveness?

May you learn today with Peter to stop counting and allow forgiveness to be a part of your identity as a child of God!

Sunday September 17, 2017

Matthew 18:35 (NIV) "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

Jesus had followed up telling Peter to keep forgiving with a story to emphasize how he was to forgive. Forgiving is so much more than the recitation of rote words, it is about a systemic change of heart and being that allows the forgiver to release the burden and treat the other with love. This heartfelt change bring healing and wholeness of spirit to the forgiver!

Do you ever mumble words without heart when forgiving? Today will you ask Jesus to help you to change and release your burdens by forgiving from the heart?

May your words of forgiveness and reconciliation be spoken from the heart today and everyday!

Monday September 18, 2017

Colossians 3:23-24 (NLT) Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ.

The Apostle Paul offers us excellent advice for how to keep our focus on God throughout each day. We do this by how we approach and engage each daily task, keeping in mind that we are really doing it for God. When we work from a foundation of love it gives significance and grace to everything and enables us to experience joy throughout each day!

Whom do you work for each day? Today will you choose to dedicate each thing you do to God's love?

May all your work today flow from the foundation of God's love so that you experience peace and joy in your labors!

Tuesday September 19, 2017

Romans 8:6 (NLT) So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace.

The Apostle Paul is teaching us that when we try to handle life on our own terms with our own strength we become overwhelmed with worries, temptations, and stresses that drag us into a downward spiral to death. On the other hand Jesus Christ offers us new life and peace for our souls when we welcome his gift of the Holy Spirit to guide and guard our hearts and minds. Living in the Spirit is not about making us zombies but instead gives meaning and vitality to our lives!

Have you welcomed the Holy Spirit into your life? Today will you choose life and peace and embrace the loving life giving presence of the Holy Spirit?

May the Holy Spirit direct you today to embrace God's love and peace as you follow Jesus Christ!

Wednesday September 20, 2017

Exodus 16:4 (NIV) Then the Lord said to Moses, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day.

God promises to rain down blessings and provide enough for each of us every day. Manna and blessings are not intended to be hoarded, because they will spoil, instead they are provided by God to be used each day to nourish our lives so we may flourish!

Do you trust in God's promises? Today will you gather God's blessings for you and use them to fully live as a disciple of Jesus Christ?

May you fully use today each blessing God rains down!

Thursday September 21, 2017

Philippians 1:27 (NRSV) Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel.

The Apostle Paul was writing to encourage the early church in Philippi to not let the pressures of the culture around them distract or discourage them from faithfully following Jesus Christ. We too need the encouragement of Paul to stand firm in God's Holy Spirit to be a transforming witness for our culture. As Christians working together and living lives worthy of the gospel of Christ we can overcome the darkness in the world!

How are you living your life? Today will you choose to stand firm in the Spirit and work with other Christians to fully live the Gospel?

May your life today reflect your belief and faith in Jesus Christ!

Friday September 22, 2017

Hebrews 10:23-25 (NIV) Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encourage one another.

The Author of Hebrews is a wise pastor who knows that we all need encouragement to keep to our faith in Jesus Christ, and the best way to stay strong in our faith is to meet with other Christians. Then we can support one another to grow in love putting our faith into action. We are reminded to make gathering regularly with other people of faith a priority in our lives!

Do you regularly gather with people of faith? Today will you make it a priority to meet with and encourage other Christians, and gracefully receive their encouragement?

May you hold unwaveringly to your hope in Jesus Christ, today and every day, as you faithfully gather with and encourage the best behavior in other Christians!

Saturday September 23, 2017

1John1:7-9 (NIV) But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Pastor John's words resound with truth, light, and hope for our lives in the fellowship of other believers and Jesus' love. We first must honestly claim our own unvarnished sins, letting go of our compulsive need to deceive ourselves, and confess them to Jesus. When we name and release our sins Jesus forgives them, and we find light and truth and righteousness growing in us!

Do you struggle with self deception? Today will you ask Jesus to shine his light in your soul, remove self deception, and purify what you name with his forgiveness?

May you walk today in Jesus' light honestly naming and releasing your sins and receive his cleansing forgiveness!

Sunday September 24, 2017

Psalm 89:15-16 (NIV) Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you, who walk in the light of your presence, Lord. They rejoice in your name all day long; they celebrate your righteousness.

The Psalmist shares one of the deep truths of the spiritual journey, we are transformed as we walk with God into people of blessing. By focusing our attention on God, the source of all goodness, we become more peaceful in our hearts, minds, and behavior because God gives us a new perspective in which to experience our daily challenges. We then as people of God become an inspiration for others to seek the peace God offers!

Are you walking in God's presence? Today will you choose to walk with and learn from God?

May you experience today the peace and joy of walking with God as a person of blessing!

Monday September 25, 2017

Philippians 2:3-4 (NIV) Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

The Apostle Paul was writing tenderly to the Christians in Philippi encouraging them to live the values of Jesus Christ in community. The key to building community is to let go of vanity and self seeking ambition, and turn that energy towards encouraging and building up others. When we are able to do that the Holy Spirit does amazing work through us!

Do you struggle with the desire to make yourself better than others? Today will you choose to follow Jesus Christ and expend your energy building community?

May Jesus help you today to release selfish ambition and embrace the humility of building community!

Tuesday September 26, 2017

Isaiah 50:4 (NIV) The Sovereign Lord has given me a well-instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being instructed.

The Prophet Isaiah speaks to us of a faith-filled life lived in God's loving presence. It begins each morning listening to God speak into our heart and mind, and throughout the day drawing upon God's presence to speak the sustaining word to those in need. Sometimes we share the word with the weary, and other times we are the weary desperately in need of God's sustaining word!

Do you commune with God upon waking each morning? Today will you be intentional about listening for God's instructions before you speak?

May you pause today listening deeply to God, so the words you speak may sustain the weary!

Wednesday September 27, 2017

Exodus 18:4 (NIV) Then Moses cried out to the Lord, "What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me."

Moses experienced a crisis of leadership because the Israelites were thirsty and had turned on him, he turned to God for help. Leadership, especially in the church, is not for the faint of heart, because it often requires sacrifice and difficult conversations. However, we have a faithful God, who always provides what we need, when we remember to ask, just as God guided Moses to strike the rock with his staff and water flowed!

What do you do when people are upset with your leadership? Today will you turn your anxieties over to God and prayerfully ask for what is needed?

May you find the solutions you need today when you turn to God in prayer and listen expectantly!

Thursday September 28, 2017

Psalm 78:4 (NIV) We will not hide them from their descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done.

The Psalmist speaks of a vital part of our faith journey, sharing the wonders and stories of God with the next generations. We love stories, and the story of God is the greatest story where we find ourselves and the context for true meaning in our lives. A wonderful benefit of sharing God's story with others is that it becomes a deeper part of us!

Who do you share God's story with? Today will you be intentional about sharing God's story with a younger person?

May the power of God's wonders and story shape your life anew as you share with others!

Friday September 29, 2017

Psalm 34:4-7 (NIV) I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame. This poor man called, and the Lord heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.

King David wrote this Psalm about a particularly challenging episode in his life that required him to be totally humble and rely upon God's grace to rescue him. David teaches us that his relationship with God, one of awe filled respect, enabled him to confidently call out to God in his need. Those in relationship with God have a special radiance about them that reflects the trust and peace of God in their hearts!

What is the nature of your relationship with God? Today will you trust God with all your heart, soul, and needs?

May you be inspired by King David today to wholly trust in God's provident grace!