

Sunday, March 13, 2022

HEALING AND PRAYING

READ: Mark 1: 29-45

OPENING PRAYER: Heavenly Father, you are the ultimate healer of our souls. Thank you that you are with us each and every day in all situations and that we can depend on you for peace and comfort, whatever our circumstances. Amen.

MEDITATION: Healing and praying go hand in hand. Not always when we pray are our prayers answered in the way which we would want them answered. But God hears our prayers and wants and decides what is best for us. Healing does not always come in the form of healing from illness. We need healing from insecurities, from our past and present unkind actions, from being judgmental, and for help with our everyday living. In our prayers for someone who is ill, I believe God answers those prayers in the way that is best for that person who is ill. In the case of Simon's mother-in-law, there were no prayers. It only took the disciples to tell Jesus about her fever. This speaks to their faith in Jesus' healing powers. The leper had faith that if only Christ was willing, the leper would be healed from his leprosy. What a joy to hear Christ's words, "I am willing" and to receive that healing.

As we seek to become more like Christ, finding quiet times and quiet places to spend time with him is crucial, just as he had to draw away to a solitary place away from the crowds to pray. When life becomes crazily fragmented and overwhelming, I get to a point where I need to shut myself off from everything around me and spend quiet time with God. When peace begins quieting and relaxing my mind and body, I feel like I can breathe again. Then comes the happy anticipation of how God will guide my days.

CLOSING PRAYER: Heavenly Father, we are infinitely blessed that you are our Lord and Savior. You bring us healing in so many ways. As we yearn to be more like you and come closer to you through prayer and quiet time, your promises become more fully felt. May we never take you for granted. Help us to live into the life into which you call us. Amen.

Jan Edwards

Monday, March 14, 2022

WE MUST KEEP GOD'S COMMANDS

READ: Deuteronomy 28:9

OPENING PRAYER: We come to you knowing that in order to live our best lives as your disciples we must follow your commandments. Please help us to strive in our walk with you and to be a shining example. In your name we pray. Amen.

MEDITATION: In the passages following 28:9 you will see you are to listen to God's word and follow his commandments. In turn he will open to us all his good treasures, in our work and in our families. In giving us his commandments, he left us no doubt as to what he demanded of us when we become children of God.

CLOSING THOUGHTS: In these troubled times when it might seem no one is listening to God's words, remember to find peace within us and with God, the way is to follow his commandments and his words.

Carolyn Lee

Tuesday, March 15, 2022

NOTHING MORE

READ: Philippians 3:1-11

OPENING PRAYER: Lord, help me to understand your words so that I might know you better and understand you more completely. Amen.

MEDITATION: Sometimes, all I want to do is talk about myself or tell others what I have done or accomplished. But there is only one thing I should be boasting about and striving towards, and that's my relationship with God. As Paul says, it's "the priceless gain of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord."

After reading this passage, I thought to myself, what are my take-aways?

1. Be careful to discern truth from error.
2. There are "dawgs" out there sent from the evil one, who are trying to confuse us about what God wants us to do.
3. There's nothing that we can do to earn points with God. No human effort will get us into Heaven.
4. We need to make an intimate relationship with God our number one priority in life.

CLOSING PRAYER: Lord, I too often worry about keeping up appearances and living by my own efforts. Help me to change my focus so that I may find my strength and place my hope in you alone. Amen.

Cheryl Buell

Wednesday, March 16, 2022

HEALING THE PARALYTIC

READ: Mark 2:1-12

OPENING PRAYER: Dear Lord, thank you for all the wisdom that you provide us, so that we can live a faithful life and get through all of today's struggles.

MEDITATION: When Jesus had come back to Capernaum several days afterward, it was heard that he was home. Many were gathered, so that there was no longer room, not even near the door. Jesus was speaking the word to them. Some men came to him carrying a paralytic. Jesus was impressed by the man's friends. Their faith was active, showed care, compassion, and friendship to someone who was excluded from both the financial and relational rewards of work.

In their faith, there is no separation between being and doing. Jesus saw their efforts as an act of collective faith. Jesus' claim to be able to forgive sins was a claim too controversial, which the teachers of the law saw as blasphemous. It was clear that one purpose of the miracles was to give evidence of Jesus' deity.

In short, we learned how Jesus serves as a model of faith, a warning of doubt, a lesson of spiritual discernment, and a testimony of the power of our savior to change lives, heal, forgive sins, and grant eternal life, lessons that apply to us each and every day.

CLOSING PRAYER: Thank you, Lord, for your forgiveness, even when there are times when we may have our doubts. But through you, all things are possible. Amen.

Joe Kagarise

Thursday, March 17, 2022

IN GOD IS OUR TRUST

READ: Psalm 40:1-4

OPENING PRAYER: Lord, help us to always put our trust in you. On our own we can do nothing. With you all is possible. All honor to you, in Jesus' name. Amen.

MEDITATION: Our society is so much inclined to the idea of "you can do it." It's so easy to forget to include God's will in our decisions. We rush right into things without going first to God to discern what is his will and the best for us. We don't have to get on our knees – just close our eyes and be open to what is God's will. Be patient just like David in this Psalm.

CLOSING PRAYER: Dear God, you are an awesome God. May I always turn first to you in all my decisions. I put my trust in you. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Doris Johnson

Friday, March 18, 2022

PRESSING ON TO THE GOAL

READ: Philippians 3:12-21

OPENING PRAYER: Heavenly Father, we long for the day when you bring us home to meet you face to face. In Jesus' name. Amen.

MEDITATION: Reflecting on this passage, my first question is: **What is the goal?** Verse 20 says we are citizens of heaven where the Lord Jesus lives. This tells me that all of the challenges we face in this life are only temporary. We must press on and look forward in order to receive our heavenly prize.

A favorite song "I Can Only Imagine" by Mercy Me, asks several questions about what our arrival in heaven will be like. "Surrounded by your glory, what will my heart feel? Will I dance for you Jesus, or in awe of you be still? Will I stand in your presence, or to my knees will I fall? Will I sing hallelujah? Will I be able to speak at all? I can only imagine."

The next question that comes to mind is: **How do we reach our goal?** The next verse answers this by acknowledging that it is only through the power of Christ that we will receive our prize.

The last question: **What does Paul mean by "press on"?** With all the uncertainty of the last couple of years this has meant several things for me. Wait – wait upon the Lord. Acknowledge – The Lord is in control. Pursue the Lord through prayer and the reading of his word.

CLOSING PRAYER: Lord, thank you for the cross. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Deena Saffell

Saturday, March 19, 2022

CALLING AND FASTING

READ: Mark 2:13-22

OPENING PRAYER: Dear Lord, be with us this Lenten season. Open our hearts to your word as we mediate on the devotions for your coming. In Jesus' name. Amen.

MEDITATION: The theme, "We are Sojourners" conjured up a different thought to me than what the scripture tells us. I thought of the wagon trains that moved our country west to the Pacific Ocean. Had they not persevered, where would I be now? I might still be in Nebraska or Kentucky.

Fasting selfishly? I can't remember having ever truly fasted. My faith and belief in Jesus are true and strong. The Pharisees fasted for show. The teachers of the law had the rules about fasting written on their scrolls and in their law books. For many of them fasting was a meaningless exercise. Learn about true fasting by reading Isaiah 58:6-9a. Read it now!

Every Sunday we confess our sins and are granted forgiveness. Yet some of those same sins keep reappearing. Will we ever be sinless? Most likely not. Jesus knew the hearts of the Pharisees and what they would soon learn. Jesus sojourned to Jerusalem, where he knew what awaited him. Jesus is still waiting for us to become his emissaries to the world, and how belief in him will enrich us, not only with worldly goods, but with a good heart to spread his goodness and the reward of a heavenly Father who loves us.

CLOSING PRAYER: As sojourners with Christ, let our hearts be filled with love and goodness so his light shines through us. We pray in his precious name. Amen.

Shirley Burrows