

**Sunday, March 6, 2022**

**ARE WE STILL WAITING?**

**READ:** Mark 1:1-8

**OPENING PRAYER:** Dear Lord, may our meditations on these words be pleasing in your sight. Amen.

**MEDITATION:** For centuries, the Israelites, Hebrews, Jews, and (pick one) waited for the Messiah. Many prophets spoke of his coming, and what he would do once he got here. During this long waiting period, the people were involved in many wars with their neighbors and others who were just passing through. As a result, the people started believing that the Messiah would use similar strategies and tactics to solve their problems for all time.

The people must have been surprised when John the Baptist started talking about repentance, forgiveness, confession, and that the one who was coming would also baptize with the Holy Spirit. It is apparent that his message resonated with the people, since more and more folks joined the ranks of those baptized with water.

Once Jesus appeared on the scene, many of John's followers became Jesus' followers. As we have learned through reading the scriptures, many people waited until after his death and resurrection to become his followers.

However, since we know the rest of the story, we do not need to wait until we celebrate Christmas, Epiphany, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter, Pentecost, etc. to accept him into our hearts and our lives. We do not need to wait any longer to reaffirm our faith and trust in Jesus as our Lord and Savior!

**CLOSING PRAYER:** Dear Lord, it is so easy to use any excuse to wait for the "right time" to accept you whole-heartedly into our lives. Help us to live our lives like John the Baptist proclaimed, so that others will see by our example that waiting to accept Jesus is not a good option. Amen.

Bill Amblad

**Monday, March 7, 2022**

**THIS WORLD IS NOT MY HOME, I'M JUST PASSING THROUGH**

**READ:** Deuteronomy 10:12-13

**OPENING PRAYER:** Dear Lord, as I sojourn through my short time on earth, help me to walk in all your ways, love and serve you with all my heart, and keep your commandments. Amen.

**MEDITATION:** Throughout history, most people lived their entire lives in a relatively small circle, rarely leaving their village or region. Unlike our forefathers, people in our generation are likely to live and travel to other regions and other countries throughout the world! But our spiritual sojourn has little to do with the distance we travel, the countries we visit, or the cultures we experience.

Our spiritual sojourn begins when we accept Christ as our Lord and Savior. Step by step, we proceed to grow in knowledge of Christ, and further progress as we commit ourselves to the study of God's word, prayer, and fellowship with other believers. Travel can be fun and exciting. Our experiences in other countries make for great conversation. We certainly learn more about our world and ourselves. But "walking in all God's ways" is the sojourn that God calls us to. It's the trip that begins here on earth and lasts throughout eternity.

**CLOSING THOUGHT:** Lord, help me to not get so consumed with the "trip itinerary" of this world that I forget to walk in all your ways and sojourn with you.

Judy Brockhoff

**Tuesday, March 8, 2022**

**TELL GOD WHAT YOU NEED**

**READ:** Philippians 1:15-30

**OPENING PRAYER:** Dear Lord, help us to understand your words and the many ways we can honor you. As we experience troubles in our lives, we pray that our good works and perseverance will bring glory and praise to you. Amen.

**MEDITATION:** Paul wrote to his followers in Philippi while he agonized in prison. He was suffering greatly and his life was in jeopardy. He was overwhelmed by troubles and in a state of despair! It was from this state of mind that he wrote his letters. He expressed his deep feelings to his believers to include his love for them and how thankful he was for their friendship and ministry. His final words of wisdom were: "Don't worry about anything, instead, pray about everything." Tell God what you need and thank him for what he has done. We should forever be grateful for the blessings we have received. In times of frustrations and turmoil, give thanks to God for leading us forward!

Our Pastor recently said: "God loves you. God wants the best for you. God already has a plan for your best to be a reality. So, seek God! Seek God first and all these things will be added to you as well."

I reflect on these words as I recall anxious times in my life when taking part in military combat operations or reacting to man-made or natural disasters.

**CLOSING PRAYER:** Lord God, thank you for being with me in the many trials and tribulations of my life. I know that you are in control of all things and that nothing is too difficult for you. As I praise you, fill my heart with hope. Amen.

Roy Davis

**Wednesday, March 9, 2022**

**GOD TEACHES US HOW TO FAST**

**READ:** Isaiah 58:6-14

**OPENING PRAYER:** Heavenly Father, thank you for giving us a guide to live by and for becoming more like you. Help us to open our hearts and minds so that we may understand what it is you are asking of us in this passage. Amen.

**MEDITATION:** Lenten season: A time for fasting and reflection. What does God want from us? What does he call us to do? What does it mean to fast? When you look up a definition of fasting it says: "to abstain from all or some kinds of food or drink, especially as a religious observance." That seems a bit vague. Just to abstain from food or drink without any context? What are we fasting for? To be more like Jesus.

That is what God is asking of us in this passage: To care for each other. To humble ourselves and give what we can to raise up one another. This will bring us to his glory and only then will we be his light amidst the darkness. Lifting up others, in turn, lifts us up as well. Isn't that the truth? When you help someone, don't you feel a sense of uplifting and humbleness? God wants us to share the same love for one another as he has for us. When you see someone in need, ask yourself, "What would Jesus do in this situation?" Let us all humble ourselves in this time of fasting and remember what we are truly fasting for.

**CLOSING PRAYER:** Loving God, we humble ourselves before you and ask that you help us in our time of fasting and reflection. Give us the strength to battle injustice and spread the love you have for us with all of your children. Help us to be good disciples of your word and spread grace in all that we do. We pray these things in your precious name. Amen.

Molly Crane

Thursday, March 10, 2022

## THE CALLING OF THE FIRST DISCIPLES

**READ:** Mark 1:14-28

**OPENING PRAYER:** Dear Heavenly Father, these are difficult times that we, as a nation, are going through. We pray for hope, healing, and unity for us to get through it together. Amen.

**MEDITATION:** After John was imprisoned, Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee proclaiming the good news that the kingdom of God was near. Jesus was filled with faith, hope, and love. He summoned Simon, Andrew, James and John to follow him. He told them that he would make them “fishers of men”. Jesus was also a great teacher. A man with an evil spirit jumped out and asked what Jesus wanted with them. Jesus spoke with the man, shook him and the evil spirit disappeared! The people were very impressed with his teachings and authority and the news of Jesus’ presence spread throughout the area of Galilee.

Growing up in the “Bible Belt” in the state of Tennessee, I attended church on a regular basis. At home, we watched Billy Graham on TV every week. During my years as a military spouse, I did not attend church services on a regular basis. In 1985, then in civilian life, Roy and I were invited to attend services at LCOP. Like the disciples who were summoned by Jesus, we felt that God was telling us, “It’s time to come back and make a commitment.” We are glad we did!

**CLOSING PRAYER:** Dear Lord, thank you for the many blessings that you have given us. Forgive our sins and shortcomings. Please walk beside us and guide us on our journey. Amen.

Vickie Davis

Friday, March 11, 2022

## THE LORD IS MY SALVATION

**READ:** Psalm 27

**OPENING PRAYER:** Lord, thank you for this Lenten season. Please guide us as we seek to find you in the mundane as well as in the miracles. I pray that the lessons learned during this time will draw us close to you the rest of the year. Amen.

**MEDITATION:** What stuck out to me as I read Psalm 27 was verse 4 that says: "One thing I ask from the LORD, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple."

I know for our family that the Lenten season is a time for prayer, fasting, and alms giving. Yet children are asking for presents from the Easter Bunny and attention from exhausted parents. Jobs are asking for more time, effort, and energy. Charities are asking for donations. So many asks. Verse 4 reminds us what is the most important ask, our ask to be with the Lord, to dwell in his house, to gaze on his beauty, and to seek him. That should be what this Lenten season (and every season) is about, seeking Jesus and dwelling with him. May there be reminders, both big and small, of the beauty of the Lord this Lenten season. Let his beauty shine and let us slow down enough to dwell and gaze. this

**CLOSING PRAYER:** Lord, help us to ask, seek, dwell, and gaze on your beauty. Remind us of what is important and good and worthy. We celebrate you! Amen.

Justin Davis

**Saturday, March 12, 2022**

**LET LOVE AND KINDNESS RULE THE DAY**

**READ:** Philippians 2:2-11

**OPENING PRAYER:** Dear Lord, give us the strength and wisdom to always consider the needs and concerns of others with equal or greater importance to our own, and let our hearts be filled with grace and love for others throughout each day. Amen.

**MEDITATION:** “Sometimes it’s hard to be humble,” the old joke goes. Unfortunately, our lack of humility seems to be too often the case in our competitive society and culture of today. We tend to hold our opinions and actions to be superior to others and our grace and humility “go out the window.” In order to provide for our family, maintain an advancing career and a sparkling reputation, we think we have to put our own needs at the forefront, often at the expense of our consideration for the needs of others. This is particularly true when it comes to those suffering from misfortune.

In this time of hyper division and partisanship, it is more important than ever, that we put aside our selfishness, and conceit, and remember that as disciples of Jesus, we are commanded to serve others. Our faith, prayers, and actions must overcome our desire to be self-centered and surround ourselves with people who are “like us”. We must imitate Christ’s humility and fill our lives with love and respect for others.

**CLOSING PRAYER:** Dear Lord, please help us to reach down deep inside ourselves and come out of our comfort zone; to grant us the humility and strength to be in service to others. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Glen Graves