

2012
Lenten
Devotional
Booklet

LIVING AS SPIRITUAL BEINGS



Grace Lutheran Church
Royersford, PA
The Reverend Paul H. Neff
The Reverend
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Week 1: Prayer For



Spirit's Presence

Wednesday

Feb.22

Psalm 51: 10-12

Prayer for Spirit's Presence

The theme for the bible verse is "Living as spiritual beings."

In this passage, David is trying to ask God to forgive him of his sins and to cleanse him. He wants to renew his spirit and restore the joy of God in him. It reminded me that you can ask God for forgiveness and that God will always be in you. All you have to do is keep God in your heart and mind and praise him. David wants his relationship with God to be renewed and pure again.

Prayer:

Dear God,

Thank you for being in our lives and in our spirit. Help keep us free from sin and keep us in your presence. Help nurture our relationship with you and help us to keep you in our hearts. Please keep us pure.
Amen.

~Jess Della Guardia

Thursday

Feb. 23

Psalm 51:10-12

Prayer for Spirit's Presence

When confronted with overwhelming serious problems, we cry out in desperation "Please help us God. Do not forsake us."

The desire is to ask the Lord to "fix" things the way we think is best.

However God in his wisdom knows the best way. We just have to have the faith and patience to follow His lead.

Prayer:

Our Heavenly Father,

Please keep restoring our faith in your wisdom and healing. We are feeling this very strongly as events start to untangle in our own lives.

~Carson and Judy Heil

Friday

Feb. 24

Psalm 51: 10-12

Prayer for Spirit's Presence

These verses are familiar not only from this Psalm, but also from a popular hymn - "Create in me a clean heart." With these words I feel as if I am speaking directly to God asking him to cleanse my heart and set my spirit on a straight path. It continues, asking him to remain present in my life and rescue me through his ever-present spirit. These words can be very comforting at any time in our life both during times of struggle and hardship, but also as a daily devotion when we just need a little something to start the day off on the right note. These verses remind us that God is ever present in our life and he will carry us through whatever tribulations we face whether major or minor.

These verses also remind me that God's spirit lives in us and through his presence we can bring God's comfort and joy to others.

The tune that these verses are set too is also very serene and comforting. I found many arrangements on YouTube.

I particularly enjoyed Keith Green's version and I encourage you to listen to it today.

Prayer:

Dear God, Be with me this day and always. Bring me comfort and give me strength to bring comfort to others.

May your spirit be ever present within me today and throughout this season of Lent.

Amen.

~Cathie Leister

Saturday

Feb. 25

Psalm 51:10-12

Prayer for Spirit's Presence

We ask God to keep us in His presence and not take the Holy Spirit from us. God wants us to repent, believe, help other people, and pray at Lent. Remember God is good and God is Holy. He also wants us to remember the reason we have Lent. Jesus died for our sins on the cross.

Prayer:

Lord, do not send me away from your presence and do not take your Holy Spirit from me. Cleanse my heart and renew a right spirit in me. Bless the sick, depressed, and all in the congregation.

Amen

~Joyce Straub

Monday
Feb. 27
Psalm 51:10-12

Prayer for Spirit's Presence

The theme for this week is "Prayer for Spirit's Presence". In this Psalm, it helps to remind us to pray to God for replenishment and cleanliness in our hearts. Going into Lent, it reminds us to stay Godlike and help preach the Grace of God to others that we encounter. It helps us be honest and humble as we enter this season.

Prayer:

Dearest God,
Help us to always be our best to others and ourselves. I ask that you strengthen my resolve and restore in me a steadfast spirit. Thank you for all the blessings you have given me; and help me and others remain in good faith during this season of Lent.

~Alicia Hornberger

Tuesday
Feb. 28
Psalm 51:10-12

Prayer for Spirit's Presence

I think these verses say "God, make my thoughts pure and make me faithful again. Don't make me go away or take the Holy Spirit away from me. Make me happy like when you saved me and make me want to do what you want."

It's a psalm, which is like a song, and is also like a **prayer:**

God, thanks for all the people and stuff in my life.

Amen

~Jolie Berner

Week 2: The Spirit



and Spirituality- Learning by Doing

Wednesday
Feb. 29
Genesis 1:1-5

Spirit at Creation

This verse brought me to the conclusion that when God made the land and the ocean; he decided that he wanted animals to supplement it. He made the fish rule the sea, and the livestock were livestock.

Prayer:

I pray that in times to come, third-world countries will have enough food to supply their hunger needs.

~Ashley Lawson

Thursday
March 1
Isaiah 11: 1-2

Prophecy of Spirit in Jesus

In these verses we are reminded that God had a plan for his Son even before he was born, just as he has a plan for all of us. Sometimes we can be knocked down and it may seem like there is little hope. But just like new branches sprout from stump, so our lives have new hope if we put our trust in the Lord.

We all have natural God given talents. Sometimes they are hidden from us, but can be revealed through prayer and service to the Lord.

Prayer:

Dear God, help us to be mindful and thankful for our talents you provided us and use them to show your glory. Help us to trust in your plans for us. Amen

~Mark Rehrer

Friday
March 2
Romans 8:1-8

Spirit is Life

I believe this speaks to the challenges or temptations we may all face on a daily basis in our lives. Jesus was brought to us for many reasons, but in this regard, to provide a standard or goal we should all seek to achieve. There are always reasons to give into a multitude of wrongful acts or thoughts, to act with regard "to the flesh" and not "of the spirit." We may at times stray and give in to temptation; some, more than others, depending upon their circumstance. However, our faith in Jesus teaches us that by repenting, and not continuing in the wrong direction, we may be forgiven.

Prayer:

Lord please grant us the strength to strive to live in the way you intended for us. Please forgive us for our sins and weakening at times. At our most weakest times, when we need you most, please guide us on the right path and help us when we begin to stray.

Thank you Lord.

~Ken Lacey

Saturday
March 3
Romans 12: 1-2

Spiritual Worship

What does it mean to present your body as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God? I think of three parts of the body, my mind, my body and my spirit. When I use my mind to learn new things in my profession, in my family life or in current events, I feel I am presenting my mind as a living sacrifice. I am using my mind to read books that are educating me about people's lives and events that will help me in my daily life as well. I will not use new information to degrade others, but to lift others up and to help solve problems. Every day, in the morning, before I begin my day, I have a yoga/pilates routine that I do, that helps me center my mind and body on God. After dinner, my husband and I usually do an exercise routine that is keeping both of us active and we enjoy doing that together. In the nicer weather, we enjoy biking or walking through Valley Forge National Park, not only doing something that helps our bodies, but gives us the enjoyment of God's creation. The body is a temple of God; something to be nourished and taken care of. I not only exercise, but I try to eat healthy, by choosing not to eat things that are bad for me. During Lent, I usually give up chocolate because that is something that I enjoy. My spirit is nourished daily by praying, reading the Bible and worshipping. Through all of these things, I believe God has blessed me, and I will continue to strive to present my body, one, which is holy and acceptable to God.

Prayer: Good and gracious God, thank you for giving me a healthy body and mind. I ask for your guidance that I might use my mind and body in service to you. Please help me to live a healthy lifestyle and give you the glory. In Jesus Name, I pray. Amen

~Janet Neff

Monday
March 5
Matthew 4:1-11

Spirit in Wilderness

Jesus was tempted by the devil in the wilderness. He did not give in.

In Matthew 4:10 Jesus said, "Worship the Lord, your God, and serve only him".

Daily we are tempted in many ways: through thoughts and actions, bitterness, lust, evil thoughts, hate, greed, pride, lying and cheating.

We Lutherans know we can resist sin and serve God. We know that our

Baptism and Confirmation gave us a foundation in faith.

As adults we need to hear and read the Bible and learn more of the Word of God. We can communicate with God and faithfully receive Holy Communion. During the period of Lent, we can strengthen our faith by praying more, attending the Wednesday Lenten classes, attending Church and confessing our sins. We can repent and accept forgiveness. We can serve others through our love of Christ. We can pray for strength and not give in to temptations.

Prayer:

Dear Lord, Thank you for letting me know you. I pray that you would keep me in your care and help me stay strong against temptations.

Guide me to become a faithful Christian. Help me stay close to you and serve you. In Jesus' name I pray.

~Rosalynn Capor

Tuesday
March 6
Revelation 22:17

Spirit's Invitation to God

You are cordially invited to our Father's house. God extends an open invitation to each and every one of us. There is no guest list or bouncer at the door; no one will be turned away. Anyone who hears His invitation and RSVPs "yes" is welcomed with open arms.

As humans, we often forget to just come as we are. We dress up in our Sunday best and make sure we're on our best behavior. We live by these "rules" and we expect others to do the same. But when God calls us to His house, He doesn't give us a dress code or etiquette guide. His invitation has no terms or conditions: He just wants us to come and to encourage others to accept His invitation to join us.

Today's verse specifically invites those who are thirsty and those who wish to "take the free gift of the water of life". We must remember that anyone and everyone who wants to join us in God is welcome, regardless of whether or not they live up to our standards. We are all guests at His table and He is happy to have us all there.

Prayer:

Dear Lord,
Thank you for inviting me to your house and accepting me just as I am. Help me to spread your message to those who haven't heard it yet and to welcome them into the church.
Amen

~Kate McGarry

Week 3: Good News! God Promised!



Faith from The Holy Spirit

Wednesday
March 7
Joel 2:28-29

God's Spirit Poured Out

In this reading, God sends his spirit to all the people of Israel after nearly destroying the land and the people. Once again they turn back to the Lord; and He has compassion for them. Isn't it also like that for us? We turn away by things we say or do; but we are always welcomed back and FORGIVEN! Wow! What a gift!!

Prayer:

Dear Lord, thank you for your gift to us – forgiveness through your Son, Jesus Christ. Help us to be worthy of your love for us, as we show love to one another and give us strength to do your will.

AMEN

~Martha Curran

Thursday
March 8
Matthew 3:17

Jesus and Spirit

And a voice from heaven said, "This is my son, the beloved, with whom I am well pleased.

WOW! What does this have to do with being chosen by the Spirit?

To help us understand, we need to know the verse just before this, says in part, "The heavens were opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending on him like a dove, and alighting on him." Aha.

When we think about our baptism, (or present at a baptism, since many of us don't remember our own) We realize that the Spirit of God descends on us. It is said at our baptism:

"By water and the Holy Spirit we are made members of the church, children of God."

The next verse tells us Jesus was led by the Spirit. Like Jesus we too are lead by the Spirit whom has chosen us. We need to listen to the Spirit and follow where it leads us.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father,
Help me to be a tuned to hearing the Spirit in me,
Give me the courage to go where the Spirit leads,
Help me to remember that your Holy Spirit is always with me.

AMEN

~Jim Campbell

Friday
March 9
Luke 1:26-38

Mary and Spirit

Reading these verses, I am reminded that the spirit of God is available to everyone of us if we chose to accept the call. Mary, when visited by the angel Gabriel, did not readily accept the call. Mary was troubled at first. However, the angel goes on and tells Mary, the Lord is with you and has greatly blessed you. Do not be afraid, for you have found favor with God.

There is something very significant and life changing in Mary. She moved beyond the fear and believed that God had chosen her and would provide. She said, "Do with my life as you want to." Because she believed, she was able to put into effect what God had chosen her to.

As God chose Mary, a common and ordinary person, God has also chosen you and me, common and ordinary people. We are to go out into the world, knowing that we hold the peace of God in our hearts and that he will bless us with the talent and ability to spread the loving presence of Jesus Christ. We only need move beyond the fear and to dare to believe that God will use our life for His purpose.

Reference:

<http://ministrydepot.com/sermons/2008/11/luke-1-26-28-39-45-4th-sunday=of-advent-you-chosen-do-not-be-afraid>

Prayer: Lord, provide the peace of God that I can accept your blessings and go into the world and carry Jesus Christ in my heart and actions. Today, my prayer is "Do with my life as you want."

~Deb Kammertz

Saturday
March 10
Luke 2:21-40

Simeon and Spirit

Luke tells us that on the 8th day of life, Mary and Joseph take Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem to be circumcised as required by law. There they meet Simeon and Anna.

Simeon is devout. The Holy Spirit has told him that he will live to see the Messiah. When Simeon sees Jesus, he knows that he is the Promised One. Simeon is at peace for he knows the promise of salvation. Mary and Joseph marvel at the telling of his future that Jesus will cause the fall and rise of Israel.

Anna is a prophet. She stayed in the Temple for 60 years praying and fasting. She too recognizes Jesus as the child that will redeem Jerusalem. Anna gives thanks for the hope of redemption.

Prayer

Dear Lord you offer peace to all. Even the most devout followers will not rest until they know your love. We are assured of salvation because of you walked among and made the ultimate sacrifice. As a child you gave us hope. As an adult you gave us redemption. As our Lord and Savior, we confirm to you our belief and love.

~Trish & Mike McGarry

Monday
March 12
Luke 4: 14-19

Jesus and the Spirit

Jesus is addressing the Jews in their synagogue in Nazareth, where He had been brought up, by reading the scrolls of the prophet, Isaiah: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

Likewise the Spirit of the Lord is upon us all, and although we fall well short of Christ’s perfection, it is our responsibility to emulate His life and passion for others (the poor, downtrodden, oppressed, and struggling members of our society. Live by Christ’s model and live life abundantly.

Dear Lord,
Please help us to escape our comfort zone, to lose “self” and be more aware of the needs of those around us. We thank You for Your unconditional love and sacrifice to guarantee us life everlasting. Help us to live by Your example, to let the Spirit shine brightly, and glorify You in all our actions.

~Kurt Meyers

Tuesday
March 13
Acts 9:1-19

Saul/Paul and the Spirit

This verse tells me we can go along doing the work we choose and living our lives without the Spirit in us. But when He chooses us, look out! Changes are coming! He can show us how blind we are to everything. That is, until He sends someone to open our eyes.

Prayer:

Lord, help me to be ready when my own Ananias comes into my life to open my eyes and fill me with the Holy Spirit.
AMEN

~Susan Firering

Week 4: Called and Enlightened:



Get Your Bible Goggles



Wednesday
March 14
John 16: 5-11

Spirit Reveals Jesus

Jesus tells the apostles that He must leave them but in turn will be to their advantage. He will send the Holy Spirit to them. The Holy Spirit is going to empower them and enlighten them regarding sin and righteousness and judgment. When the Spirit comes, He will convince the world that sin is unbelief in Jesus and the cross reveals God's righteousness and brings judgment by triumphing over evil.

Prayer:

O Holy Spirit,
Enlighten me, guide me, strengthen me,
and console me. Tell me what I should do
and give me Your orders. I promise to
submit myself to all You desire of me and
to accept all that You permit to happen to
me. Let me only know Your will. Amen

~Jessica Hobbs

Thursday
March 15
John 16: 12-15

Spirit Reveals Truth

This message is about how Jesus is not just the Son of God, but also the spirit of truth. He will guide people in the path of truths not just in the time of his life but also in the time after his life on earth. The idea the spirit of truth knows the truth from the mind and word of mouth. The idea of the word importance must hear through the message of God.

The idea of the truth of how one is to live and spread the word of God is important to all people. Jesus father tells him the message that all must hear which is the truth and he upon tell us the word of God. The word of God is the truth and nothing but the truth.

Prayer

Dear God,
Help us tell the truth to others so we as people can become better people, and for others to see as well. Let us spread the word of God to others about his important message of how to treat others right and be good to our neighbors.
Amen.

~Katie Delaney

Friday
March 16
John 20:19-23

Jesus Gives Spirit

In this passage, Jesus appears to all the disciples who are gathered in a locked room. Jesus says “peace be with you” and shows them his hands and side. Jesus tells the disciples he is sending them out into the world as God had sent him. He then breathes on them and says, “Receive the holy spirit.”

It reminds me of the passage in Genesis where God breathed into Adam and made him a living being. Just as God had breathed life into to Adam and Eve, Jesus breathes the Holy Spirit onto the disciples. By breathing the Holy Spirit onto the disciples they know that they are not alone when they go out to spread the word. They carry the Holy Spirit with them. That breath has been carried forward to us through the church for over two centuries. Like the disciples, we are never alone, and we continue to breathe the Holy Spirit onto others as we spread the Gospel and live our lives according to Jesus’ teachings.

We are often taught to think of lent as a time of giving up. One of the things we can give up is our time to do things to give back to our community. I think this passage reminds us that as Christians, one of the ways we can continue to spread the Holy Spirit by giving back.

Prayer:

Dear Lord,
Please help us to remember that your Holy Spirit is always with us. May it sustain us in our own lives, and give us strength as we continue to spread the breath of the Holy Spirit in our own community.

~Ellen La Place

Saturday
March 17
Ezekiel 36: 26-28

Spirit and Heart of Flesh

A heart of stone? Impossible. Stones do not pump blood- there would be no life. And that's exactly God's point. Without God's Spirit within us, it is as if we have no life. Listen quietly for a minute to the beating of your own heart. Reflect on how the presence of God's Spirit has given you physical life, and also how it gives to you the richness of human experience- joy, love, compassion. (Yes, even sorrow and pain.) God has placed the Holy Spirit within you and because of that Presence, you are able to experience an incredible, wonderful fullness of life that truly is holy.

Prayer:

Gracious Spirit, Flow through my life and awaken within me those places that have been dead. Make me to come alive with Your love.
Amen.

Monday
March 19
Luke 1:67-79

Spirit Reveals Jesus Through Zechariah

Zechariah sees through the Holy Spirit, God's love for Israel, by sending a mighty Savior to save them from their enemies and all who hate them. This is showing mercy and God's Holy covenant to Abraham. Go forth in love and righteousness to give knowledge of salvation to his people. Live in the light, and in the shadow of death, guide us into the way of peace.

Prayer:

Almighty God,
Grant us peace in life and death, keep us in your love and mercy. As we go on our way may Christ go with us. May He go before us to show us the way, go behind us to encourage us, go beside us to befriend us, go within us to give us peace. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
AMEN

~Joe Curran

Tuesday
March 20
Romans 14:13-17

Spirit Shows Righteousness, Peace, and Joy

This passage provides some good 'food' for thought! I had ideas about what it meant, but also did some research to see a more 'scholarly' interpretation. I learned that the text refers to the literal eating of certain foods/meats. Some Jews who became Christians were not used to the freedom of being able to eat pork and other meat that had been declared unclean, and they did not agree with the Gentile Christians who continued to eat them. Likewise, there were Gentile Christian converts who looked down on Christian Jews who refrained from the consumption of such animals and thereby did not fully enjoy the freedom they had in Christ.

While the history of this passage is quite interesting, I particularly appreciate its powerful reminders regarding Christian living:

~We should not judge others. God loves us all.

~Be tolerant and respectful of other people's customs and beliefs.

~Don't place the enjoyment of freedoms, nor adherence to restrictions, above the love of Christ and the love we are commanded to have for all people.

I'm grateful for these points, which encourage us to simply *judge less and love more!*

Prayer:

Thanks be to God & Amen!

~Cindy Butler

Week 5: The Spirit,



At Work, At Home, and On the Job

Wednesday
March 21
Luke 11:9-13

Spirit as Gift

God does answer our prayers! This chapter speaks of our perseverance in prayer. A quote from this scripture “so I say to you, **Ask**, and it will be given to you; **Search**, and you will find; **Knock**, and the door will be open to you. Sometimes when I pray, I become impatient for God’s answer. However, I have learned that God does not always answer our prayers speedily, yet he **will** in due time if we are **persistent** and continue to pray. And, sometimes I find that he answers my prayer differently than I expected, leading me to a different and better path than I had planned. And that’s great!!! I find that the quote “God works in mysterious ways” to be so true in my life.

Blessings from our heavenly Father are bestowed upon everyone one of us who asks for them, as a parent is to give food to a hungry child. Through the influences of the Holy Spirit, we are brought to know God and ourselves and the love of Christ so that we find happiness in this world as well as when we meet in the next.

PRAYER:

Dear Heavenly Father,
Please continue teach us to pray. May we be **persistent** in asking for your daily guidance in our lives? Help us “**not to give up**”. May we follow Pastor Neff’s “recipe for prayer” as he expressed in one of his sermons, and Pastor Kraiss’s continual “be **persistent** and never give up attitude”. I know that both of the Pastors have been an inspiration to me and others! Let’s all thank God for answering our prayers.

~Kathy Mills

Thursday
March 22
Galatians 5:22-26

Fruits of the Spirit

Life can be very hard if we choose the wrong path. Without faith and the Holy Spirit as a guide, life can become mostly up and down and out of control, resulting in a circle of unhappiness. But when the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, life is good. Against such things, there is no law. So during the season of Lenten, it is a time for the members of the Christian family to be a light to the world of Jesus teaching of mercy for our fellow man weaknesses. We need to lift up our spirit so we can use Jesus teaching as an example for life. There is no better guide. When we are low in spirit, all we need to do is look at the many gifts of happiness we have with the love of Jesus Christ as our personal savior and be thankful. Those of us who have faith in Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature of life and lifted up the passions and desires of fellow believers. We always try to find a way to overcome the difficult times by believing in God’s will. His Will is our guide and with it, we can overcome any thing. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. Envy only destroys the Spirit of life that God so richly provided to us. So let your light shine and may God bless all of the faithful and believers!

Prayer:

Lord, help me to understand that my needs are fulfilled in every breath I take and every day I wake up with a sound mind. Help me and others to understand the need to be thankful for all of the blessings you have given us over the years and in the future to share and share alike to all who are in need. In Jesus name I pray.
Amen

~Jesse L. James

Friday
March 23
1Peter1: 13-16

Call to Holy Living

This week's focus is "Holy Spirit, Holy Lives"

This is a great verse for Lent, because it asks us to focus on the big, wide scope of what Christianity means. In Lent, we most often focus on the cross. And often we find ourselves right at the foot of the cross with Mary, weeping. It is painful to witness the crucifixion, to see the cost of our sins in a real, physical, bodily way.

However, this verse jumps us to afterward – “the big reveal” at the end of the ages. It puts our focus WAY ahead to the glory of the Second Coming when ALL will know that the Christ is the Messiah, the Savior of the World.

And then it asks us to LIVE in such a way to SHOW that our lives have been transformed by this knowledge. That is what faith is – living in such a way as to show that WE know the outcome because it has been foretold to us – not because we have seen it already.

The verse emphasizes that our living is not a result of the law, but is a result of grace. It is our way of showing who has already claimed us and to whom we owe gratitude. Notice, however, that it doesn't happen automatically. It says we must be fully “alert” – not on automatic pilot!

I know, for me, when I let my life get on automatic pilot I can get sloppy and lazy. And, you know – it doesn't feel good. This verse makes me want to be my better self. In the busyness of today it is easy get swept up in stress and forget that we are holy creatures.

When is the last time someone walked up to you and said, “You are holy.” Wow! That is like saying “You are a gift to the world.” We are all blessed to be gifts to this world, because we have been chosen by a redeemer who went to the cross for us.

Let us be our best selves and live intentionally!

Prayer:

Dear God,

You know our frailties and our weaknesses. Yet you have chosen us and asked us to be your hands in the world. Let us always be mindful that you have given us everything we need to be your holy people – that we have your Son, your commitment and your Holy Spirit. Let us always keep turning to you for strength. Keep us daily mindful of the life you want us to lead.

Amen

~Stephanie McMullan

Saturday
March 24
1Corinthian 12:1-11

Gifts of the Spirit

I asked my daughter what kinds of gifts God gives us, and then I read today's Bible passage to her. By verse four, as I read, “God's various gifts are handed out *everywhere*, but they *all* originate in God's Spirit,” she interrupted. “All the gifts are LOVE,” she confidently announced.

I probed, “But what *are* the gifts?”

“*All* the love. FROM GOD!” she pronounced.

I see a pile of oddly shaped presents, gift-wrapped in many colors. One gift tag reads, “To: Mandy. From: God, with all my love.” Whatever is inside this fancy package, God chose these gifts especially for *me*, so they can be used to share His love. Today God gave Lily a gift of understanding, which was meant for her to share with me and with you.

Come on... rip off the wrapping and open up your gift!
What's in there? Wanna share with me?

Prayer:

Dear God, Thank you for the spiritual gifts you've given to me and to my friends. Give me insight to recognize these gifts, and help us share them to serve your children and You.

~Mandy Gonzalez (with help from Lily, age 5)

Monday

March 26
29
Ephesians 4:1-6

Unity in the Spirit

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

Paul's teaching to the Ephesians is showing that in our faith, hope and love for others, we are spreading the love that God has for us. We are each called with different gifts to do God's will and that calling comes to us thru the Holy Spirit. It will lead and guide us to do what is right for our family, friends, neighbors and community, if we only open our hearts and minds to listen and feel the message of hope, love and faith. Share the love!

Prayer:
Dear God,

Let my ears, heart and mind be open to your word, to speak and share to others, so that they may also experience your love.

Amen

~Kathy Delaney

Tuesday
March 27
1Corinthians 3:16-17

Spirit Dwells In You

Paragraph: Somewhere in the Bible it is stated that you have to guard your heart. This Bible verse made me recall that and the song "Oh Be Careful" that Matt and I sang with the children in Group Worship and is currently used as part of the Faithful Family Service. This verse reminded me that we are God's temple individually and we owe it to God to take care of ourselves. It's up to each of us to decide how to be the best temple we can be and how we should direct our children.

The song has 7 verses: "Be Careful little eyes what you see, little ears what you hear, little mouth/tongue what you say, little hands what you do, little feet where you go, little heart whom you trust, little mind what you think...for the Father above is looking down in love so be careful little eyes what you see".

I'm not a fan of vampires and such and so my daughter hasn't read the books or seen the movies. Why? Be careful little eyes what you see. Once you read something or say something or do something...you can't undo it. While looking up this song, I found a grown up version by a Christian group called Casting Crowns. Their song is called Slow Fade. They sing how what the mind thinks and what the hands do are closer than you think. That once you start making compromises it's a slow fade from black & white to grey. One action leads to another. People don't crumble in a day. They incorporate the children's song and the video ends with a little girl singing a verse and asking her Daddy not to go on the business trip which would have led to end of his marriage/infidelity issue. Cool video..But not for Cherub Choir age. Go to www.elyrics.net, artist name "Casting Crowns", song name ""Slow Fade". You won't be disappointed.

Prayer: Dear God, lead me not into temptation but give me the strength to resist, especially when that decision doesn't make me very popular. Please send the Holy Spirit to guide my decisions that they may be pleasing to you. Amen

~Brenda Johnson

Week 6: Sanctified and Preserved:



In Joy and in Pain

Wednesday
March 28
Romans 8: 12-17

Spirit of Adoption

As difficult as it may be, we can't live to satisfy our desires. We will live fully if, by the help of God's Spirit, we say no to our desires. Only those people who are led by God's Spirit are his children.

God's Spirit doesn't make us slaves who are afraid of him. Instead, we become his children and call him our Father.

God's Spirit makes us sure that we are his children. His Spirit lets us know that, together with Christ, we will be given what God has promised. We will also share in the glory of Christ, because we have suffered with him.

Prayer: Lord, help us to be strong and say no to our own desires. Give us the strength to be fully led by your Spirit. We thank you, Lord, for making us your children and for being able to share in the glory of Christ. In Jesus' name we pray,
Amen.

~Joyce Berner

Thursday
March 29
Psalm 104:27-30

Created Through God's Spirit

Psalm 104 is known as the creation psalm in that it speaks to the formation of the world and the natural cycle of life and death, as well as God's intricate plan for renewal. He breathed life into all living things, and he provides all that is necessary for sustaining life. In verses 27-30, the focus is on God's relationship with us. This includes our total dependence on him for the food we eat and for every breath we take. He breathes life into us and withdraws that breath at the time of our death. But even with death, the cycle continues and the earth is renewed.

Prayer:

Thank you Lord for the intricate, wondrous, amazing beauty of your creation. I know you will provide for all our needs and will sustain us, just as you sustain all your creatures.

~Jack Perry

Friday
March 30
John 14:15-17

Spirit as our Helper/Comforter/Advocate

Jesus asks for our love, and for us to obey his teachings. In return, he will ask God to send the Holy Spirit to us, to live within our hearts. Only through our love for Jesus, and by living as He taught us, will the Spirit live within us. Once the Holy Spirit lives within us, it will reveal the truth about God.

Prayer:

Dear God, You sent Your Son to teach us your word. Through living as he has taught us, and loving him, the Holy Spirit lives inside us. Allow Your Spirit to guide us in our every day lives, and to help us live and act, according to your Word. In the name and love of Jesus Christ,
Amen.

~Charles Plaugher

Saturday
March 31
Romans 8:26-27

Spirit Intercedes For Us

In this passage, we are taught that the Spirit of Christ was given to us to help us. As humans, we are weak, and do not know how to pray, or what we should pray for. As we let the Spirit of Christ to guide our hearts, the Spirit will call out to God, and He will hear it and know what is in our hearts. He will know what it is that the Spirit cries out for, and he will answer our prayer as He sees fit.

Prayer:

Dear God, as we pray, hear the thoughts and desires that we ourselves cannot express, but that the Spirit of Jesus inside our hearts desire. Answer our prayers with what You know is right, and guide us to live according to Your will. In the Spirit of Jesus,
Amen.

~Charles Plaugher

Monday
April 2
John 1:1-13

Believers Born of God

GOD SENT JESUS THE TRUE LIGHT OF THE
WORLD!

L- LOVE God loves us.

Deuteronomy 7:9 Understand, therefore, that the Lord your God is the faithful God who for a thousand generations keeps his promises and constantly loves those who love him and who obey his commands.

I- INSPIRATION God inspires us.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 The whole Bible was given to us by inspiration from God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives; it straightens us out and helps us to do what is right. It is God's way of making us well prepared at every point, fully equipped to do good to everyone.

G- GRACE Through God's grace we are forgiven.

Ephesians 2:8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.

H- HOPE God promises each and everyone of us hope.

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

T- TRUST Trust in God, he loves us.

Psalms 9:10 NIV Those who know your name trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you.

Prayer: Thank you God

~Judy Lukens

Tuesday
April 3
Acts 2: 1-13

Spirit at Pentecost

This reading, depicting the events we celebrate on Pentecost, reminds us of two great gifts from God. The first is comfort. The apostles, adjusting to life without Jesus in their daily lives, receive the Holy Spirit for direction and guidance. This should remind us that no matter how lost we may feel, God will provide us with the comfort we need in abundance. The second gift is one of my favorites. This gift is the mystery of God.

Whenever we humans try to categorize life and our role in God's world, He always throws a bend in our understanding. I always try to enjoy the sensation of not having everything figured out and having trust that God's plan will prevail.

PRAYER:

Comforting God,
Thank you for the promise of comfort you offered us during Pentecost. As we travel through Lent, help assure us that all of our doubts and questions will be answered in time in the best possible manner.
Amen

~Joe Perry

Holy Week



Wednesday
April 4
Mark 14:22-25

Lord's Supper

Communion is trust, forgiveness, and thanks. Receiving the bread and wine in addition to hearing the words of God, reminds us that God is always with us and loves us. Our trust in this belief is strengthened each Sunday when we receive communion and hear "Do this in remembrance of me." God's love is with us no matter what we do or where we are.

Imagine your life if there were no forgiveness of sins. Fortunately we do not have to worry about this. Jesus dealt with our sins through his death and in drinking the wine during communion we are reminded of this. We do not have to dwell on our mistakes, God doesn't. He wants us to look to the future, remember His love, and share it with all His people.

Lastly, during communion we give thanks to God. Thanks for loving us unconditionally, thanks for the forgiveness of our sins, thanks for the gifts we've been given, and thanks for His Word which guides us daily.

When receiving communion each Sunday, be reminded of God's love, forgiveness, and be thankful.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, the institution of Holy Communion surrounds us with your love and forgiveness, for which we are truly grateful. Thank you for this gift. Amen.

~Judy Stryker

Thursday
April 5
Mark 14:32-42

Prayer in Gethsemane

Can't you just feel the emotion as Jesus goes to his Father in prayer, hoping that God will spare Him from this heart wrenching pain?

But God's plan for Jesus forces his own Son to go through his suffering, so that we, mankind, can continue to live.

Another issue Jesus has, is his disappointment when his disciples cannot stay awake and be with him as he goes to pray with his Father.

He realizes that our body has limitations even if our spirit wants to be with Him. We have needs of sleep, food, and concentration.

How often do we make promises to God to do more for Him, for church, for our neighbors and we fail miserably? We don't have the time, the resources, and the energy. We do have plenty of excuses.

With verses 41-42, I hear God warning us that now is the time to stand up for Jesus and God so sin does not win. We have rested enough.

Prayer:

Dear Lord, Heavenly Father,
Wake us up! Please guide us to action! Show us what's needed. Guide our Spirit.
Thank you for loving the world so much that you gave us your only Son.
AMEN

~Sue Perry

Good Friday
April 6
Luke 23:44-46

Jesus Commends Spirit to Father

Good Friday. What's so good about a death?

The death of Jesus is no ordinary death. The temple curtain – the very barrier that separated people from the holiest of all places – is torn in two. As Jesus is dying, God destroys the barrier between humanity and the Divine- not just the curtain, but also sin, which is the ultimate barrier. Jesus then prays Psalm 31- a psalm of complete trust that God redeems us. In life and in death, Jesus completely trusted that he was in the hands of his heavenly Father.

We, too, can have complete trust in God our Father. We are in God's hands. We have been forgiven. Through the death of Jesus, the barrier of sin is removed and nothing is left that could ever separate us from God.

What's so good about today? God's love – a love that conquered sin and death, so that we might live in complete trust and love.

Prayer:

Gracious God, Let your Spirit guide us to trust in your love and care for us, especially in those times that we can't understand. Thank you for grace that is beyond all understanding. Amen.

~Pastor Janelle Kraus

Saturday
April 7
Matthew 27:50-54

Living as Spiritual Beings

Some people have a gift for faith; they are in tune with their spiritual side; they are in touch with God's voice, plan, and path.

Others, though, may be struggling to connect with God; they may be searching, praying, hoping to hear God's voice, see God's plan, or be pushed along God's path for them.

Some people are not sure that they believe; maybe they're not sure God exists, or that God has a plan, path for them.

What an amazing and terrifying scene this must have been to witness. An earthquake! The temple curtain torn in two! The dead being raised! It certainly had an impact on the centurion and his fellow guards. This was quite a sign to them (and to anyone who may be searching for one), enough for them to say *YES*, God is present and this was God's Son!

Prayer:

Wherever we are on our spiritual journey, we ask that you give us whatever it is that we need – a sign, a presence, an inner voice, a push in the right direction, a continued sense of connection and faith. You know us best; you know what it is that we need to grow in faith and live as spiritual beings.

Amen