

Devotions – September 27 – October 3, 2015

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Sunday, September 27, 2015

Fragile

Text: 2 Corinthians 4:7

But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.

When I was about nine years old I was visiting my grandparents in Marble Falls, Texas. I was not familiar with the house because I was so young and we had not been there for long.

It was late at night when I needed a glass of water, as many young children do. After taking a sip of water, I went to put the glass on the counter by the sink and I missed. I accidentally dropped the glass IN the sink – crash! I was embarrassed and disappointed in myself for messing up. It was late at night and I knew no one wanted to clean up my mess, and what are they going to do now that they are minus one of their glasses?

Things break, we learn at an early age that the pieces of this world are only pieces. They don't last forever. A jar made of clay can break, shatter, chip, and dissolve yet we learn that God lives in us through the Holy Spirit. Our flesh, or the parts of us that are human, are breakable. But we have a treasure, this treasure is beyond our understanding; however, it is made clear the power belongs to God and not ourselves. Because of Christ Jesus' death and resurrection we have life, everlasting life. Although we are breakable we can give thanks for the strength in love that comes from Christ Jesus.

Let us pray: *God, our Treasure, thank you for meeting us where we are: fragile. Be with us as we discover day by day the strength we have in you. Amen.*



Monday, September 28, 2015

Peace

Text: John 20:19

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, Peace be with you.

One late evening I, a middle school young girl, was home alone. Someone came to the door and knocked. I became afraid, ran to the bathroom and locked myself in. The knocking was loud and persistent. I had reason to be afraid. It was dark, I was alone, and I was younger. The knocking was loud and I didn't understand why they were not using the doorbell. They continued as if they knew someone was home. I had reason to be afraid.

The disciples were afraid and they hid in fear. Jesus had died and their realities had now changed: from following Jesus to now being alone. The authorities could find them out and kill them too. It was a scary time for them. As they were hiding, behind locked doors, Jesus appeared to them and brought the words: *Peace be with you*. Jesus knows what we need.

In your deepest fear, how powerful would it be if Christ Jesus appeared through your locked doors and said: *Peace be with you*? Although we may not yet see the hands and feet of Christ Jesus, He is with us. No locked door will keep him away.

Let us pray: *God, thank you for coming to us in our locked doors. Keep us mindful of your wonderful peace. Amen.*



Tuesday, September 29, 2015

Not Alone

Text: Jeremiah 1:1-8

Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations." Then I said, "Ah, Lord God!! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy." But the Lord said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a boy': for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you."

It's not easy to say yes when we see something in us that could hold us back. In Jeremiah's case, he feels he is too young. We certainly can place expectations on age no matter how old a person is. A young person may think like Jeremiah and an older person may think they are too old; and the middle one may think they should be at a different

stage in their life. Wherever we are, we tend to put up barriers for our abilities and ourselves.

The book of Jeremiah starts with: *the word of the Lord came to me saying*. These words too continue throughout this book. Jeremiah was chosen. Do we see here some resistance though? Yes, *truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy*. Like Moses and many of us we find something that might get in the way and try to run from the call of God.

We have been chosen, claimed by God. We have been called to love co-workers, family, friends, and enemies. We have been called to love God with our whole hearts, and remember God is with us through it all.

Let us pray: *God, thank you for being with us when we recognize that we are not enough. Thank you for being enough for us. Amen.*



Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Ordinary Ways

Text: 1 Kings 19:11-12

Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountain and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire, and after the first a sound of sheer silence.

Have you ever experienced some form of relationship long distance - a friend, relative, co-worker? At times it seems distance doesn't matter, but then, much of the time, it's what matters most. They seem so distant, so apart from you. So much so, it's hard to see a relationship could still exist.

Sometimes does God seem far away? Almost as though you can only hear God through big events in your life? After these big happenings, and God not in them, a sound of sheer silence came. At this point Elijah knew God was speaking. This gentle voice shows God doesn't always speak with big events. God uses ordinary ways. God can seem far away, but we don't have to climb a mountain. Listen, God is close to you, whispering in the silence.

Today find comfort in the silence. Quiet your heart to hear God speak to you. Listen in the most average, ordinary ways and God is there.

Let us pray: *God, in times of confusion to who you are thank you for showing us you working in extraordinary ways through the ordinary. Amen.*

Thursday, October 1, 2015



Human Hearts

Text: 2 Corinthians 3:2-3

You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all; and you show that you are a letter of Christ, prepared by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of humans hearts

Letter writing is a lost art; at least that is what they say. The letters to the Corinthians are a great example of the art of writing. Here Paul tries to explain that it's not that these letters that lift him up; but the gift of the Holy Spirit written on our human hearts, for all to see. Not the stones, which Moses uses, but the Spirit acting in you. God has written on our hearts not with ink, but in the language of the spirit, God's new covenant for us.

No longer do we cover our faces when God speaks in silence. We have this freedom to see God and the veil is removed from our eyes and now the Spirit remains in our heart.

Let us pray: *God, thank you for speaking to us through the language of our hearts. Help us to listen. Amen*



Friday, October 2, 2015

Grace All Wrapped Up

Text: Philemon 1: 20-21

Yes, brother, let me have this benefit from you in the Lord! Refresh my heart in Christ. Confident of your obedience, I am writing to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.

Philemon is the smallest book yet comes to us with a big gift. Paul pleads to Philemon a familiar plea but one we have to hear time and time again. At least at times we can

unwrap the gift of grace yet it seems so much easier when it is for our own hands, given to us. When we think of others perhaps it takes on new meaning. Paul is asking Philemon to give the gift of grace to Onesimus. We commonly ask this gift for ourselves and not for others. Paul sees that Onesimus is in need of grace.

There are many ways to unwrap a gift. Carefully so you could potentially use the paper again, like a tornado ripping through whatever you can, and finally-somewhere in-between. The letter Paul is writing to Philemon is carefully written because he knows what a great deal this is, presenting this option to give grace upon Onesimus.

With this gift of grace, we don't have to take our time unwrapping it. It is so available for us, yet so strange that we have a hard time tearing right through. Maybe not for our own gift, but for those around us. Let us think today of how grace extends to others. Perhaps we can write our own "letter" for someone who could be reminded of the great grace that God gives through Christ Jesus.

Let us pray: *God, help me open your gift of grace like I mean it. Help me voice this gift for others to see they have it too. Amen*



Saturday, October 3, 2014

Buoyant

Text: Mark 6:50

...For they saw him and were terrified. But immediately he spoke to them and said, "take heart, it is I; do not be afraid."

Over and over again in the Bible we hear Jesus have compassion over God's people. Here Jesus sends his disciples away ahead of him in a boat. As Jesus saw them and walked near them on the water, Jesus *intended to pass them by*. The disciples saw what they thought, at first, was a ghost and became terrified. At once Jesus spoke in their distress, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid."

In the midst of our struggles in the storm, and our fear, we can be reminded of the compassion God has for you and me. When we cry out Jesus calms our fears. We do not need to be afraid for He is with us.

Today let us remember Christ Jesus calms our stormy waters and our terrified hearts.

Let us pray: *God, in the midst of our fear you call to us. Help us to live boldly by your name. Amen.*



