

**Devotions – October 18-24, 2015**

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**Sunday, October 18, 2015**

Lord, Guide Me

Text: Psalm 19:14 (TEV)

*May my words and my thoughts be acceptable to you, O Lord, my refuge and my redeemer!*

Our words and thoughts shape our days and our relationships. This verse has often been on my lips over the decades of my adult life. Now, as I spend many days with my elderly parents or communicating with them across the 750 miles that separate us when I am not with them, this verse returns to me over and over. “Acceptable to you”, “my refuge”, these phrases are the backdrop as I attempt to find an honest and respectful response to my father whose dementia and diminishing mental capacity are paired with physical energy and powerful yearning to still run his own life and to implement his priorities. My words must always convey reverence for the significant life as a healer he has led, while also clearly communicating the limits that now exist for him. No one feels he can safely ride an adult tricycle by himself. He can’t sell farmland that doesn’t belong to him. How do my words and the tone of my voice convey love, grace, joy and forgiveness along with the limits?

Let us pray: *Lord, thank you for the words that sustain and guide me during challenging times. May I set an example of your love as I live my life. Amen*



**Monday, October 19, 2015**

Just What I Need

Text: Proverbs 30:8-9

*...keep me from lying, and let me be neither rich nor poor. So give me only as much food as I need. If I have more, I might say that I do not need you. But if I am poor, I might steal and bring disgrace on my God.*

Enough/ not too much, where is the balance? What is it that gives anyone the faith that their needs will be met? Like a powerful commercial I have the line from the Jazz Offertory by Jayme Bell of Messiah running through my head, “Let no one’s needs be lost when I have some.” In the past few years I have cleaned out and sold the homes of elderly family members. How do you accumulate 12 pairs of like new house slippers? It is possible to have enough gift wrapping to last more than a lifetime, especially if your arthritis no longer permits you to use a roll of paper

and scotch tape so you switched to gift bags. What have I learned and applied to my own life? How do I live to keep the needs of others in mind, in my home community? around the world? Everyday am I making choices that my granddaughters will see and remember as Christian choices that demonstrate my faith and generosity?

Let us pray: *Lord, don't let me miss the routine, daily opportunities to live a life that shows my faith. Help me make decisions that teach what is enough. Amen*



**Tuesday, October 20, 2015**

Shoes, a Foundation to Do Your Work

Text: Ephesians 6:14-15

*So stand ready, with truth as a belt tight around your waist, with righteousness as your breastplate, and as your shoes the readiness to announce the Good News of peace.*

I am retired from a desk job. In this new phase of life, my shoes are vital to my ability to do God's work in the world. No one is going to view me as a powerful preacher, yet I find myself thinking about how my shoes permit me to do God's work. As well as my words, my steps are important as I care for my parents. I must have sturdy shoes to walk with my mother as she doggedly works to regain her ability to walk with a cane after more than two years in a wheelchair. I have to have good shoes to walk with my Dad as he rides his adult tricycle. I also have granddaughters who need me to keep them safe. Recently I have done more sprints than usual, as the 10 month old was about to go down the steps at camp head first, as the 3 year old did not see the car in the alley as she picked up speed on her bright yellow strider bike. I also must keep walking to be a good steward of the miraculous gift of life that I enjoy. None of these shoes look like my Sunday school shoes of the early 1960's; they look like working shoes.

Let us pray: *God, let me think of you and all of the ways I am able to do your work in the world as I lace up my shoes each morning. Amen*



**Wednesday, October 21, 2015**

A Matthew 25 Christian?

Text: Matthew 25:31-46

*When the Son of Man comes as King and all the angels with him, he will sit on his royal throne, and the people of all the nations will be gathered before him. Then he will divide them into two groups, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the righteous people at his right and the others at his left. Then the King will say to the people on his right, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father! Come and possess the kingdom which has been*

*prepared for you ever since the creation of the world. I was hungry and you fed me, thirsty and you gave me a drink; I was a stranger and you received me in your homes, naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you took care of me, in prison and you visited me.” The righteous will then answer him, “When, Lord, did we ever see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you a drink? When did we ever see you a stranger and welcome you in our homes, or naked and clothe you? When did we ever see you sick or in prison, and visit you?” The King will reply, “I tell you, whenever you did this for one of the least important of these brothers of mine, you did it for me!”*

*Then he will say to those on his left, “Away from me, you that are under God’s curse! Away to the eternal fire which has been prepared for the Devil and his angels! I was hungry but you would not feed me, thirsty but you would not give me a drink; I was a stranger but you would not welcome me in your homes, naked but you would not clothe me; I was sick and in prison but you would not take care of me.” Then they will answer him, “When, Lord, did we ever see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and we would not help you?” The King will reply, “I tell you, whenever you refused to help one of these least important ones, you refused to help me.” These, then, will be sent off to eternal punishment, but the righteous will go to eternal life.*

I have always liked following the news. I like it when the news includes thoughtful, in depth consideration of faith issues. The visit of Pope Francis to the US filled the news shows with religious issues and jolted many out of their standard judgments of right and left, Republican or Democrat. I liked it that news reporters seemed so moved by the words of Pope Francis and the different work day context of his visit. I liked it that there were numerous biblical references to the challenges of today, the sanctity of life, violence, immigration and refugee concerns or economic justice. I listened to one of my favorite news show hosts repeatedly ask if we will be Matthew 25 Christians. I’m not used to this challenge from the news with my morning coffee.

Let us pray: *Dear God, keep my eyes open to the lowliest and most marginal people in my world. Don’t let me miss opportunities to lift up and serve. Amen*



**Thursday, October 22, 2015**

Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God

Text: Matthew 6:33-34

*Instead, be concerned above everything else with the Kingdom of God and with what he requires of you, and he will provide you with all these other things. So do not worry about tomorrow; it will have enough worries of its own. There is no need to add to the troubles each day brings.*

The song based upon this passage goes through my head often. I learned the song to the familiar passage as an adult at Fortune Lake. This is the Bible passage that my Mother and I most often share. My Mother raised six children. I am the oldest and as I graduated from high school, my Mom earned her bachelor’s degree and as I graduated from college she earned her Master’s degree. Now with unrelenting pain, and many mobility challenges, my Mother frets that

she is not able to keep up and do and manage all that she once did. Her hearing is bad and she is tone deaf so singing the song to her doesn't work as well for her as it does for me. She is still able to use her computer for short emails and these verses go out to her over and over, always a powerful reminder of God's love and comfort.

Let us pray: *Lord, thank you for lessons that continue to teach. Help us to use your teaching and to share your lessons with others, over and over. Amen*



**Friday, October 23, 2015**

Beloved, Let Us Love One Another

Text: 1 John 4:7-8

*Dear friends, let us love one another, because love comes from God. Whoever loves is a child of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God for God is love.*

Again, this text was put to music for me at Fortune Lake as an adult. Music has embedded the Word deeply within me. God is love. Am I living my life as a Christian in a way that teaches that lesson at every opportunity? Here comes another song taking over my brain, "They will know we are Christians by our love". Am I sharing songs of faith with the little people in my life that will echo powerfully for them in the future? Am I giving enough thought to all of the different ways that powerful faith messages will stick with people who learn and retain information in many different ways? Will I look for times to sing hymns with my Dad? I can also hear his voice booming out "Onward Christian Soldiers" generally on Saturday mornings as he tried to give my Mom a break, while entertaining, teaching, and trying to get us to do some chores.

Let us pray: *Lord, I am so blessed with love and music in my life. Don't let me forget that as I face the pain, challenges and disappointments that are also part of life. Amen*



**Saturday, October 24, 2015**

Walk Humbly with Your God

Text: Micah 6:8

*No, the Lord has told us what is good. What he requires of us is this: to do what is just, to show constant love, and to live in humble fellowship with our God.*

This summer I attended a wonderful wedding. Everyone commented that they had never been to a wedding with so many hymns included. The church rocked with the voices. There were 300-400, mostly young people in attendance as my nephew and his bride were wed in her home church, a few miles from where they both attended college. Having just celebrated my 39th

wedding anniversary, I found this passage that they selected to be particularly fitting at the start of a marriage. I returned home to enjoy summer in the UP and this quote appeared in my Word a Day vocabulary email:

“I’d rather see a sermon than hear one any day; I’d rather one should walk with me than merely tell the way.” - Edgar Guest, poet ( 1881-1959)

Walking humbly, walking with, how am I walking my faith journey? How am I as a Christian sharing the walk of others?

“We are walking, walking, we are walking, walking, we are walking in the light of God”

Let us pray: *Dear God, give me reminders to share your light as I walk through my life. Keep me searching for ways to show your light to those who are different from me and to those with whom I am the closest. Challenge me to find the ways I am best able to share your light and love. Amen*

