

..... Daily Devotions

**Devotions – September 3-9, 2017**

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(All scripture referenced is taken from *The Message* translation of the Bible as that is the version I am currently working through.)

**Sunday, September 3, 2017**

Text: *Philippians 1:3-6*

**Every time you cross my mind, I break out in exclamations of thanks to God. Each exclamation is a trigger to prayer. I find myself praying for you with a glad heart. I am so pleased that you have continued on in this with us, believing and proclaiming God’s Message, from the day you heard it right up to the present. There has never been the slightest doubt in my mind that the God who started this great work in you would keep at it and bring it to a flourishing finish on the very day Christ Jesus appears.**

The last time I committed to submit Prayfaithfully devotions, I was very nervous. I am not a pastor, a bishop or a Lay school student. But you all have blessed me so much with your encouragement that I was compelled once again to sign up. I want to thank all of you for your kind compliments and prayers on this journey we walk together to share the glory of Christ. The above scripture always reminds me of the people who gave me encouragement to keep writing and to keep praying.

Let us pray: *God of Angel Armies! We thank you for answering our prayers. Thank you for bringing Your people into our lives at the perfect moments when we feel like we aren’t doing enough or we aren’t enough. Thank you for your mercy and grace when we forget who we are and whose we are. Amen*



**Monday, September 4, 2017**

Text: *Isaiah 38:4-6*

**Then God told Isaiah, “Go and speak with Hezekiah. Give him this Message from me, GOD, the God of your ancestor David: ‘I’ve heard your prayer. I have seen your tears. Here’s what I’ll do: I’ll add fifteen years to your life. And I’ll save both you and this city from the king of Assyria. I have my hand on this city.**

Here is another one of those scriptures that I have a little bit of an issue with. While I get that 15 extra years on this Earth seems like a pretty sweet gift, I also am curious over what Hezekiah

missed out on with the trade. I realize that time is relative in the spiritual realm but 15 extra years on Earth seems to pale in comparison to 15 years at the foot of the throne of God. I wonder what we miss out on when we trade what we are comfortable with for something that might be all together better.

*Let us pray: God of all things good, we thank you for our freedom to come to you with all our doubts and our questions. We praise you for your willingness to answer our prayers, even when we miss out on something that might be better. Help us to always be mindful that our way is not the best way. Amen.*



**Tuesday, September 5, 2017**

Text: Psalm 139:7-12

**Is there anyplace I can go to avoid your spirit? to be out of your sight? If I climb to the sky, you're there! If I go underground, you're there! If I flew on morning's wings to the horizon, You'd find me in a minute - you're already there waiting! Then I said to myself, "Oh, he even sees me in the dark! At night I'm immersed in the light!" It's a fact: darkness isn't dark to you; night and day, darkness and light, they're all the same to you.**

I can't begin to explain how afraid of the dark I am. I try to play tough and "mom" up because I don't want my children to know that accomplished adults can be afraid. Not only am I afraid of actual darkness but I'm also afraid of the dark that has a tendency to sneak up on my soul. My self-doubt, my sin, my anxiety can come sweeping in so quickly sometimes that I don't even notice it. But God is "already there waiting" for me. In all those moments of darkness, "I'm immersed in the light."

*Let us pray: Lord of all knowing, we all face darkness. We all have felt it creeping in on us. Help us to remember You in those dark times, Lord. Remind us that in all the darkness, "we are immersed in light". Grant us Your peace that passes all understanding until we are in the light again. Amen.*



**Wednesday, September 6, 2017**

Text: Matthew 9:12-13

**Jesus, overhearing, shot back, "Who needs a doctor: the healthy or the sick? Go figure out what this Scripture means: 'I'm after mercy, not religion.' I'm here to invite outsiders, not coddle insiders."**

Very often, when I say that I have something going on at church, people will say something along the lines of “I’m spiritual but not religious.” I can’t help but chuckle. A dear friend of mine once told me “church is a hospital for the sinner...I don’t know why I gotta be in the ICU all the time.” This makes way more sense to me. This is a sister in Christ, speaking truth into my soul. There are so many reasons to go to Church but the number one reason for me personally is “I’m after mercy, not religion.”

Let us pray: *Awesome, Awesome God: Remind us that Your church is not just our building but Your people. Help us to provide mercy to the outsiders, to shed light in the darkness and be examples of your grace and love. Amen.*



**Thursday, September 7, 2017**

Text: *Luke 14:11*

**But if you’re content to simply be yourself, you’ll become more than yourself.**

The Holy Spirit honors our uniqueness more than we honor it ourselves. I want to fit in, I try to fit in but so often I feel like I don’t. I feel like an awkward outsider. But, when I give it all up, when I just sit still and have some fun with Jesus, I find that the world goes away. That it doesn’t matter what the world thinks of me but what Jesus thinks of me. He loves that I’m awkward and a little too loud. He made me this way and if I would just be content, I’ll grow closer to Him.

Let us pray: *God, King of Creation, remind us of how special we are. Be with us as we work towards being content with ourselves so we might be able to become more than we are, more than we thought we could be. Help us to become who you want us to be. Amen.*



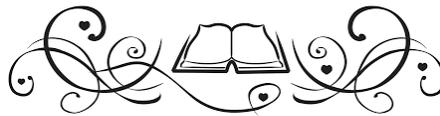
**Friday, September 8, 2017**

Text: *Psalm 34:17-20*

**Is anyone crying for help? God is listening, ready to rescue you. If your heart is broken, you’ll find God right there; if you’re kicked in the gut, he’ll help you catch your breath. Disciples so often get into trouble; still, God is there every time. He’s your bodyguard, shielding every bone; not even a finger gets broken.**

I am someone who loves to help. My catch phrase would be “How can I help?” This helps me be a blessing but it also gets me into a heap of trouble. Jesus has been convicting me lately to not take on so much. Be there for people but not to take on all their troubles. It’s a constant struggle to be the hands and feet of Christ but also, to take care of myself. As it turns out...I am terrible at Jesus’ job. If God is listening and ready to rescue people, that means I can help him but I don’t have to be the one to rescue everyone. That knowledge really takes the pressure off sometimes.

Let us pray: *God of unending mercy, forgive us for trying to do Your job, for thinking we have the answer and for taking on more than You have tasked us to take. Remind us today to take care of ourselves and to always remember that we will never be good enough to mess up Your works. Amen*



**Saturday, September 9, 2017**

Text: *Psalm 34:22*

**God pays for each slave’s freedom; no one who runs to him loses out.**

I have meditated on this particular scripture this year. It has been a constant reminder to me that I will not alienate people from Jesus. That was a particular fear of mine when I first dedicated my life to Christ at the ripe age of 23. I thought that people wouldn’t want to talk to me or be around me if I brought Him up in casual conversation. I have found that not to be the case. I have found that everyone is running towards something and the people who have run to God never lose out. They are blessed with knowledge of love and compassion that they might have never felt.

Let us pray: *God of mercy and love, help us be bold for You. Help us plant seeds of hope and faith in all the people we meet. Help us to see all people as You would see them so that we might bless them with Your love. Remind us that You paid for our freedom to speak so use our mouths to speak freedom to others. Amen.*



