

..... Daily Devotions

July 8-14, 2018

By Members of the Northern Great Lakes
Synod Women's Organization

Sunday, July 8, 2018

Small Town USA

"Enjoy what you have rather than desiring what you don't have."

Ecclesiastes 6:9

Recently I took an evening bike ride around our small town. As I was riding I couldn't help but have a grateful heart for the beautiful place I live. I witnessed music at the park, several people walking, biking, pushing strollers, rollerblading, children playing at the playground, a baseball game in action, people sitting on their porches...I ran into some people I knew and some I didn't, and no one hesitated to say "hi" as we passed each other.

It was just a bike ride, but a much needed reminder of how life is really about the simple things!

Let us pray: Thank you, Heavenly Father, for all that you have blessed us with. After a long winter what a gift it is to enjoy the outdoors. Thank you for our neighbors, baseball fields, parks, musicians, porches, and bicycles! And most of all thank you for our small towns of the Upper Peninsula and the pleasure of enjoying the simple things!

Pam Chouinard, SWO Vice President



Monday, July 9, 2018

We all know the feeling of being overwhelmed with life. The daily routines are shouting at us to get them done. Our commitments to our jobs, be they paying or voluntary, keep asking us to do more and more. And then there are the surprises brought on by the people and things in our lives: health, natural disasters, malfunctioning appliances and vehicles, leaky plumbing and roofs. How can we handle it all when it caves in on us? Where is the light at the end of the tunnel?

Take a deep breath. Close your eyes. Open your heart and mind. Take a minute and call Jesus into your life. Now I am not saying he will get your house clean, your grass cut, or your garden weeded. He may not change the results of your blood tests, stop the lava from rising out of the

fissures in your neighborhood, or fix your roof. But he is there to walk beside you, encourage you, and give you the strength to think things through and deal with your unique situation.

These two passages come to mind.

Matthew 28: 18-20 (NIV)

*“Then Jesus came to them and said “All authority on heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded to you. **And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”***

John 14:27 (NIV)

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

Barb Rice, SWO Secretary



Tuesday, July 10, 2018

Psalm 5:8-9

- 8. O Lord, lead me in Your righteousness because of my foes;
Make Your way straight before me.**
- 9. There is nothing reliable in what they say;
Their inward part is destruction itself.
Their throat is an open grave;
They flatter with their tongue.**

In today’s world, there is a lot of “he said”, “she said”. And who really knows who may or may not be telling the truth? As a child, I was taught to own up to whatever you did wrong, or we all were going to get the wrath. Of course, when wanting to know, who did whatever on any specific day..... nobody did it. The truth did eventually did come out, and punishment was doled out.

We were raised in the ways of Christ, as I’m sure many today are not. I am forever grateful to my parents for that. It is our job as God’s children to go forth and teach his word, not only by our words but also by our actions. For they will know we are Christians by our love.

Let us pray: *Lord, in today’s unjust world, let us be the light that shines with your love. Help us to not be afraid to do what is right and help others to know you. Help us to pray daily, and*

faithfully to hear your words, when you speak to us and to act on them accordingly. Let your light shine through us to be the beacon signaling to the lost. I pray these things through Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior. Amen.

Gail Schmidt, SWO Board Member



Wednesday, July 11, 2018

Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.

1 Peter 5:7 NLT, 2nd ed

Worry-Wart: The dictionary defines this (informally) as a person who worries too much or who worries about things that are not important. That would be me. I worry about everything and everybody.

I know that worrying isn't good but trying to "spoke" those "wheel-spinners" (think hamsters on their little exercise wheels); seems futile.

My grandma used to say: "In a hundred years, it won't matter anyway". Intellectually, I know that it doesn't matter now either; emotionally, not so much. I know that God is in charge, but it can be so hard to rein in those worries.

Let us pray: *Lord, I worry about so many things, I worry when I don't have anything to worry about. I know that you are in charge. I pray for peace of mind, body and soul. I pray for all the "worriers", that they may know comfort and peace through you. Amen.*

Kris Carlson, SWO Treasurer



Thursday, July 12, 2018

What Would Jesus Do? (WWJD)

"Jesus said unto him. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

- Matthew 22:37-39

Remember the big wave of “What Would Jesus Do?” You could possibly still have a bracelet with WWJD in your jewelry box, or a junk drawer. If not, I am pretty sure you may have had one during your life time. Remember the book that was published, even though it was fiction, did have some truth to it because after all Jesus said what the “the first and second Great Commandments” were as we see in the Matthew passage above. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. In the book it encourages people to use their wealth, large or small, to help others who are the least of them. Those that did this were criticized by others, but they found their way in their journey to be rewarding.

In real life, we may not be willing to give much at all. But then I remind you that God created everything that we have access to in this life’s journey and we should be good stewards of it all. God provides what we need, not what we always want. He answers our prayers but not always with a yes. He makes good out of the bad things that happen to us if we are willing to seek his help. It is like in the Bible when the rich man asks what he needed to do to follow Jesus and Jesus responds by telling him to sell everything and follow him. However, we know that the rich man could not bring himself to do it. However, we also know the story about the woman that gave everything she had (the story of the woman with the least coin).

What would Jesus do? He would encourage us to follow his lead. He came and showed us through parables in the Bible of how we should live among each other. He told us to put God first in our lives. Do you know what the word JOY can stand for, a diagram of how we should travel through life putting JESUS first, OTHERS second and YOU last. Think about it. Is Jesus first in your life 24/7 or is he only there on Sunday (and that is if you actually go to church to hear his word).

Let us pray: *Dear Father, help us to contemplate your great commandments and then help us to implement them in our lives every day, all day long. Help us to discipline our habits to include you always and to learn more about you, not on our own, but with brothers and sisters who may share their stories with us. Help us to build a desire to become a BFF with you by studying your word.*

Melzee Jacobson, SWO President



Friday, July 13, 2018

What’s in Your Cup?
“Cast your burdens on the Lord”
Psalm 55:22

I read something recently from “Daily Dose of Humility”: Just be nice about being bumped into and spilling coffee or tea or something else. The fact is it spilled out everywhere. When the body gets bumped the body is shaken. Maybe God has a way of shaking us up to remember no matter what is in our cup sometimes it has to come out. When things are at their worst,

instead of holding it in talk to God and let it out before it spills out and makes a mess. God is there for us in all things. Just let Him in. Remember to love your neighbor and be grateful for each day we have.

Let us Pray: *Dear Lord, as our cups are filled with things help us sort them out. Amen*

Elaine Kuhlmann, SWO Board Member



Saturday, July 14, 2018

Come and Follow Me

*"If anyone would come and follow me, my disciple you would be,
Leave the past behind, see and you will find all you're called to be.
If anyone would come and follow me, know the truth will make you free.
Give and you receive. Trust me and believe. Come and follow me."
(Come and Follow Me by David Haas).*

The Great Commission – Matthew 23:18-20

Jesus came and told his disciples "I have been given complete authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations baptizing them in name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this, I am with you always even to the end of the age"

I want to follow you Jesus, but what must I do?

First, I need to know your story. I need to study the word, contemplating it as I read it and praying before I even start that you will help me receive the message you have for me each time I read a passage. Then maybe, not maybe, I should join with others in studying to share thoughts and stories. Then I should seek a Christian community to share my life with, to love, and to come and hear your words on a regular basis. I must become a Disciple of Christ rather than just a member of a congregation because your church is not contained within the building proper. Your church is in the world, so I must learn and accept and then after meeting with other disciples for worship I need to rise and walk out into your mission field to help you find your lost sheep and to spread your love to others. I need to put you first in my life, then seek out others, and then I can be concerned with myself.

But Jesus the world is changing. The numbers attending worship are declining. How do we convince each other that we need to make changes in the institution of the church so we may be a place where others can find you in safety? Help all of us to look deep within ourselves to see what each of us can do to bring about bringing others into our midst so that your church community can grow disciples for you. I have been reading *SHIFT Three Big Moves for the 21st Century Church* by Mark E. Tidsworth. He suggests in this book that "Our pathway to a deeper relationship with Christ" would be to **Pray daily, Worship weekly, Read the Bible, Serve others, Share your story, and Give freely**. I am finding many ideas and thoughts in this book and I would encourage everyone to pick it up and read. If we all can

open our hearts and minds and work together perhaps God's encouragement to us will help dispense some of the chaos in our lives.

Let us pray: *Dear Father, please open the minds and hearts of your people so we may desire to learn more about you, each other and the world that we live in. Use us to reach out to others and share your story and ours so that they be encouraged to have a desire to fill the emptiness with their souls. Amen*

Melzee Jacobson, SWO President

