

Devotions – April 7-13, 2019

By Members of the Synodical Women’s Organization

Sunday, April 7, 2019

By Elaine Kuhlmann
SWO Board Member

When I am Tempted to Quit

Text: Philippians 3:16

Let us hold true to what we have attained.

Sometimes I feel like I can't go on without the love of my life of 51 years. We did everything together, we were best of friends.

Having to do things on my own such as meals, social activities and going to church alone is very hard. It could be very easy to just lock myself in my home and not come out. But with the faith I had in God and still have I can be true to what we had and know God is with me through all the hurt and sorrow I feel. I know my faith will get me through.

Let us Pray: *Lord, you have promised I will be blessed. I want your help. Please give me the heart to go on with some humble spirit and grateful thanks. Amen*



Monday, April 8, 2019

By Pam Chouinard
SWO Vice President

Text: John 15:15

[Jesus said] I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my father.

After Jesus came to visit Martha, Mary and Lazarus, their lives changed forever! There was a new peace. A new joy. A new sense of love permeated their whole household. Then Lazarus took ill. Martha and Mary knew Jesus loved their brother, as much as they did. So, the sisters sent a note to Jesus: *“Lord, he whom you love is ill”* (John 11:3). Jesus wasn’t a stranger to them, he was a friend.

Martha and Mary knew Jesus could make their brother well again. And their life would continue as they'd always known it. They had their hope to cling to. However, by the time Jesus came, Lazarus had already passed away. Needless to say, Martha was very disappointed and let Jesus know her feelings. I am a Martha, I relate to her irritations. Whether she's upset with Mary for not helping in the kitchen or feeling betrayed that Jesus hadn't come quicker to heal her beloved brother. But as patient and understanding as Jesus is, he reminded Martha that he is the resurrection and the life. And Martha responded with her confession of faith: *"Yes Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the son of God, the one coming into the world"* (John 11:27).

Let us Pray: *Loving God, thank you for reminding us that hope is NOT gone. Your love, grace and patience for us is a true blessing. Amen*



Tuesday, April 9, 2019

By Frances Voyce
SWO Board Member

Text: Luke 12:18

"Then he said, "I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones."

As the days get longer and the sun is brighter, showing the dirty windows, we start to think of spring housecleaning. Many years ago, I saw a daily devotion with this verse, and I have never forgotten it. I for one seem not to be able to toss anything away. Not sure if I developed this habit from my dad who grew up during the depression or if it was after we lost out home in a fire.

I find it hard to let go of things that I have accumulated. After we moved back on to my family home that has been in our family since the late 1800's, I have things that were my parents, grandparents and my husband's parents. I know that life does not consist of an "abundance of possessions" (verse 15), yet I struggle to find the right balance between acquiring, keeping and letting go of my things.

Recently I went to the GLIDE Methodist Church while in San Francisco, CA with a friend. I saw first-hand how the homeless people who have nothing live. How people with abundance serve the Lord by doing things for them, from feeding them and providing medical help to giving them guidance to become once again independent. Most of all showing them Jesus' love by caring for them.

I decided I would try to do more with the possessions I have by sharing with others who are not as fortunate. Making more quilts for Lutheran World Relief and the comfort quilts for individuals who are struggling with tragedies in their lives.

Let us pray: *I ask you, Lord, to guide me to form healthy attitudes and habits regarding my possessions, by giving more to those who are less fortunate that I may serve you with my whole being. I pray that others may join me in doing so. In Jesus' name, Amen.*



Wednesday, April 10, 2019

By Barb Rice
SWO Secretary

Text: Matthew 13:15

“For this people’s heart has grown dull, and their ears are hard of hearing, and they have shut their eyes; so that they might not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and understand with their heart and turn— and I would heal them”.

Every day, we are awakened to be assaulted by the news in our towns, states, nations, world. And every day we ask, “why?” Why is there so much hate? Why is there so much greed? Why are so many decisions made that cause people to suffer? We do the small things that we can in hopes that someday we will not need to ask these questions. We work in soup kitchens, we donate money to world hunger and disaster relief, we help in our community homeless shelters, we knit and crochet prayer shawls, we piece together quilts, we cut the grass or shovel the snow for our church or even our neighbors, we march in PRIDE parades and protest injustice to the marginalized. Our efforts don’t seem to make a small dent in all that is going on.

And then we read this verse from Matthew and realize that if we truly trust in Christ Jesus that He is there to answer our questions, to support and guide our efforts to be His hands, and, in His own time and way, to heal our world in ways we may not recognize or understand. And we make it through each day in the knowledge that Jesus said “...I would heal them.”

Let us pray: *Lord Jesus, you know us and know where we are going. As we try to do your work in our world, guide us to do what is right in all our words and actions. Be with us as we strive to make our world a place of peace, respect, love, and justice. In your name, we pray. Amen*



Thursday, April 11, 2019

By Kris Carlson
SWO Treasurer

Text: Hosea 6:3

Let us know, let us press on to know the Lord; his appearing is as sure as the dawn; he will come to us like the showers, like the spring rains that water the earth.

The seasons are turning. The darker days of winter are giving way to the lighter days of spring; even if some of the spring rains are falling in the form of snow. Spring is “already here, but not yet”. As we journey through these 40 days of Lent; though the days are getting brighter, we know the shadow of the cross is looming. Beyond the shadow of the cross, we also know that there is the promise of new life on Easter morning.

Lord, Thank you for darkness and light. Thank you for your willingness to go through the darkness to reach new life for us. Help us to always be mindful every day of your great gift for us. Amen.



Friday, April 12, 2019

By Sue Hill
SWO Board Member

Text: John 10:14

I am the Good Shepherd; and I know my sheep and am known by My own.

As I have been more diligent in doing regular Bible study, I often think that He knows me but do I really know, trust in, and want to be like Him? I know that to be like Him I really have to be more loving towards people I don't like and don't understand. The stumbling block for me is the word I.

This should not be about what I want but what Jesus wants. As a middle child, I am used to trying to keep the peace in my family and do whatever is needed to keep it together. One of my ways to think about Jesus in the middle of a problem is to pray "please give me the strength to do whatever it is You want me to do."

Do you see a problem with this prayer?

Instead of saying thank you, Lord, for all that You have given me or using one of the gifts He has already given me, I (yes, the big I) am asking for more. The troubles in life are always much easier when Jesus is allowed to lead.

Let us Pray: *Hi God, yes, it's me. I want to say "thank you" for all that you have done and continue to do for us. Please allow us to continue to learn about and understand more about you. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen*



Saturday, April 13, 2019

By Melzee Jacobson
SWO President

Text: Ephesians 4:2

“Be patient with each other.”

I have always heard people say, including me, be careful what you pray for. If you pray for patience, then you may be provided with lessons in life for which patience is required. I have also heard that there are two ways to learn, one by emotion and the other by repetition, with that which is learned through emotion remembered the longest.

For many of us patience is not a strong trait in our personalities, especially as we begin to grow from being an infant. As an infant, we learned to let others know when we were hungry, needed a diaper change, were overly tired by fussing and crying uncontrollably until our needs were met. Through childhood we would let others know when things did not go our way, again by complaining in some way or another and we continued through into adulthood. Our pattern was for instant gratification.

As I am now entering into my retirement years, I look back and see that as I added the years on, I also discovered one truth to a happier life. Being patient with others instead of getting upset gives me a sense of calm and peace. Taking the time to listen and learn about the other person's personal journey makes me realize how much we do and do not have in common. Our stories may be different, but the essence of the events and the growth from the experience takes us one step further to realizing that patience is what allows us to see other people as Children of God, even if they don't realize they are, and to reach out in love and respect to one another.

God's teaching of being patient with others is a gift to both the giver and the receiver that can make our life journey a pleasure rather than separating us from each other unnecessarily.

Let us pray: Lord God, help me to accept the gift of patience and allow me to learn from other's experiences and them of mine through the sharing of your Story and the story that you have provided me in this lifetime through the blessings you have bestowed upon me. Please allow me to experience the grace and peace that comes with being patient with others. Amen

