

Devotions – November 10-16, 2019

By Members of the Synodical Women's Organization

Sunday, November 10, 2019

Examining Our Accepting Hearts

Text: John 4

The woman at the well—a Samaritan woman. A person despised by the Jews, a person married five times and now living with another who won't even give her his name, a woman who goes to the well during the heat of the day supposedly to avoid others chastisement, a woman who talks to a "strange man." A Samaritan, mixed marriage, between Gentile and Jew.

This "strange man," Jesus, made no excuses for her. He gave no lecture about the sins of a "fallen" woman. He simply asked for a simple, honest answer and received one. He asked for water and told of the Living Water. He chose her with no reservations as to who she was, what she was, or from where she came. He loved her. That's it. No strings. She was there. He loved her.

I think of the time when I had my adopted Korean daughter in a stroller at the Penney's store and was stopped by a woman who said, "What did you adopt one of those for?" and another woman who said, "Oh, how cute; she looks just like you." Hmmm. My daughter now has two beautiful children...

Are we prejudiced? Do we struggle for words when we come upon someone who lives differently than us? Are we accepting of all God's children knowing we are one of them and brothers and sisters in Christ? Can we honestly pray for our enemies across the seas?

Let us pray: *Father in heaven, help us to be a true disciple of your word. Help us to follow your Son's example. Give us the words and compassion to place others at ease. Give us forgiveness in our struggle to be more like him. In your most holy name we pray. Amen.*

By: Mary Lou Stefanski, SWO Board Member



Monday, November 11, 2019

Take Time

Text: Philippians 4:4-5

“Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near.”

Waking up to see a beautiful sunrise, listening to a loon calling as it crosses the sky or touching the beloved pet’s soft fur are all things that one may be thankful for. While living here or traveling there we see, hear and touch God’s goodness every day of our lives.

I remember how God has reached me in the lonely moments, uncertainties and sorrows with surprising comfort and his joy. So take a moment . . . look around at your surroundings, stop and listen to what you hear. How is God speaking to you?

Let God know how much you are grateful for in your life.

Let us pray: *Dear Heavenly Father, please help me to always rejoice in your provisions. Thank you for what you have given me today. In Jesus’ precious name, Amen.*

By: Karen Reitz, SWO Board Member



Tuesday, November 12, 2019

Take Heed

Text: Luke 12:15

And he said to them, “Take heed, and beware of all covetousness; for a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”

It’s hard to believe that Advent is just a few weeks away. A new church year, a new beginning, a fresh start: “Advent” housecleaning. If you are like me, I haven’t done fall housecleaning [or spring cleaning for that matter]. Boy, is it easy to accumulate stuff. We’re bombarded from all sides with advertising for the latest, newest, shiniest “anything”. It’s even harder when some of your material possessions have history and sentiment and memory attached. There was a *Frank and Ernest* cartoon a number of years ago that certainly speaks to this: The animals are checking in to get on the ark and the pack rats want to know if they can bring more than one piece of carry-on.

Material things aren’t the only things in our carry-ons; there’s also “stuff” like greed, malice, envy, anger, grudges. These can be harder to resolve than dealing with all the material things we see around us. Jesus said we should sell our possessions and give the money to the poor. That’s pretty drastic; but we can certainly look to the Lord for guidance to balance what we get to give

to God (**THE VERY FIRST THING, BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE**); how to help those less fortunate than ourselves, what we need, what we have, what we want.

The tangible is one thing; the other “stuff” we can’t see can be harder to let go. Again, we look to the Lord for help and guidance to divest ourselves of this stuff as well.

Let us pray: *Lord, thank you for all the gifts and blessings you have bestowed on us. Help us to be ever mindful of how best to use all of the gifts for God and neighbor. Amen.*

By: Kris Carlson, SWO Treasurer



Wednesday, November 13, 2019

Morning Joy

Text: Psalm 30:5

For His anger endureth but a moment; in His favour is life: weeping may endure for a night but joy cometh in the morning.

This is one of my most favorite verses. How many times I have experienced the truth of this verse as I crawl into bed at night with heavy burdens upon my shoulders. My mind races and I turn and toss until I give into a night of restlessness.

The next morning the world doesn’t seem so harsh in the sunlight. My worries and fears may even seem a little petty. Things don’t look as impossible as they did the night before. It becomes easier to cast my cares to the Lord. And when I do, JOY comes to me once more.

Weeping may endure for a night: I love the fact that God puts a time limit on the suffering and restlessness of his children! During the night, dawn may seem far away, but remember morning will come, and with it, God’s promise of joy. We have God’s Word on it!

Let us pray: *O Lord our God, you take away our worries and fears and replace them with joy. We give you thanks forever. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

By: Pam Chouinard, SWO Secretary



Thursday, November 14, 2019

I Stand at the Door

Text: Revelation 3:20

“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.”

Jesus will always be there waiting for me to except his love.

The picture of Jesus waiting by the door was the first picture I saw when coming in my grandmother’s home. As a little girl, I would look at it and ask my grandmother what the picture was. Grandmother said, “He’s waiting for you; welcome him into your life.” This is what I can share today 50 years later. Do not wait. We are made not perfect, and every day I ask for forgiveness and know that I am loved unconditionally. So Awesome!

Let us pray: *Dear Lord, thank you for your unconditional love and forgiveness. You have truly blessed me. Amen*

By: Holly Guerin, SWO Vice President



Friday, November 15, 2019

Be Still

Text: Psalm 46:10

“He says, ‘Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.’”

Just recently I had the opportunity to experience contemplative meditation. I know that I am to be still and listen for God to call on me and to fill my heart with peace. This experience was just one of those times (probably the first time that I have truly felt it). St. Teresa describes contemplative prayer (*oracion mental*): “In my opinion is nothing else than a close sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with Him who we know loves us.” Contemplative prayer seeks Him ‘whom my soul loves’.

This experience consisted of breathing in and out, relaxing, letting yourself find that quiet place within and then listening to scripture being read, then quiet listening to hear what may be brought into your inner being. My thoughts were, “Where am I supposed to be for you Lord?” and this is what transpired.

You are where I want you. I have walked your life’s journey with you.

You are where I want you. Your circumstances have prepared you to see my lost sheep who can relate to you.

You are where I want you. Your family both then and now have taught you how to love unconditionally. I have taught you how to love unconditionally.

You are where I want you. You have learned that if the gifts that I have given you are easily received, then you continue. If your gifts are rejected, I have taught you to wipe the dust from your feet and move on.

You are where I want you for now. One day I will have you move on to the next place I need you. Continue to have trust that you are where I want you to be for now.

Be still and always listen for I am here.

Let us pray: *Dear Lord, thank you for loving me. Thank you for walking beside me. Thank you for making me a child of yours. May I continue to listen more closely and heed what you ask of me. May my heart continually be open and willing to have a life that is yearning to be of service in the Kingdom of God. Amen*

By: Melzee Jacobson, SWO President



Saturday, November 16, 2019

God's Love

Text: Psalm 100:5

“For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.”

Learning to cope with life without the one you love can be very hard at times. People say things like: give it time, things will get better, he's in a better place, it was God's will.

I know that God decides when he wants us. My faith gets me through each day. My humanness in me is asking why now? Why not later? I need him too, but God knows more than I and knows my faith in him will get me through. So, when I question why things happen, I turn to prayer and guidance from God. The faith I have in God I know his love will endure forever.

By: Elaine Kuhlmann NGLSWO Board Member



