

**Devotions: June 14-20, 2020**

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***Behind the Scenes:** As a brand, spanking-new Quilter, I've found myself rather bemused at the many new terms I'm learning along the way, and just how apropos these concepts are when it comes to my life in ministry here in the UP. Cheers to a devotional week of melding these two loves: **faith** and **fabric**!*

**FABRIC:** the **Biblical** passage that weaves us together

**DESIGN:** a brief **reflection** of God's amazing design

**BIND:** the offering of **prayer** that binds us to God

**Sunday, June 14, 2020**

**FABRIC:** *But a woman who had been suffering from a hemorrhage for twelve years came up behind him and touched the **edge** of his cloak. (Matthew 9:20)*

**DESIGN:** The selvage is the part of the fabric that has the most tightly woven stitching, keeping the whole of the fabric together. Personally, it felt great to be able to cut-off those seemingly useless, ends of the fabric – clear them away so I can get to the REAL fabric. What possible use could these selvage scraps really have!? Oh, how wrong I was: my quilting mentor showed me not only her jar of selvages, but the amazingly creative, quilting products she had been able to craft. Just by using those tiny strips of “useless” material, she had fancied herself a beautiful design.



How often do we carelessly discard the seemingly “useless” things in our

lives, never giving a second thought as to whether or not they'd actually serve a purpose? Even worse: how often do we simply toss aside those who might be on the very edges of life? Where did the woman with a nonstop hemorrhage reach for Jesus? Not along his sleeves, nor upon his shoulder, but on the very, edge of his cloak. There, at the very edge of fabric, grasped a woman who was at the very edge of society.

**BIND**: *Lord, help my eyes to see the full fabric of life around me. Unleash me to pour out your mercy and love to the very edges of my community. Help me look to you as a guide and Savior, so that my life doesn't unravel into chaos. In your holy name we pray, Amen.*

**Monday, June 15, 2020**

**FABRIC**: *And he said, "Thus says the LORD: 'Make this valley full of ditches.'"*  
(2 Kings 3:16)

**DESIGN**: Once you've pieced together a quilt (front piece, batting in the middle, and back piece), you're ready to "*Stitch the Ditch*". Basically, you'll take the time to go up and down as many straight lines as you can (the ditches), stabilizing the entire quilt. It can be a laborious task, but it serves the purpose of making sure the layers don't shift as you add all of the decorative quilting.



When faced with the dangerous plight of extreme thirst, the Armies of 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings were commanded to dig ditches – a seemingly ludicrous suggestion when all they wanted was a little water! But, alas, they tackled the physically-demanding job, and had the ditches they needed to capture the water they desired when a flood swept through the land.

**BIND**: *Lord, help me to look past what might seem ridiculous, and listen to your guidance in my life. Help me trust that you are only the stabilizing force I need, and*

*to take the time to study your Word. In your holy and surprising name we pray, Amen.*

**Tuesday, June 16, 2020**

**FABRIC:** *For God gave us a spirit not of fear, but of power and love and self-control. (2 Timothy 1:7)*

**DESIGN:** The art of quilting is FILLED with the use of rulers and guides and straight edges. There is a plethora of tools to help you achieve alignment, and taking the time to do so *vastly* increases your chances of creating something that looks like a *quilt* (*vs. something you might have made in an afterschool, craft club when you were 12!*)



**Alignment** in quilting isn't NEARLY as important as alignment in our walk of faith. We're given multiple rulers and guides to keep us along that straight edge of life, helping us line-up *our* wills and actions with that of *God's*. Notice the author of 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy mentions both self-control AND love – they are not mutually exclusive. Instead, when working in harmony, we can exercise the self-control needed to stand strong during our moments of spiritual weakness, tapping into the very power and love of God, so beautifully shared with us as fruits of the Spirit.

**BIND:** *Guiding Light, straighten our paths so that they both glorify and point to you. Keep us in alignment with your love and your kingdom so that Thy will might indeed be done. Faithfully yours, Amen.*

**Wednesday, June 17, 2020**

**FABRIC:** *But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter.*

**(Mark 1:45)**

**DESIGN:** EVERY. SINGLE. QUILT I've made so far has employed the use of the ¼-inch stitch. This is so standard a measurement that there's actually a presser foot made for the sewing machine that has a built-in, metal guide so that you will stitch a perfect line EXACTLY one-quarter of an inch away from the edge. I love this little tool, as it guarantees that, even if I'm not paying the best of attention (*and getting a little, too caught up in my Netflix binge*), the end result will always be a beautiful, even, ¼-inch line of stitching.



Jesus had *just* healed a man with leprosy in the verse we just read from Mark, and implored him NOT to share the good news of what has just happened. Instead, as any miraculously-healed human might be tempted to do, the newly clean man tells anyone and everyone, from all quarters of the world. We, too might be tempted to completely ignore God's command, either because we don't understand it at the time, or think we might be better off going our own way. God's Word, much like the handy-dandy presser foot, serves as a guide to keep us heading down the path as GOD sees fit, and keeps us from swerving our lives off course.

**BIND:** *Healing God, help us to lean into your guidance, even when we think we know a better way. Thank you for your forgiving grace when we wander off-course. In your faithful name we pray, Amen.*

**Thursday, June 18, 2020**

**FABRIC:** *Then Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go, do as you have said, but make*

*me a little bread **cake** from it first and bring it out to me, and afterward you may make one for yourself and for your son.'* (1 King 17:13)

**DESIGN:** Jelly Roll. Layer Cake. Sweet Rolls. Before you think I've simply lost my mind, and abandoned my quilting theme, fear not: ALL of these terms pertain to a measurement of fabric! These are just some of the various terms for pre-cut strips and squares of fabric. *What kind of hungry soul thought this stuff up!?* I find myself chuckling when overhearing experienced quilters just toss these ridiculous terms about and think absolutely nothing of it!



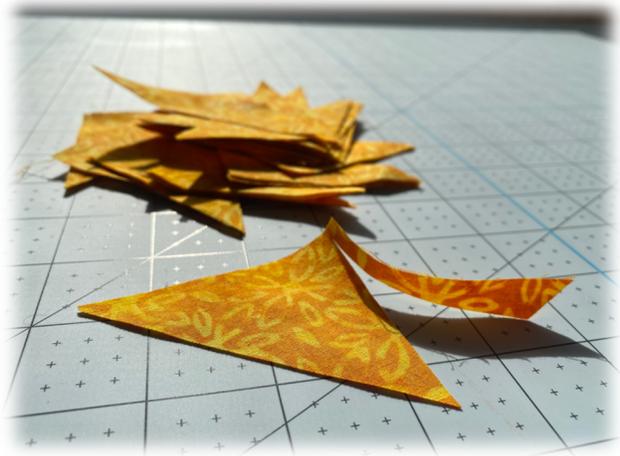
The prophet, Elijah, seemed just as bonkers when telling the poor, hungry, ready-to-die widow to go and make him a **CAKE** with what very little she had left. Her obedience to God, however, yielded not only a cake for Elijah but jars of oil and flour that never ran dry. In what seemed to be a situation of scarcity, Elijah reminded the cautious mother of the abundance of God.

**BIND:** *Giving God, help me to trust in your never-ending capacity to provide for my needs. Keep my eyes looking past what I might see and focused on what might be. In your generous name we pray, Amen.*

**Friday, June 19, 2020**

**FABRIC:** *Surely, there is a future, and your hope will not be cut off.*  
(Proverbs 23:18)

**DESIGN:** I can't TELL you the number of times I have been slicing along, my sharp, rotary blade in hand, and I slice WAY off-course of what my ruler intended. There it is: the little, shnibblie (*that's my technical term for the skinny, little slice of ill-cut fabric that is now, quite literally, hanging by a thread*) just staring you in the face. GREAT, I think, looking at my precious fabric that I've sliced to bits. I have NO extra yardage to spare, either. Way to go, Bren. Eventually, I dig into my stash to find something that will work, but BOY, do I frown!



How many times have we found ourselves making QUITE the whoops of our own life? Hanging on to what little bit of normalcy we seek by a meager thread? Thankfully, as the Proverb above reminds us, HOPE will never be cut off, as we have a God who looks out for us, much like a caring parent looks out for their child.

**BIND:** *Caring Creator, we thank you for the steadfast way you tend to your flock, and the grace you pour upon our mistakes. Keep us clinging to the hope of life eternal by your side. In Jesus's holy name we pray, Amen.*

**Saturday, June 20, 2020**

**FABRIC:** *And this is the sign to you: you will see a young child **folded** in linen, in the place where the cattle have their food. (Luke 2:12)*

**DESIGN:** One of the last things a quilter does to properly finish off their quilt, is to stitch the binding of the quilt around its outer edges. Upon reaching the corners of the quilt, one can choose to sew what is called a mitered corner, or what looks like a sharp, 45° angle **fold** in the corner of

your quilt. My dear quilting guru has helped me break down the steps of this fancy-pants turn so that I end up with a precise corner (*and not the lumpy, bumpy catastrophe I had when I tried it myself!*)

This final, quilting devotional really brings us back to where the story truly began: with the Son of God, folded inside some fabric of his very own. The joy of quilting is often in the giving of this work of art you've poured your hands and heart into. And yet, no quilt could ever match the priceless gift of Jesus coming to us in person.



**BIND:** *May we hold on to our faith with as much love and care as Mary once held onto her tiny, little boy. May the folds in our lives be that of our hands in prayer to you, holy and ever-listening God. In your precious name we pray, Amen.*