



Daily Meditations

July 12 - 17, 2021

The Biblical readings are taken from the Daily Office in the Book of Common Prayer for Year 2 and written by the St. Stephen's Meditation Writing Team: Dave Boyd, Jon Campbell, Becky Denton, Pat Gillory, Jay Nickel, Bob Reed, and Carroll Wilson.

Click on the scripture reading for each day to go directly to link. Current and past copies of the "Daily Meditations" may be found at: ststeve.org/daily-meditations

PROPER 10:

O Lord, mercifully receive the prayers of your people who call upon you, and grant that they may know and understand what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to accomplish them; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Prologue

As I write these meditations, I am reminded that summer really is here now. Drinking coffee on the porch in the mornings is not nearly so enjoyable when the overnight low is 78 degrees. But, I know that October will come soon, and that I am a very lucky and blessed person to have only the heat of summer as my overriding concern these days. Amen.

Early in the Mornings

Monday, July 12, 2021

Mark 1:29-45

"...before dawn, He got up and went out to a secluded spot and prayed." - The Message Remix Bible

I often wonder what kind of prayer life others practice. I wonder what works for them. I would love to have some advice, some tips that I could employ in my own prayer regimen. Mine has developed over the years since retirement into something that just kinda works for me.

Like the quote above, my habit is to get up early in the morning, before

sunrise, while it is still and quiet inside the house and out. While making my first cup of coffee, I try to imagine and remember the names of all those folks I know who especially need or want prayers. Then I sit down after my first sip, either in my easy chair or on the front porch near the bird feeders, and I start.

I try to remember first those folks in special circumstance—those I've been made aware of. I direct my prayers to Jesus. I don't know why, except that it just seems to work for me. I ask that he bless and protect them.

Then, I turn to the people that I pray for daily. First, I pray for my spouse. Then I pray for myself—that today I could be a better parent, grandparent, spouse, and friend. Then, I pray for my children and grandchildren and other relatives. Then I start what I suspect is an unusual process of remembering all the other folks I have chosen to pray for daily. I imagine a map of the country, and I move from Wimberley to the North, then East, then South, then Northwest, then South again, finishing up here in Texas and Wimberley.

Sometimes, I forget one or two folks and am reminded of them later in the day. When that happens, I simply launch a quick prayer for them. I think Jesus understands that I cannot always cover all the bases.

Prayer is a terribly personal and solitary thing for me. I cannot help but wonder if I could do a better job of it. I wish I could ask each and every one of you about this. I suspect that my ways are quite different from yours. At this time in my life, mine seem to suit me, and I hope they suit Jesus. Thank you, Jesus. TYJ

Only God Can Forgive Sins

Tuesday, July 13, 2021

Mark 2:1-12

"Jesus said to the paralytic: Son, I forgive your sins. Some religious scholars sitting there started whispering amongst themselves. He can't talk that way! That's blasphemy! God and only God can forgive sins." - The Message Remix Bible

I read these 12 verses over and over trying to fix my mind on something that made sense to me—something I wanted to talk about. And, although it is not in the spirit of this described encounter between Jesus and the paralytic, or the encounter between Jesus and the scholars, I choose to write here on forgiveness.

I have spent many years of my life suffering under the effects of not forgiving. All that anger, all that hatred have not served me well at all. It doesn't matter if I'm talking about my father or a crooked boss or a priest or a laundry list of others over the years who hurt me in one way or another. Also, on that list is me. I must forgive myself.

If I have learned anything over my 73 years, it is that it's just not worth being owned by some act by someone in the past.

"Get over it, fella. Just let it go."

That's very easy to say after one has actually done it. It is quite a freeing state of mind to just let it go. How I wish that I could have had this understanding within me many years ago. It took a ton of wasted emotion to arrive in a better place. But, I'm not finished with this practice yet. There remain a few more things to get over and let go.

What could you let go of today? TYJ

What Kind of Example

Wednesday, July 14, 2021

Mark 2:13-21

"The religious scholars and the Pharisees saw Him keeping this kind of company and lit into His disciples. What kind of example is this, acting cozy with the riffraff. Jesus overheard them and shot back: Who needs a doctor, the healthy or the sick?" - The Message Remix Bible

There are some important things to talk about here, but I am driven to mention just two of them by inserting myself into the story. First, I have been the riffraff before. I have been the sick (not physical sickness) in need of the doctor. It is not a good feeling knowing that you've lost your way and you need someone's help. Many times in that situation, I stubbornly did not seek the help that was usually there for me to access. Being honest with myself has never been one of my best qualities.

Secondly, let's insert me into the role of a doctor. So many times in my past, I have been confronted with a situation where I could try to provide the healing of a doctor for someone who's lost their way. And many times, I've walked away from the opportunity. I have walked away from the RESPONSIBILITY to help.

I try harder these days not to be the one who's lost his way and not to be the doctor who turns his/her back on the one who's lost. I try and I fail and I try again. TYJ

The Meaning of Sabbath

Thursday, July 13, 2021

Mark 2:23 - 3:6

"The Sabbath was made to serve the people; we weren't made to serve the Sabbath." And, "What kind of action suits the Sabbath best? Doing good or doing evil? Helping people or leaving them helpless?" - The Message Remix Bible

What comes to mind for you here? I think about how much people work these days. We've convinced ourselves that we must work from home for many more hours than ever before just to keep up – just to be able to keep our jobs for another pay period - another few months.

I think of Sunday as the day I go to be re-charged, to re-collect my thoughts, to re-orient my thinking. I go to be reminded of what's important for the coming week and for the rest of my life. Is it helping people, or leaving them helpless?

Fr. Kevin, in his sermon, reminded me on a recent Sunday that going to the Valley to feed hungry people once every six weeks or so is not about being politically correct. We do these things because Jesus has said that it is what we are called to do. I observe the Sabbath to get my head screwed back on straight again after forgetting what's most important during the week prior. Thank you, Fr. Kevin and TYJ.

And I'm About to Disappear

Friday, July 16, 2021

Acts 13:13-25

"From out of David's descendants, God produced a Savior for Israel, Jesus, exactly as He promised – but only after John had thoroughly alerted the people to His arrival by preparing them for a total life change. As John was finishing up his work, he said: Did you think I was the One? No, I'm not the ONE. But the One you have been waiting for all these years is just around the corner, about to appear. And I'm about to disappear." - The Message Remix Bible

Paul has a whole lot to say here for you and me. But, there is (for me) a certain peace to this quotation from Acts. I've been on this earth for a good long while now. I write these meditations for me as well as for you, readers. Writing them is usually a very cathartic exercise for me.

For me, to meditate on the notion that Jesus is just around the corner, and I'm about to disappear does not conjure up in my mind some kind of Armageddon or "rapture" scenario. I think that I have even come to embrace the thought. I don't mean to convey to you that I have it all figured out, or that I know just what happens when I "disappear." I mean only to say that I'm not going to worry about it anymore. I will have regrets surely. But I will not fear. WOW! That's more that I usually let on about myself in these meditations. TYJ

A Diet of Tears

Saturday, July 17, 2021

Psalms 42

"I'm on a diet of tears—tears for breakfast, tears for supper. All day long people knock at my door, pestering , saying 'where is this God of yours?' These are the things I go over and over, emptying out the pockets of my life." - The Message Remix Bible

I have said before that I rarely write on the Old Testament or on the Psalms from the Daily Office. I set this quote from Psalm 42 into prose in order to better capture my feelings about it. It brings up the very deep feelings I had during a time of incredible grief – the death of my sweet daughter. I am reminded vividly of this because it is just five years ago this month since she lost her battle with cancer.

I cried and cried. And yes, I was sure that others were pestering me secretly and wondering "where is this God of yours" now.

And yes, there has been a lot of emptying of my pockets since that event in California five years ago. All of the "why" questions have been screamed out at God about "bad things happening to good people."

But thankfully I have arrived at the point that I described earlier. I don't have to figure it all out anymore. Jesus is just around the corner for everyone, and we are all about to disappear. We need not fear that eventuality, nor hold onto the anger of past sorrows. TYJ

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