



Worship & Weekly Devotional Notes

**St Luke's - Albury
Home of FRONTIER**

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FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT (Purple)

Dense Disciples

March 18, 2018

Whether you're a visitor or have been with us for a long time, it is exciting for us to gather together as one in the presence of the Lord to Worship and be fed by him.

These Devotional Notes are for your spiritual journey. We encourage you to re-read this week's readings, say the gathering and missional prayer daily, reflect on the sermon, read the coming lessons, and work through the study guide.



As Disciples we need to pray daily, read our Bibles, worship weekly, serve others, develop spiritual friendships, and give generously.



As we draw closer to Holy Week, we may find ourselves dumbfounded by how dense the disciples seem to be! Again and again, they don't understand just exactly who Jesus is or why He has come. As they travel up to Jerusalem, Jesus can't be much more explicit about His mission than He is in today's Gospel. He says, "The Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him over to the Gentiles. And they will mock Him and spit on Him, and flog Him and kill Him. And after three days He will rise" (Mark 10:33b-34). Despite these specifics provided by Jesus, we see in the days to come that the disciples still don't get it! But before we are too hard on these followers of Jesus, we examine ourselves and see that we don't always take Jesus' words and promises to heart in our own lives. Thanks be to God that Jesus still came, died, and rose for dense disciples like us!

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT (Purple) - Dense Disciples—March 18, 2018

GATHERING PRAYER:

Almighty God, it was Your will that Your Son drink the cup of suffering and death on our behalf. Grant us repentance and faith that we might receive the benefits of Christ's suffering for us; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

READINGS: (PAGE REFERENCE ESV)

OLD TESTAMENT READING Jeremiah 31:31–34 (“I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel.”) (p660)



EPISTLE Hebrews 5:1–10 (“The source of eternal salvation to all who obey Him”) (p1003)

HOLY GOSPEL Mark 10:(32–34) 35–45 (“The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve.”) (p846)

MISSION PRAYER

While we pray the Lord's Prayer as a gift from Jesus teaching us how to pray, there is only one prayer our Lord has commanded his church to actually pray.

37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. 38 Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." (Matthew 9:35-38)
Together, let us ask the Lord of the harvest to send us out to be his people to the world in which we live.

Stop & Pray twice each day:

Lord of The Harvest, we know the need is great and there are too few to pursue the task we face. Move us by your Holy Spirit and Jesus' compassion and love towards those we know who are open to you. Send workers, yes even us, into your harvest field. Amen

(Imagine what could happen if every congregational member set an alarm to pray this every day at a specific time??)

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT:

"What a waste of a life..." is often the exclamation when someone dies young. Jesus died young in his early thirties. In today's gospel Jesus says, "Unless a grain falls into the earth and dies it remains alone; but if it dies it bears much fruit." His life was given, not taken.

"What a waste of money," is often the word when some project of mission is proposed. Often the unspoken motivation is "We don't want to spend our church's carefully accumulated assets on..." At a personal level, we sometimes just can't let go of a few dollars. We love our life. We love the enjoyment of it. Money helps us enjoy it so much. Jesus goes on to talk of those who love their life - only to lose it, and of those who give their life and win life. The simple stewardship of money can be the "ABC" of the Christian life, its beginnings.



1 Thessalonians 5:16-17 – Prayer – walking every moment with God.

It always places a smile on my face to see the devoted affection that stems from young love. There is a vibrancy and affection that clings to the other almost as if there is a sense that if it didn't it would be lost. The lovers crave to spend as much time as possible together, and when that is not physically possible, we have any number of other means. It is no longer a letter, but a phone call, a text, video chat, multi-media platforms, and other technological marvels that fill the gap. We all know the feeling, and perhaps some of us should reignite it if we can, but there is a desire to spend every moment with the other which fuels the couple's passion.

Whenever I think of those young lovers I always begin pondering why we don't do the same with God. He loves us better than any earthly parent. He looks beyond the darkness that haunts our existence, bypasses the faults we think only we know, and reaches out in sacrificial love just so He can tell you how special you are to him. Yet we are poor partners in this relationship. We give it some thought, whenever the Pastor mentions in church, but by and large we live lives without much regard to this amazing relationship God invites us into. Our desire to be in conversation with him seems to be reserved for those special moments when we find the time. It is not a consistent, ongoing, experience.

Paul tells the Thessalonian to rejoice always and pray without ceasing. He encourages us to live a life in constant prayer. I once heard someone say that means we don't need to pray as everything we do is prayer. I disagree, for prayer is always an intentional activity and not something that happens by chance. Paul is urging the Thessalonians to live lives that include constant prayer. Prayer as they wake up, prayer as they eat, or work, or play, or socially engage, prayer when they sleep, and pray that happens in all the times in-between. Prayer that believes that God is with them even when they aren't aware of his presence.

It's hard to live a life of prayer this way if you don't already have a disciplined life in which prayer already exists. So that is always the first step, to set aside a specific time each day for prayer. Constant prayer extends that time into the day and begins with a reminder and an invitation for God to come with you as your day unfolds. It then requires self-discipline to take those quiet moments, or those hectic moments, and remind yourself that God is present. It give this opportunity to just ask God to be with you, to guide you, to watch over the person you have encountered.

There are times when life is so difficult we don't know how to do this. The tragedy and chaos of the experiences we have often leave us unable to pray. The wonderful thing about our Father is that he already knows what is on your heart. He already knows the pain and struggle you're facing. And he gives you his Spirit to intercede for you at those times (Rm. 8:26,27). When your life is one of constant prayer, simply acknowledging the Spirit's intercession at those times is more than sufficient.

Our lives need to be lives of prayer. We need to recapture the joy of young lovers with our God whose love for us far surpasses anything we can comprehend. Adopting a life of prayer is a challenge, but a=one that is very rewarding. As you live your life in prayer, you start to be more in tune with God. You begin to see ways in which God is at work like you've never seen them before. Prayer changes lives, and God works that in you before he does it in others. So, rejoice always and pray without ceasing.



Preparing for next Week

PALM SUNDAY/SUNDAY OF PASSION (Purple)

Empty and Full

March 25, 2018

READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK: (PAGE REFERENCE ESV)

OLD TESTAMENT READING Zechariah 9:9–12 (The prophet foretells of the humble King.) (p797)

HOLY GOSPEL Mark 14 - 15 (“READING OF THE PASSION.”) (p850)



Zechariah 9:9–12 (The prophet foretells of the humble King.)

1. What would be the 3 top qualities you would look for in a leader: vision? Integrity? Service record? Promises made? Looks? Other...?
2. What qualities will Zion’s king possess?
3. Describe the scene of his coming. How will the people respond? Why the donkey (cf. Mt 21:5) instead of a war horse?
4. On what basis will restoration be given to prisoners or exiles?
5. Describe the King’s coming in your life?
6. God’s intention for prisoners and exiles is peace – how has God’s health, wholeness, and harmony came into your life?
7. What projects or activities have you taken in your life to promote peace in the church, community, or world?

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, you entered Jerusalem as the humble king, with promises of restoration and salvation to all those who are outside the Father’s kingdom. May you draw us, and all we know, into a life of peace with you as the humble, sacrificial and victorious king have won for us. Amen.

Study
Guide
Prints

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