

Week 16 Daily Devotional

I. Prayer to enter the Lord's presence:

Be still for a moment. "Lord, I give the day that is now past to you. It is yours. I give the day that is to come to you; help me to see where you are working and to join you there. Speak to me during these moments. I commit them and myself to you."

II. Prayer of Confession:

"Lord, you are faithful to forgive me and cleanse me of my sin when I confess it to you. I confess my sin(s) of _____. Thank you for forgiveness." (1 John 1:9)

III. Prayer of Thanksgiving:

Choose to be thankful, speak out loud of what God has done.

"Thank you, Father, for _____. Fill my heart and my mouth with gratitude throughout this day."

IV. Scripture Reflection

Day 1

Read

Matt. 26:36-45 Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." ³⁷ He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸ Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me." Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. ⁴¹ "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak." He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done." When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴ So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing. Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour is near, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

Reflect

Have you been overwhelmed with sorrow? So has Jesus? Have your friends and family failed you when you needed them most? Has someone you trusted betrayed you? Jesus experienced this as well. But what was the Lord's focus in his time of deep sorrow and even as his friends failed him? His attention was turned to the will of his Father. Where do you set your focus when you suffer? What thoughts fill your mind when you feel like others have failed you?

Respond

Ask God again to take from you what you would like him to take. Or ask him to give to you what you believe you need him to give. Then say to him "Your will be done."

Day 2

Read

Matt. 26:59-67 The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death. ⁶⁰ But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward. Finally two came forward ⁶¹ and declared, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.'" Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" ⁶³ But Jesus remained silent. The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. ⁶⁶ What do you think?" "He is worthy of death," they answered. Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him ⁶⁸ and said, "Prophecy to us, Christ. Who hit you?"

Reflect

Unfairly treated. Unjustly accused. Belittled. Disrespected. Physically abused. Mocked. Jesus experienced things that would have likely caused us to feel very sorry for ourselves, to be overwhelmed with self-pity. This of course is normal, how could we not feel this way? However Jesus did not "use" any power unavailable to us in his time of need. He could have called legions of angels, or just thought a thought and all those who were mistreating him would have ceased to exist. But he chose to do what we can do if we only will. He trusted his Father, he focused on his purpose, he lived like we can live...the power is there for us as well.

Respond

Do you believe that the Kingdom of God is power not merely words?(1 Cor. 4:20). If not, why not? If so, what does that mean for your life today?

Day 3

Read

Matt. 26:69-74 Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. "You also were with Jesus of Galilee," she said. But he denied it before them all. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said. Then he went out to the gateway, where another girl saw him and said to the people there, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth." He denied it again, with an oath: "I don't know the man!" After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, "Surely you are one of them, for your accent gives you away." Then he began to call down curses on himself and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!" Immediately a rooster crowed. ⁷⁵ Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.

Reflect

This passage is written so that we would all see ourselves in the story of Peter. The bravado giving way to failure is often our story. We cycle in and out of arrogance and shame, pride and failure. Jesus was not done with Peter even though he failed but Peter had to see the fact that his own self-pride was an empty and vain thing. Peter was able to experience real power when he experienced the truth of his own powerlessness.

Respond

It is likely you have failed in the past 24 hours. It is also likely you have been proud in your thoughts of self and others and in your words and actions towards others. To feel sorrow over failure is good but to live in ongoing sorrow over failure is unnecessary. Repent now of your failures and pride, then rejoice in your restoration to God's favor.

Day 4

Read

Matt. 27:27 Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. ²⁸ They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹ and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand and knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said. ³⁰ They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. ³¹ After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

Reflect

It is difficult to put ourselves in a frame of mind where we are able to "see, hear, smell, and feel" events of the past that have relevance for our lives now. We tend to read history as if it were something other than the real events we experience right now. It is important to read Biblical history using all of the powers of imagination God has given you.

Respond

Read the passage again, pause often and put yourself there. Feel, hear, see, smell what is going on. Remind yourself as you do...this happened and it happened for me.

Day 5

Matt. 28:1-11 After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³ His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. ⁴ The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. ⁷ Then go quickly and tell his disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.’ Now I have told you.” So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹ Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.” While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. ¹² When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, ¹³ telling them, “You are to say, ‘His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.’ ¹⁴ If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.” ¹⁵ So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day.

1Pet. 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade — kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷ These have come so that your faith — of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire — may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹ for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Reflect

There was an attempt at a systematic cover up of the resurrection of Jesus. Normally the soldiers tasked with guarding a prisoner or given an order would have been killed for failing like this. But to kill the guards would have communicated that Jesus' body was indeed gone from the tomb. Instead they paid them to keep and circulate the lie that Jesus was still in the grave. The problem was that the resurrected Jesus would appear to hundreds of people and it is impossible to keep that a secret. What people have seen, what they know from personal experience has more power than what someone who has not seen merely says to be true.

Respond

Re-read Peter's words. You have not "seen" him but you have experienced him. Pay attention to what God has and what God is doing in your very soul. Pay attention to joy. It may be buried under emotions of sadness or confusing thoughts of life situations beyond your control but it is there if you are his. Be still, pay attention. Joy is there.

V. Prayer for others:

Pray specifically for the concerns of your life and the lives of others.

VI. Prayer of commitment:

“Lord God, I commit to love you with all my heart and with all my soul and with all my strength and with all my mind and to love my neighbor as myself. Empower me today to love you and others with everything that I am.” (Luke 10:27)

This Month's Scripture Memory:

Galatians 5:22-23

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.