

## **Week 24 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

Mark 8:27-38 Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Christ." Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him. He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men." Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?"

### Reflect

Focus your attention on these verses: **Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Christ." Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.** Why did people have such a hard time understanding who Jesus was? Peter got it right and yet he didn't get it right...why do you think this was so?

### Respond

Resiliency is the ability to "bounce" when adversity comes. You still "hit the ground" but you do so like a ball rather than an egg. How would you rate your own spiritual resiliency right now? Low, medium, high? Unknown, untested? Consider your understanding of who Jesus is. Not what you are supposed to believe about him but what do you actually think about him in your mind? Is he truly the "Christ," the Savior of the world? Even as Christians we often don't contemplate in deep and meaningful ways the implications and applications that Jesus is the Savior. What are some actual implications for your own spiritual resiliency as you embrace the truth of Christ more fully and more consistently in your mind?

## Day 2

### Read

Mark 8:27-38 Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Christ." Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him. He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men." Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?"

### Reflect

Focus your attention on these verses: **He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."** Here we see that on the surface Peter had gotten it right, Jesus is the Messiah. But we also see that Peter got it very, very wrong. He did not understand what Jesus, as the Messiah, had come to do. Peter's thoughts were normal "human" thoughts. Namely, that true greatness and power are not seen in laying down your life for others. In God's mind (which unlike our minds, always mirrors reality) true greatness and power is sacrificial love. Spiritual resiliency depends on understanding the world as God understands it. Greatness equals sacrificial love not self-serving actions and attitudes.

### Respond

The more we live for ourselves, the less resilient we become. Resilient living begins with resilient thinking. Scrutinize your own thinking. What thoughts have you held on to the past few days or longer that are out of line with what is on God's mind? Reject those thoughts that are out of line with what is real and valuable. It might help to say out loud as you consider self-centered thoughts..."No!" Learn to reject these thoughts like "shooing" crows. Do not let them nest in your mind.

## Day 3

### Read

Mark 8:27-38 Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Christ." Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him. He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men." Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?"

### Reflect

Focus your attention on these verses: **Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it."** To "take up your cross and follow" does not mean simply bearing life's difficulties with a "stiff upper lip." For instance having a nagging spouse, or a persistent health problem is not a good application of "taking up your cross." When Christ went to die for our sins he literally had to carry his own cross to the place of his death. He did this willingly. His cross was not some problem in his life it was the instrument of his death. For us to take up our cross means we willingly die to self. We give our lives fully to God and hold nothing back for ourselves. In practice it could mean loving a nagging spouse, or making certain choices in the face of a persistent health problem. But these would be examples of the "application" of taking up our cross not the definition of it.

### Respond

You have many challenges, fears, struggles in your life...everyone does. These are not your "cross." How might it change how you deal with these situations in your life if you were to decisively and consistently "die to self and live fully for God?" What would it mean for how you think and feel about your own problems? How would it affect your relationship with others, particularly those who you find it hard to love or like?

## Day 4

### Read

Mark 8:27-38 Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Christ." Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him. He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men." Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?"

### Reflect

Focus your attention on this verse: **What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?** Jesus is doing a compare and contrast here. He is stating what should be obvious but often is not. The whole world, meaning all the power and wealth in it, are not worth a single human soul. They are not worth **your** soul. In addition all the power and wealth in the world could not purchase a human soul. He is addressing the fact that people are trying to trade their very souls (lives) for the things that don't ultimately matter. Jesus is challenging the status quo that says it is a good trade to pursue power and wealth and pleasure with your life. He is stating that the status quo is very, very wrong.

### Respond

You could do a quick search of all the famous, wealthy, and powerful people who have taken their own lives in just the past year or two. You don't have to actually do it, but you could very easily if you chose to. Certainly some of them had mental health issues or were under the influence when they died. But it remains true that the trajectory and outcomes of their lives demonstrate that gaining the "whole world" was not enough to satisfy their souls. You have in Christ all you need for your soul(your life). You may "want" more than Christ, or think that you do...but you do not "need" more. What does this actually mean for your spiritual, mental, relational resiliency? How does taking this reality to heart make you better able to "bounce?"

## **Day 5**

### **Read**

Mark 8:27-38 Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Christ." Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him. He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men." Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?"

### **Reflect**

These words of Jesus would have sounded absurd to many people of his time. They sound absurd and unrealistic to many people today. They appear to have absolutely no practical, actionable value for our lives. Yet Jesus was not merely an academic philosopher. He did not throw around fine sounding phrases that had no real application to life on earth now. He was a practitioner, a pragmatist...what he did and what he taught had and continues to have actual application for changing human lives.

### **Respond**

If you are able and willing...get on your knees right now. As you do, if you are willing, say to God..."Here is my life, I've given it to you before...but I need to tell you again...it is yours." Does that make you afraid to say that? If so ask God help you to see that he is a good Father. You should never fear giving him your life. You should only fear *not* doing so.

**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:**

Matthew 6:25-31

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'