

## **Week 49 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**

Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendent of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

"How will this be," Mary asking the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God."

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said."

Then the angel left her.

### **Reflect**

Mary was a humble girl. She refers to herself as a slave girl. She was certainly not a person of noble birth, but from what we read about her in scripture she was a person of character. She lived in a simple town called Nazareth. Researchers in archeology have claimed that Nazareth was a small town, maybe 400 people. She is to give birth to a son and his name will be Son of the Most High. He will be holy. Mary was a simple girl and the Savior of the world is going to be born through her life. She is engaged to a simple carpenter. Nothing about their lives was note-worthy except they were available to God's purpose and plan. The majestic stepped into the mundane and fulfilled his promise. The weakness of Mary and Joseph was not a problem for God. God desired to use them as ready vessels.

### **Respond**

Give thanks to God that he keeps his promise. Speak words of adoration to God because of his ability to use the simple to reveal his plan. He is a great God. Ask God to use you as a vessel to bring his love to those around.

## **Day 2**

### **Read**

#### **Matthew 1:18-23**

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son and they will call him Immanuel" - which means God with us.

#### **Hebrews 1:3**

The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

### **Reflect**

Jesus is fully God and fully man. He entered into our world through the virgin birth by Mary. As God, Jesus has always existed. In the virgin birth he came and lived fully as a man. How is this possible? As Isaiah said, the zeal of the Lord Almighty accomplished this. As the angel said to Mary and Joseph this is possible by the power of the Holy Spirit. If God created the world, the virgin birth could happen. If the bible is reliable the virgin birth did happen. What does it matter if the virgin birth happened? It means that God has made a way to save people from their sins. Jesus can be our savior. Jesus can also relate with us. He is fully the Holy God and fully a sinless human.

### **Respond**

If you have accepted Christ, thank Jesus for being your savior. Worship God for His plan of redemption. Jesus came a human. As you experience all the normal things of life today, eating, feeling tired, waiting in line... imagine Jesus experiencing these things. Imagine him experiencing them with you. As you are frustrated and annoyed, remember that Jesus knows what it feels like to be human. He took on our limited humanity and experienced all of life.

### **Day 3**

#### **Read**

Hebrews 4:14-16

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to **empathize with our weaknesses**, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. 16 Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

#### **Reflect**

Jesus is our High Priest. He came from heaven and returned to heaven and will return someday. In advent we remember his first coming and look forward to his second coming. The first time Christ came he experienced all of life as a human. He was tempted just as we are. You can read about Jesus temptation in Luke 4. He resisted temptation as a human man. He took on our weakness but did not sin. He is not put off by weakness but entered into it.

No one likes to be thought of as weak. Weakness is not something we value. The bible does not tell us to value weakness but the reality is, as humans, we are all weak. When we experience weakness in ourselves we run or hide. When we experience weakness in others we get annoyed or avoid them. They are weak, we don't want to be around them. Jesus came in weakness and lived through weakness. Could weakness be the place in our lives and in the lives of others where we will experience the power of God at work? Weakness is not a curse. It is a blessing. It is an invitation for us to experience God.

#### **Respond**

Reflect on weakness in your own life. Even your physical weakness can be a way for you to experience God. Your physical weakness is a reminder that one day you will have a renewed and glorified body. Death is not the end. Choose to look for opportunities to move towards people in their weakness. Jesus associated with people of lowly position. Would you be willing to do the same if he asks you to?

## Day 4

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### Reflect

Some people would say the virgin birth is a myth. It is a cleverly invented story spread throughout church history to convince people that Jesus is God. The reality is that all people live by faith. They have faith in the God of the bible revealed most clearly in the person of Jesus or they have faith in someone or something else. Your faith is not weakness. Your faith is not a crutch. Your faith is not wishful thinking to get you through hard times. Your faith is grounded in the reality of the Bible. The bible proves itself over and over. It is accurate in prediction. Jesus was prophesied throughout the Old Testament and he came just as the prophets said. The bible is accurate in description. The history described throughout the bible lines up with what archeologist find in the world. Many people have claimed that Luke, the writer in the New Testament was not a good historian. Discoveries have been found to back up what Luke claims.

The bible is accurate in prescription. When it gives us instructions those instructions give us information to experience a good life. Culture at large might have you think that your faith is a crutch. Your faith is not weakness. Your faith is reasonable.

### Respond

Think through the basic foundations of your faith. Jesus lived a sinless life. Jesus died because of our sin. Jesus rose again. Jesus will return and we will live with him forever in glorified bodies. Praise God that he did not leave us without hope in this world. Your faith is a sure hope.

## **Day 5**

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**Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.**

### **Reflect**

The place where a King sits on his throne is a Majestic place a royal place The throne is the place where all the king's power and might is embodied. A person does not just walk up casually to the throne of the King. You need to be invited or else! The throne is terrifying place because the king has absolute power and authority.

Our King Jesus sits on a Throne of Grace. You have an underserved audience with the King.

His invitation to us is to come to the throne of grace with your weakness. Jesus can empathize with you. He is not put off by your weakness. His invitation to us is to approach with confidence. In your weakness come to him and find help in your time of need.

### **Respond**

Are you hiding from Jesus? Are you afraid to come to him with your weakness and need? He is inviting you. In what ways do you feel weak or in need? Make a list of those things or those relationships. Ask Jesus to meet you in those places in your life. Your weakness and the weakness of others is an invitation. Ask God to use you as a vessel today to meet the needs of others in their weakness.

**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:**

Isaiah 53:4-6

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid him the iniquity of us all.