

Weekly Devotional

[Pass It On]

A Study in 1st and 2nd Timothy



May 9-13, 2011

Prayer Requests

Monday: Pray for our enemies, especially that we might be able to love them in concrete ways that would bring healing and peace and that they would be able to see our love.

Tuesday: Pray for our military, especially as they handle stressful situations and are away from home. Pray for their families.

Wednesday: Pray for those who help with and are helped by the Shepherd's pantry Pray for teachers and for those worried about jobs

Thursday: Pray for teachers and for those worried about jobs

Friday: Pray for weekend church services, especially for children and youth programs.



Monday

Read: Matthew 28:16-20; Luke 24:38-53



This coming weekend we are beginning a new series called “Passing It On.” Starting with God’s call to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-4, God has been working to create a people for Himself, to restore that which was broken. In The Fall Adam and Eve forgot who they were and whose they were. The result was that evil entered into our lives. No longer was the world good; now evil was present, mixed in with everything. On the cross Jesus took care of the evil and through the presence of His Holy Spirit is working to restore us to people of beauty... to replace, through his power and authority, the evil in our lives with His good. He, in fact, sees you now, as a person of beauty. Do you allow yourself and others to see you in the same way?

All authority rests with Jesus. Not some, not just religious, not just every now and then, but ALL authority is with Jesus. Do we really live as if we believe this? Because of who Jesus is, what He has done, and how He has impacted our lives, we are called to go out with news to share with others, not in our power, but His Holy Spirit power.

Tim Keller in his book “King’s Cross” makes the statement that “the difference between Christianity and all other religions, including no religion [is that] the essence of other religions is advice; Christianity is essentially news...other religions say ‘this is what you have to do to get to God’...the gospel says, ‘this is what has been done...for you.’” (P. 15) We are not called to share what we don’t know but what we do know, what Jesus has personally done for us. “And the gospel isn’t about advice...it is choosing to follow a King. Not just someone with power to tell you what to do, but with the power and authority to do what needs to be done.” (p.20) Where do you need to allow and trust God’s work and power in your life?

Tuesday

Read: John 1:35-50; Matthew 4:18-22



Each of the gospel writers stress different aspects with regards to the calling of the first disciples. What stands out in these readings?

Growing up, the aspect of responding “immediately” and fully seemed to be stressed over and over again. Would I, do I, respond that fully (leaving all), that unquestioningly immediately? “Immediate” is a favorite word of Matthew. By using this word he seeks to stress the supreme authority of Jesus and our call to unquestionably respond to His call. But it is also important to note that being called to be a disciple of a rabbi was a supreme compliment. John and James’ dad would not have gone home that day miffed at his sons for leaving everything for some itinerant teacher; he would have gone home celebrating that this new rabbi saw something of worth in his sons. Not only that, rather than the sons applying to learn from Jesus, Jesus sought them out and He has sought you out too.

In deciding to follow Jesus we are not deciding for a life of irresponsibility but a life of privilege, a life of disciplined learning where we seek to glean from and mimic as much as possible the ways of Jesus.

Being a disciple becomes the first priority in our lives, not the second or third.

When one gets that letter of acceptance through the mail, one cannot wait to tell someone. That’s what we see happening in the John account. Of course, often when we share with someone the good news of what has happened in us they question. We do not need to have all the answers. We need only to point to Jesus, trusting that Jesus will make Himself real to those we bring to Him.

Finally, our choosing to follow is only the beginning. Jesus promises to do great things in us and through us as we follow. Where have you seen Jesus in your life? Pray for God to allow you to share your story with someone today.



Wednesday

Read: Revelation 2:1-7

After studying Paul's letters to Timothy, the question was often asked: "What happened to the Church at Ephesus?" Written almost 30 years after Paul's letters to Timothy, while he was pastor of the church in Ephesus (and after Paul's letter to the Ephesians), we discover at least the short-term answer in this passage. This is what Jesus asks John to write from the Island Patmos to the church around 95 AD. The church had taken to heart Paul's teaching. They worked hard. They had endured and were diligent about accurately following the teaching Paul had left them. In fact they did not tolerate false teachings whatsoever, but critically examined everything. They resisted sin, holding each other to a high ethical standard- something that was hard in a city known for its immoral sexual practices. They had endured hardships without growing weary.

They had listened. They were different. As Christians we are called to be different. We are called to be "holy," separated, to stand apart from the ways of the world. The road, the gate to heaven is not wide, it is narrow; and Jesus reminds us that few follow it (Matthew 7:13-14). Recently I heard a sermon where the pastor called his congregation to be "weird." Are you weird, are we weird? For you to you take joy in the fact and train your children to take pride in the fact that you are "different" from the rest of the world is a good thing. We live by different standards and for different purposes.

Unfortunately, in their desire to be theologically and ethically pure, to be different, the Ephesians had lost their first love. According to both Jesus and John, love was the authenticating proof of the gospel. It is easy to become critical in the midst of defending the faith. It is easy to become rigid, to lose patience and needed affection for others trapped in sin. Are you able to love people, while hating sin? Also, it is easy to work so hard for God, we grow weary in our love for God, substituting work for love. How is your heart? What practices did you once engage in that you now let slide?

Thursday

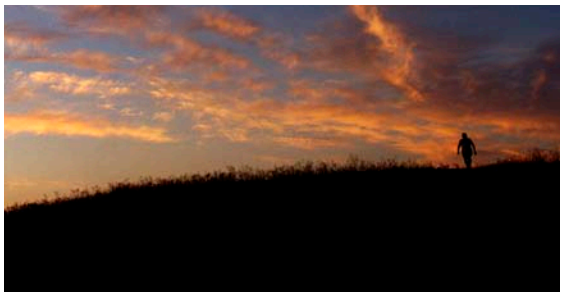
Read: Acts 9:1-19; 10

In 2 Thessalonians 2:16-3:5 Paul prays that the Thessalonians might have the courage to continue the ministry of word and deed. The Thessalonians were being persecuted and it was easier to play it safe than continue to witness. But Paul has a desire to spread the word throughout the Roman Empire in answer to his calling on the road to Damascus. I am sure the last thing Ananias wanted was to present himself to Paul, the one who was coming to Damascus for the sole purpose of arresting him. And Peter's going to Cornelius' house was against everything he was brought to do and believe.

Passing on the faith is not easy. It is not without risk. It is not without consequence. But God has ordained that His work in this world would be done through men and women as they respond to His Holy Spirit's leading and in response to prayer. Often we think of prayer as my telling God what I need Him to do in my life. Prayer is better understood as opening up my life to hear God rather than asking God to hear me. The purpose of prayer is to change me more than it is to change God. Prayer also works to change the hearts of others.

As we seek to pass on the faith, we need to not take responsibility for the conversion of another person. Someone's being open to God takes His prior work in their lives and His Spirit's work to enable them to say "yes." Our job is only to have the courage to respond to His prompting to share. But do not ever be deceived- it will take courage. The enemy does not want us to share. He will whisper words of discouragement and sow seeds of doubt and fear. Recognize these for what they are, the enemy's attacks.

Remember, God has gone before you to prepare the way. The person you share with is probably like Cornelius, praying himself for an answer. Or like Paul, waiting for someone to come with healing. Pray today for a specific neighbor or co-worker.



Friday

Read: 1 Timothy 1:1-3; 2 Tim 4:1-8



Recently at our Women's Refresh, Dotti McKissick read a letter a grandmother had written to her grandchildren just before she died. The letter was actually from one of our member's mother. In the letter the grandmother reflected on preparing to die, realizing that all she could take with her were the things God had done in her life and through her life. She challenged the grandchildren to set their affections on things above rather than things on earth. "This is not easy when you are young because everything seems to be screaming the opposite...I know because I have been there, but if anyone can do it, if anyone can live life with an eternal perspective, I am betting on the best 13 grandchildren God ever made. Remember, Heaven is Home," she wrote.

2 Timothy is Paul's letter to his spiritual son Timothy, just before Paul died. Here he appeals to Timothy to live in view of Jesus' coming, in view of His kingdom- and he spells out what such a life will look like. How do you live? Growing up, whenever anything bad happened in my life my Dad would say: "If that's the worst thing that ever happens in your life, you will be really blessed." Those words always put the momentary in the proper perspective. But keeping eternity in view is not just for when bad things happen. We need to keep eternity in view during the good times and especially during the bad times. The one blessing of cancer is that it causes us to be thankful for each day and to live to make each day count. Why can't we learn to live like that without cancer?

Are there some ways that you can remind yourself everyday to live with eternity in mind? When it is all said and done, last night's episode of "The Office" will not matter as much as the phone call I didn't make. Even the project at work might not be as important as a child's baseball game. Looking back, what will you want to be remembered for? What are you currently preparing to take to heaven with you? What are you passing on?



1700 East Palopinto Ave.

Glendora, CA 91741

(626) 914-4833

www.GlenkirkChurch.org