

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

# The DEVO

AUGUST 17 - 21, 2020



# MONDAY

## Psalm 139:1-12; Hebrews 13:5-6

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It is one of those days you just wish would hurry up and end. Nothing is going according to plan. You are stressed, overwhelmed, emotional, and no one apparently wants to know or care about who you are, how fragile you are, or what you need. Your cry is for time alone; you need some space, and you hear yourself muttering, “Lord, where are you?”

Psalm 139 reminds us that we are never alone. Our Lord, through all His love, is and should always be our most intimate partner in life. He is our Lord and our God who knows us intimately (vv. 1-3), who knows exactly what each step of our day looks like (v. 3), who knows what we are going to say before we even say it (v. 4), and who is surrounding and protecting us with every step we take (v. 5). In fact, as David states, it is almost too much for you and me to even understand (v. 6).

God promises to be with us in all seasons of life: the good, the bad, and the ugly. No matter how hopeless or demanding the circumstances or our situation may be, we have a God who cares about us and loves us, and He will never leave us. The writer of Hebrews is emphatic with God’s promise to walk with us in every circumstance as He reminds the church of that day: “*God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you’*” (Hebrews 13:5-6).

Think through these promises today. A God from whose love you can never be separated, a God who has known you from the womb, a God who knows your future, and a God who is so protective of you that He

walks before you: *“The Lord Himself goes before you and will be with you: He will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged”* (Deuteronomy 31:8).

Joshua, a biblical hero, on assuming the leadership of the Israelites, was told three times to be strong and courageous, specifically, *“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go”* (Joshua 1:9). Keep this promise close to you today and whisper it on those days whenever you are praying for the day to end!

## QUESTIONS

What experiences in your life have caused you to question, “Where is God?” What experiences in your life have caused you to truly know that God will never forsake you?

## PRAYERS FOR CHRISTINA HACK AND CHI ALPHA SAN DIEGO

Pray for Christina Hack, who ministers to college students with Chi Alpha San Diego.

# TUESDAY

**John 16:33; John 20:19-20**

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It is difficult to read the newspaper, and sometimes it is even more difficult to watch the news on television, without reflecting on whether there will ever be a time again in our lifetime when the world is not in trouble.

Scripture is full of the promises of God on peace and for good reason. Our God is a loving God, who knows (as an omnipresent and omniscient God) that we will always live in a “world of trouble” and so He sent His Son. This is evident from Jesus’ first appearance to His disciples on the day He left the tomb. John describes the scene that first evening (John 20:19-20) where the disciples were together behind locked doors. What should have been an occasion of joy and celebration was, in fact, so troubling that Jesus’ closest friends were in a self-imposed lockdown out of fear of the Jews.

Jesus came to His disciples (through locked doors), and His first words were not “What are you afraid of?” or “Do you understand and believe me now?” They were the words that He wants us to hear every time we are fearful of the present and the future: “Peace be with you!” Yes, and there is an exclamation point. Jesus didn’t whisper the words, or mumble them, or use them as an introduction. This was important; this is what we all need to hear: *“Peace be with you!”*

This was not a new message to the disciples. In fact, just a few nights previously Jesus, in sharing His last thoughts with the disciples, stated, *“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this*

*world you will have trouble, but take heart! I have overcome the world"* (John 16:33). Jesus knew we would have trouble; there is no doubting the word "will" in the Scriptures. But there is a remedy to living through trouble, and that is to take comfort in the fact that Jesus is the answer. Our relationship with Christ is so much more significant than the troubles we face. The decision is ours. Did you notice the phrase "may have peace"? It is our choice.

Reflect on His promises throughout Scripture—especially with these two passages—in seeking peace, a deep peace, a peace that passes what the world might understand, knowing that He loves you and really is the answer for the world today. There will always be trouble in the world and there will always be Jesus. Make the right choice today because only One can bring us absolute peace.

## QUESTIONS

Reflect on a time when you should have been afraid of the circumstances, but you experienced a "peace that surpasses all understanding" instead.

## PRAYERS FOR CHRISTINA HACK AND CHI ALPHA SAN DIEGO

Fall semester is starting at San Diego State University with mostly online classes. Pray for wisdom and creativity in reaching Freshmen and new students this fall.

# WEDNESDAY

## John 2:1-12

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Weddings are generally joyous, very public celebrations; this was particularly true in ancient Israel. The wedding in Cana featured our Lord's first recorded miracle (vv. 7-9). Why this event and its circumstances for Jesus' "coming out" as the Messiah?

Note the odd exchange between Mary and her Son in verses 3 and 4, considering her practical dilemma: Mary was chosen to bear the Messiah while still a virgin. In small-town Nazareth she'd be spurned for 30+ years as a scandalous adulteress. By requesting that Jesus perform this miracle, one that would further the celebration for all to see, was Mary seeking public vindication? (Her possible reasoning and motivation: "See, I'm not unfaithful or delusional! I told the truth—as you can see by this miracle, He is the Messiah!") I believe so, thus Jesus' mild rebuke in verse 4 (interpreted): "My mission is not about your reputation."

Jesus was not a magician and certainly no entertainer. He never did miracles for His own gain, though He could have—Satan tempted Him accordingly and unsuccessfully (Luke 4:2-13). His aim was always to point others toward God. So, why did Jesus seemingly submit to Mary's request, ensuring ample wine for the Cana wedding celebration?

Verse 6 provides a key detail: the water jars He chose were used for the Jews' ceremonial washing, connected to Jewish hygiene laws and related practices. Jesus' first recorded miracle "indicates that the old ritual is passing away to be replaced by the new wine of the Spirit ...

The old (water) was to be turned into something better (wine, representing His blood as well as joy in the Lord). ... In the coming of Jesus, the world will be offered new and better 'wine,' replacing the old religious ideas." (Peter Pett)

This miracle wasn't about Mary or even Jesus' own popularity. It was a sign to all regarding God's redemptive plan of salvation, the key theme of the Bible. Perhaps God specifically chose a wedding for the first miracle to symbolize how Jesus, God the Son, entered into humanity's fallenness to save and claim His own, the Bride of Christ. He longs for related, joyous intimacy with each of us—miraculous indeed!

## QUESTIONS

What was behind the odd conversation that Jesus had with His mother, Mary, at the Cana wedding? Why this event for Jesus' first recorded miracle? What did the water and wine represent in this account?

## PRAYERS FOR CHRISTINA HACK AND CHI ALPHA SAN DIEGO

The continuing pandemic creates a whole host of concerns for students—being able to work and do school, living at home, new anxieties and depression caused by social distancing, and health concerns for students who have to live on campus. Pray for our capacity to minister to students in the midst of global chaos that is being mixed with an already chaotic time of life.

# THURSDAY

## Acts 14:8-20

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Paul is the conduit for a miraculous healing today, demonstrating the power that God can provide through those who believe in Him. Note that this lame man “had the faith to be healed” (v. 10)—God will not override our free will, as this would be unloving. Chuck Smith states, “The man had one of two choices: either to stand up on his feet, believing the word of faith, or to laugh and scoff at the command of Paul and beg his inability ... Jesus (often) gave impossible commands.” The lame man believed and began to walk, as we must upon accepting Christ.

This incident could have proven treacherous for Paul in two areas. Verses 11-13 surface the first peril: being worshiped as the source of miracles, rather than as God’s faithful servant and mechanism for divine healing. Such heady wine has felled more than a few “faith healers,” televangelists and pastors. But Paul passed this test with flying colors, admonishing the crowd to worship the true and living God, not mere men (vv. 14-18).

Paul’s second test followed: his faithfulness led to his stoning and related near-death experience (v. 19). At this point, like others, Paul could have abandoned his mission and forsaken God. He could have concluded, “What’s the use?! I do the right things and it nearly gets me killed!” Not only did Paul not self-deify, but he also didn’t wallow in self-pity. “*He got up and went back into the city. The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe*” (v. 20).



There's a lot to admire about the Apostle Paul; the faithfulness and surrender he demonstrated in today's incidents are near the top of the list. He profoundly lived out his profession in Philippians 4:11-12: *"I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am."*

I long for walking as contentedly as Paul did. My wrestling match with selfishness makes me too eager for recognition when things work out and angry or downcast when things go awry. I need to be more like Paul who, in turn, had learned to be more like Jesus!

## QUESTIONS

Why was the lame man able to be healed and whom does he represent in this story? What two "tests" did Paul pass in this set of events?

## PRAYERS FOR CHRISTINA HACK AND CHI ALPHA SAN DIEGO

Pray for the health and safety of the Chi Alpha San Diego staff members as they meet in small groups and one-on-one with students.

# FRIDAY

**John 1:4-9; 3:19-21; 8:12; 1 John 1:5-10**

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*"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in the darkness, but will have the light of life." ~ Jesus (John 8:12)*

The first lesson in life is *"God is light."* In God is no darkness at all. Zero darkness—none at all. This is both good news and bad news at the same time—bad news because being transparent about our sin is shameful; good news because God loves us as we are.

For this principle of walking in the light to work for us, we must put it into practice. The reason this principle works is that *"God's love covers a multitude of sins"* (1 Peter 4:8), and *"the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. ... If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* (1 John 1:7, 9). Our relationship is better when we keep short accounts with Him.

Why wouldn't we do that—confess our sins? Isn't it because we are still afraid of God (and other people)—of what they might do to us. Meanwhile, the devil (our adversary), who does not like us, tries to blackmail us. If we believe his lies, we hide in his darkness.

We are tempted to think we have sinned so far and so much that we might as well just go "all the way." But it is never too late to get off the road to destruction and on to the path of righteousness. God is our True Shepherd who *"leads us in paths of righteousness for His name's sake"* (Psalm 23:3).

Paul's story is a case in point when Jesus intercepted him on the road to Damascus in Syria and turned his life completely around. We know of other present-day stories of people whom God met and changed the course of their lives. It can happen to anyone. It happened to me. It can happen to you.

It takes great trust to embark and to continue on such a path. It takes great courage to allow oneself to be exposed to such light—but it is a healing light. It's not about bringing out your dirty laundry; it's about getting all clean—inside out.

## QUESTIONS

What, if anything, are you hiding from God's light? Take inventory. Does He not see it all anyway? Transparency is the best policy to pursue with God and with ourselves as well.

## PRAYERS FOR CHRISTINA HACK AND CHI ALPHA SAN DIEGO

This time of “virtual life” has a lot of cool opportunities for meeting student needs and expanding Chi Alpha's impact on the campus. Pray for wisdom in following university policies, in managing the online platform, and in listening to how and where the Spirit is moving.

## Sources:

- Peter Pett's quote is from <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/pet/john-2.html>
- Chuck Smith's quote comes from [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/smith\\_chuck/c2000\\_Act/Act\\_014.cfm](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/smith_chuck/c2000_Act/Act_014.cfm)

