

Saturday, October 3, 2020

John 7:40-52

PURPOSE:

Being from the wrong side of the river was a social dividing line I quickly learned as a teen in a new town. No one on the north side wanted to be seen as a south-sider, and certainly not a west-sider. It was a distinction born of generations of school rivalries. Being a newbie, I thought the whole thing was silly, but I soon learned to keep that to myself. Jesus seems to understand that people tend to get in like-minded groups and establish their own borders. There's a group called Doctors Without Borders. Their mission is to find out where conditions are the worst -- the places where others are not going -- and then go there to serve. What would Jesus tell you about the borders you have established for your life? Where would he send you?

PRAYER:

Dear God, I need to get out more. To see other places and other people, to appreciate the newness of things that are not new to others. I feel like I've been cooped up at home too long. Please help me cross the known borders and to reach new places and new people. Amen.

PURPOSE:

Log on to www.doctorswithoutborders.org to learn about people, efforts and places outside your usual borders.



GOBIN CHURCH
A United Methodist Community for All

DAILY PRAYER MEDITATIONS

Monday, September 28, 2020

Philippians 1:3-14

PONDER: What really matters? Those three words jumped out of today's Scripture reading and are a good starting point for reflection. What has mattered to you at different times in your life? In your school days, was being the best at academics or sports what mattered to you? Was it being popular? As you matured, was your career what came to matter most? Was it nurturing your family? As you get older, what do you think will matter most? Friends and family relationships? Enjoying retirement? All of these are good and important things. We grow. We change. We appreciate the perspective we gain. Now, think about the unchanging constant you can depend upon through the changes, challenges and choices of life -- God's abundant love, grace and mercy -- freely given. No matter what matters to us at any time, we always remain important to God. How much does your relationship with God matter to you?

PRAYER: Dear God, You matter to me and I am thankful for the many blessings you give to me. I want to grow as a partner in your grace. I want to become more rich with knowledge and insight on my Christian journey. Guide my actions so I may give glory and praise to you. Amen.

PURPOSE: Send a card, email or text message to someone to let them know they matter to you, and to God.

Tuesday, September 29, 2020

Philippians 1:15-21

PONDER: Was there ever a time when Vacation Bible School was not a "thing" during long hot Indiana summers when time away from school often meant isolation from friends? Several friends and I used to plan when we were going to see each other during the summer based on when our various churches were having VBS? The Friendly Grove church always had their VBS in early June. The St. Peter's church had theirs in late June before the July 4 holiday. The independent Christian church had theirs in late July after the 4-H fair. Some were in the daytime, some evening. One thing I noticed after a few years of the summer VBS circuit was that while the scriptures might be the same, the emphasis and understandings were different.

When I brought that up to one teacher, she emphasized that her congregation's teaching was "correct" and the others were not. My neighbor down our country road later put my mind at ease when I hesitated at attending her preferred VBS offering. Jesus and God's love is with you always, she said, adding there are different ways of understanding scripture, and she thought God was okay with that. Her wisdom was a blessing at that time. Have you ever been blessed by the confidence of a fellow Christian?

PRAYER

Dear God, Thank you for meeting me where I am each and every day, because I can be a lot of different places at the same time. May I offer the same grace to others, and may I share confidence that you are a loving and merciful God who offers hope to everyone. Amen.

PURPOSE

Look up and read a wisdom quote or scripture from a faith tradition different than your own. How can that quote or scripture help you on your journey?

Wednesday, September 30, 2020

Matthew 9:2-8

PONDER

What is easier to believe -- a fact, a plausible explanation or a spicy conspiracy theory? Maybe "easy" isn't the right word. Maybe "harder" to believe is a better qualification? After all, truth can have multiple points of view. What makes you "comfortable" believing something? Fitting "facts" to the narrative we want to believe seems to be the logic of current day social media and a 24-hour news cycle that targets different audiences. Does Jesus fit the narrative you want to follow? Does his interactions in kindness with outsiders make you willing to extend kindness to people not like you? How about extending kindness to difficult or unpleasant people who are like you, or more like you than you might want to admit? The message of Jesus doesn't change, no matter who is in the audience. Kindness and compassion are often his teaching objective, but because his actions don't fit the preferred narrative, he faces frequent opposition from local leaders who feel their own power is being threatened. How does Jesus fit into your narrative? Can you make more room for him in your interactions with others?

PRAYER

Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart. I need to be more like Jesus in my relationships with others. Teach me how to be loving, kind, nurturing and a better example of how Jesus can change lives for the better.

PURPOSE

Walk around your neighborhood or an area in your community looking for barriers that make it hard to people with disabilities to safely navigate on their own. Are the sidewalks, curbs and gutters in poor repair? Are signs easy to read or faded? Are door handles hard to turn, push or pull? Contact your local council person or government leader to advocate for better access for people of all abilities.

Thursday, October 1, 2020

Colossians 2:16-23

PONDER

Feeling that we don't fit in is painful and lonely. Some people want to be in on the latest new thing, and others want to join in so they won't be left out. God created us to be in community with others, sharing our passions and gifts with one another. Have you ever seen a crowd of diverse strangers at a ball game become a unified community as they cheer for their team? Some folks bond over activities such as a cooking class, a prayer group or a crafting circle. It is hard when we cannot find people who share or appreciate our interests, but that does not mean that you or your interests do not matter. As we continue to discover more of who we are, may we never forget whose we are. We belong to God. You are a perfect fit for the God of the Universe.

PRAYER

Dear God, Sometimes I am just so lonely. My heart longs for friendships. Help me long for you and relationship with you before all other things Help me find satisfaction in you. Amen.

PURPOSE

Invite someone to join you for a chat, a walk or a program so you can talk about new things. Be interested in them, and see if you share a common interest.

Friday, October 2, 2020

Philippians 2:14-18; 3:1-4a

PONDER

Living a godly life starts at the heart. When we make God's priorities our priorities, we're less likely to allow work or volunteer activities to take us away from family responsibilities. When we see people the way Jesus saw people, we're less likely to treat anyone poorly. As a Christian, we represent Jesus at all times. Whatever we do, wherever we go, whatever we say, we make an impression of who Jesus is by what we say and how we act. Does your behavior help or hinder your cause for Christ? Are you living by God's guidelines or your own? Is there one area in your life can you improve today?

PRAYER

Dear God, I want to stay on track in my faith journey. The distractions are endless, however. Please keep me focused on being the person you know I can be. Help me to see the same potential in others. Amen.

PURPOSE

Choose a Bible study plan (several options are available online) and write down your thoughts about the scripture each day. At the end, read through your writings to review your journey.

