

# Whispers of the Spirit



## Meditations for October 1<sup>st</sup> to October 17<sup>th</sup>

*Whispers of the Spirit* is a shared ministry of  
Deacon Carolyn Quinnell and Ruth Wallace.  
This week's meditations are written by Deacon Carolyn.

**Sunday, October 11<sup>th</sup>** Isaiah 25:1-9 / Psalm 23 / Philippians 4:1-9 /  
Matthew 22:1-14

Psalm 23:1 *The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not be in want.*

The translation of this verse is taken from our Book of Common Prayer, however the New International Version (NIV) of the bible translates this passage as: The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. There is a difference between wants and needs, and please note I do not mean to criticize the prayer book translation at all. However, in this sense I think rather than the literal “want” as we know it today, is different than the message being given here. To not be in want is in fact to have all your needs met – to lack nothing. To illustrate: food is a need, filet mignon is a want. The Lord knows our needs – after all, he made us. What a comfort that is.

*Father God, help me to not confuse wants and needs, and look to you for all good things. Amen.*

**Monday, October 12<sup>th</sup>** Micah 7:1-7 / Psalm 1, 2, 3 / Acts 26:1-23 /  
Luke 8:26-39

Acts 26:14 *When we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It hurts you to kick against the goads.”*

OK, I confess, I had to look this one up. The definition I found reads as follows: “Stubborn animals kick against the goads (a goad is a long rod with a sharp end that is used to prick an animal to move or to move in a different direction). Kicking against the goads **inflicts pain to the kicker**. Jesus was saying that in the process of persecuting Christians, Saul was hurting himself.” Wow. That

must have been a huge cognitive disconnect for Paul. Here he thought he was righteous and doing the will of God by persecuting Christians, only to find out that Jesus really was God's son and yes, he had risen from the dead. Have you noticed what comes next? Paul changes his ways and obeys the Lord. Are there areas in your life where you are "kicking against the goads?"

*Lord Jesus, forgive me for following my own wants and desires instead of your word. Amen.*

**Tuesday, October 13<sup>th</sup>** Jonah 1:1-17a / Psalm 5, 6 /  
Acts 26:24 - 27:8 / Luke 8:40-56

*Acts 26:28-29 Agrippa said to Paul, "Are you so quickly persuading me to become a Christian?" Paul replied, "Whether quickly or not, I pray to God that not only you but also all who are listening to me today might become such as I am - expect for these chains."*

You have to hand it to Paul, he doesn't miss an opportunity to tell the story of his encounter with the risen Lord on the road to Damascus. If he wins converts along the way, well praise the Lord! For all his witnessing, Paul wasn't able to win over everyone he spoke to - after all there is no record of king Agrippa ever becoming a Christian. Therefore, if Paul wasn't discouraged in his efforts we shouldn't be either. What is important is that we, like Paul, press on and take opportunities to be the hands, feet, ears and mouthpieces for the risen Lord.

*Lord, give me the grace to be your hands, your ears, your feet and your mouthpiece. Amen.*

**Wednesday, October 14<sup>th</sup>** Jonah 1:17 - 2:10 / Psalm 119:1-24 /  
Acts 27:9-26 / Luke 9:1-17

*Jonah 1:17, 2:10 But the Lord provided a large fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Then the Lord spoke to the fish, and it spewed Jonah out upon the dry land.*

Let's think about this from the perspective of the large fish for a moment. There is no mention of it arguing with God about whether or not it wanted Jonah in its stomach for a few days. There's no arguing that it wouldn't be actually gaining any nutrients from having Jonah inside him. There was simply obedience. Imagine what the fish *could* say to others in the sea, "I transported one of God's prophets." No, we get none of that. The contrast between the obedience of the fish versus the actions and attitude of Jonah are stark. Who was doing the will of the Father? Think for a moment when you have been like the fish.

*Father God, I praise you for those times I have been "fish-like". Amen.*

**Thursday, October 15<sup>th</sup>** Jonah 3:1 - 4:11 / Psalm 18:1-20 / Acts 27:27-44 / Luke 9:18-27

Jonah 4:4 *And the Lord said, "Is it right for you to be angry?"*

Jonah hasn't liked this assignment from the Lord since the beginning and now he's upset because lives of the people of Nineveh are being spared. It's really rather odd since Jonah (eventually) did what the Lord wanted him to do and spoke the message of the wrath to come if they didn't change their ways - and the people repented. So the "mission" was a success, right? Except there's such a thing as self-righteous anger which is powered by the frustration that the offender "got away with it." Ergo, Jonah was angry that the people of Nineveh got away with living their immoral lives because they repented at the last minute. Thankfully, the Lord looks past our misdeeds to what could be rather than what is.

*Lord, may I look upon others as you look upon them. Amen.*

**Friday, October 16<sup>th</sup>** Ecclesiasticus 1:1-10, 18-27 / Psalm 16, 17 / Acts 28:1-16 / Luke 9:28-36

Acts 28:15 *The believers from there, when they heard of us, came as far as the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns to meet us. On seeing them, Paul thanked God and took courage.*

Sometimes we need the support of those around us. Paul and his companion have just finished a very difficult journey to get to Rome. Paul probably knows he will not be leaving the city alive. The Lord gives him the comfort and companionship of other Christians to bolster his spirits. The Lord gives us the same today through our own Christian friends and relatives. One source for this is, of course, our church family. I read a quote once, “95% of Christianity is just showing up.” How can you “show up” for someone today?

*Lord, guide my steps this day. Amen.*

**Saturday, October 17<sup>th</sup>** Ecclesiasticus 3:17-31 / Psalm 20, 21:1-14 / Acts 28:17-31 / Luke 9:37-50

Ecclesiasticus 3:18 *The greater you are, the more you must humble yourself; so you will find favor in the sight of the Lord.*

I don't think I've ever heard an advertisement of any sort saying how humble a person is. Along those same lines, I've never heard anyone say, “Oh good, it's election time. I love all the political ads on TV.” When held up against this verse from Ecclesiasticus, the conclusion I reach is that a lot of people are not finding favor in the sight of the Lord. But perhaps I am being too harsh. What if, instead of complaining about the ads on TV, we prayed for the candidates who are running for office? Certainly all elected officials, all corporate VIPs, anyone we consider “great” could use our prayers today.

*Lord, guide my prayers this day. Amen.*

