

Whispers of the Spirit



Meditations for November 15th to November 21st

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

Sunday, November 15th Psalm 90:1-8/ Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18/
1 Thessalonians 5:1-11/ Matthew 25:14-30

Psalm 90:1-2 *Lord, you have been our refuge from one generation to another. Before the mountains were brought forth, or the land and the earth were born, from age to age you are God.*

This year, more than any I remember, the truth of these verses is most comforting. After all, what is there in life that is permanent, other than God? Even the “Happiest Place on Earth” is shaken as Disney lays off thousands of workers. Great industries and small businesses alike are being brought to their knees by a tiny virus that cannot even be seen by the naked eye. On our knees is a good place from which to look up and confess the sins of selfishness, greed, apathy, and whatever else has taken the place of God in our country.

*Lord, let your favor be upon us and prosper for us the work of our hands.
Amen.*

Monday, November 16th Psalm 89:1-18/ Habakkuk 2:1-4, 9-20/
James 2:14-26/ Luke 16:19-31

James 2:26 *For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*

The letter of James is just five short chapters, but it is long on content. His words may seem to some to be contrary to the doctrine of salvation through faith, but verse 26 negates this idea. Works are not a requirement of faith, but a manifestation of it. We can say that we are Christians, saved by faith in Christ, but words alone are

not evidence of our faith. Do we act Christ-like? Do we walk the path Christ walked, loving others and doing good to them? Is our faith reflected in our speech, our attitudes, our lifestyles? If we are truly thankful that Christ died for our sins, we can let him and the world know by living for him.

Thank you, Jesus, for dying for our sins. Help us become more and more like you every day. Amen.

Tuesday, November 17th Psalm 100/ Habakkuk 3:1-10/
James 3:1-12/ Luke 17:1-10

Luke 17:3 Be on your guard! If another disciple sins, you must rebuke the offender, and if there is repentance, you must forgive.

How timely is this scripture, following an election that has divided our country in half? You probably have friends and even family members on both sides of this issue. One sad by-product of the social media age seems to be that we, as a people, have lost the ability to disagree without being disagreeable. Luke goes on to say, if the same person sins against you seven times in a day and turns back and says, "I repent", you must forgive. Maybe you're thinking, "I just need to cut that person out of my life." I have felt that way a time or two, I must say. But, when I go to God in prayer, he reminds me of all he has forgiven me for, and that my forgiveness depends on how I forgive others.

Thank you, Father, that forgiveness is a bridge that connects us when issues arise that divide us. Amen.

Wednesday, November 18th Psalm 101/ Malachi 1:1, 6-14/
James 3:13-4:12/ Luke 17:11-19

James 3:18 And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.

James, in the previous few verses is contrasting a life of good works with one of bitter envy, selfishness, disorder and wickedness. James'

words are echoed by Paul in Galatians 6:7. “Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for you reap what you sow.” This is not a new concept. In our passage today from Malachi, he is condemning the priests who are offering lame, blind, or sick animals as sacrifices to God. Then they are imploring God’s favor and graciousness. God’s response is that someone should shut the temple doors and not even start the fire for that sacrifice. God created us in his image. He loves us and wants what’s best for us. How can we offer him any less?

Father God, yours is the peace that passes all understanding. Help us share your peace with others. Amen.

Thursday, November 19th Psalm 105:1-22/ Malachi 2:1-16/
James 4:13-5:6/ Luke 17:20-37

Psalm 105:1a-2 *O give thanks to the Lord; Sing to him; tell of all his wonderful works.*

So far this week, our scriptures have presented some stern rebukes and serious guidelines. We can give thanks and praise for them for the problems we are spared when we heed them. When I was a young girl we had a cast iron wood cook stove long after most people had replaced theirs with an electric range. My parents hung onto it because winters on the Canadian border were brutal, and ice storms often caused the loss of electricity. One summer day, I ran up to the stove to retrieve something from the top shelf, and burned myself across my midriff. We usually didn’t use that stove in the summer, but that day, my mother was burning some papers to get rid of them. I didn’t heed the guideline of always treating the stove as potentially hot, resulting in some serious pain for me. Eventually I healed, but I never forgot that warning again.

Lord, I praise and thank you for the directions you give our lives and for healing us when we fail to follow them. Amen.

Friday, November 20th Psalm 102 / Malachi 3:1-12/ James 5:7-12/
Luke 18:1-8

Malachi 3:10 *Bring the full tithe into the storehouse so that there may be food in my house, and thus put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts; see if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing.*

The first time I heard a sermon on this passage, my children were young. We had been struggling financially, so I started tithing on my income. My husband confronted me when the first giving statement came. "How can you be giving this money to the church when we can barely buy shoes for the children?" I showed him this verse in the Bible. He wasn't going to church at the time, but he believed in God. We didn't get rich, but our financial situation improved over time as we trusted God's word and we have been blessed.

God, I praise you from whom all blessings flow. Amen.

Saturday, November 21st Psalm 108:1-13/ Malachi 3:13-4:6/
James 5:13-20/ Luke 18:9-14

James 5:13 *Are there any among you suffering? They should pray.*

James tells us to pray for the suffering, the sick, the sinful, those who wander from the truth, and also to sing songs of praise when cheerful. I bet you could add many more times to pray to James' list. Many people don't feel like they can preach, teach, witness, or serve in other ways, but we can all pray. We don't need to impress God with our prayers, he already loves us. He's always listening, waiting to hear our voices. Prayer is a way we can care for each other and rejoice with each other even when we can't be together. Jesus thought prayer was so important, he gave us an example to get us started:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be your name. . .

