

Nudges of the Spirit



Meditations for August 4th to August 10th

Nudges of the Spirit is currently a ministry of Deacon Carolyn Quinnell, Sandy Freiburger and Denise Bersos.
This week's selections have been written by Carolyn.

Sunday, August 4th 2 Samuel 11:26–12:13a or Exodus 16:2-4, 9-15 / Psalm 51:1-13 or Psalm 78:23-29 / Ephesians 4:1-16 / John 6:24-35 *(written by Carolyn)*

John 6:26 *Jesus answered them, "Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves."*

Our readings from Exodus, Psalm 78 and John all touch on food. Let's face it, most of us like to eat. Some of us like to eat too much. Therefore, I can understand how the wandering Israelites in the desert would complain about a lack of food; likewise, I can understand how the people who had the free lunch after sitting through a long teaching from Jesus would want more of the same. I will admit, I don't always feel like cooking dinner so (on those days) if someone else volunteers to feed me, I'm likely to accept. But Jesus was offering much more than something to fill bellies – he was giving his hearers an opportunity for new life. He does the same for us today. Does that mean we'll never have to cook again? Hardly. In fact, it may mean we feed more people than ever before. Hear His words and be full.

Lord, fill me with your grace and love. Amen.

Monday, August 5th Judges 6:25-40 / Psalm 80 / Acts 2:37-47 / John 1:1-18 *(written by Carolyn)*

John 1:10 *He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him.*

The reality show, *Undercover Boss*, first aired on British TV in 2009 and spread to several countries across the globe in subsequent years. I've never watched the program myself, but I understand the basic concept is that a high-ranking executive of a company shows up as an entry level new employee and the plot proceeds from there. To some, Jesus coming into the world **could** be seen as a supernatural version of *Undercover Boss*. After all, for the first 30-ish years of His life, only a small handful of people knew Jesus was God's own Son, and being only human they probably didn't have a clear idea of what His entering the world as a human meant. Unlike the TV show, Jesus did not come to "check us out" or see how we were actually doing things; but instead, He came to show us the way to the Father. So, the question becomes: How good are we at following directions?

Jesus, help me see the path You would have me take. Amen.

Tuesday, August 6th (The Transfiguration) Exodus 34:29-35 / Psalm 99 or 99:5-9 / 2 Peter 1:13-21 / Luke 9:28-36 *(written by Carolyn)*

Luke 9:31 *They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.*

Eons ago, I was a head teller at a savings & loan. When I was pregnant and getting ready to go on maternity leave, I took every teller on staff and gave them training in specific functions that they tended to rely heavily on me for. I think perhaps it scared a couple of them because I kept getting the question, "But you are coming back, aren't you?" In our lesson for today, Jesus is talking about His departure. That word has always struck me kind of – odd. I've learned that here the word used actually means exodus as in similar to the exodus where Moses led the people out of bondage in Egypt to the promised land. This exodus is different though. Jesus leads all God's people out of the slavery of sin and death, and home to their promised inheritance. Yes, Jesus came back just as He said He would, and He waits for us to follow Him.

Jesus, may I come with you? Amen.

Wednesday, August 7th Judges 7:19–8:12 / Psalm 119:97-120 / Acts 3:12-26 / John 1:29-42 *(written by Carolyn)*

John 1:33 (John the Baptist said) *“I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remains is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’”*

Just two verses earlier John the Baptist first said the words, “I myself did not know him...”. Taken at face value, these seem like odd words for John to say since he and Jesus were cousins. I assume that John heard the story of the miracle of his own birth and also that of his cousin as well. So, why would he say that he didn’t know who Jesus was? Perhaps John knew the stories but didn’t realize the full extent of their meanings. He probably means that he didn’t know who the messiah would be – and what a surprise it was to find out it was his very own relative. Sometimes we too are surprised to learn the Lord has called someone into ministry; and often the person themselves are even more taken aback. God uses whom He chooses.

Lord, thank you for the revelation of your special servant, John. Amen.

Thursday, August 8th Judges 8:22-35 / Psalm 145 / Acts 4:1-12 / John 1:43-51 *(written by Carolyn)*

Acts 4:1-2 *While Peter and John were speaking to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came to them, much annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming that in Jesus there is the resurrection of the dead.*

It was bad enough that some itinerate ex-fishermen from Galilee were preaching on temple grounds, but they were also claiming that there is a resurrection. The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection (yes, that’s why they were so sad-u-see). Those were major argument words! But pay attention to who is doing what here. Peter, the famous foot-in-mouth disciple has become a new person in Christ; and John (the beloved disciple) is right by his side to back him up. They are passing along the very words Jesus himself used. They have become bold for Jesus. How bold are we? Would we dare go to a church and start preaching from the steps leading to the front door? Think about it.

Lord, lead me to do as you would do. Amen.

Friday, August 9th Judges 9:1-16, 19-21 / Psalm 88 / Acts 4:13-31 / John 2:1-12 *(written by Carolyn)*

Acts 4:22 *For the man on whom this sign of healing had been performed was more than forty years old.*

Forty years is a long time to not be able to walk. This man, who was healed by the name of Jesus, was standing on his own two feet next to Peter and John before the council. Nothing in this man’s normal morning routine for the day could have prepared him for the sudden life change of being able to walk, nor his first entry into the temple only to be questioned by the members of the council as to how all this took place. We don’t know his name, but God does. The Lord knows each of our names as well. Let’s suppose one day the burden that weighs you down is suddenly lifted; how would you react? Would you jump up and down and praise God? Or would you hide in a corner because you were afraid? In addition to his physical healing, this man was also given the gift of Peter and John to walk beside him. Friend, He does the same for each of us.

Thank you, Lord, for our friends. Amen.

Saturday, August 10th Judges 9:22-25, 50-57 / Psalm 87, 90 / Acts 4:32–5:11 / John 2:13-25 *(written by Carolyn)*

Acts 4:33 *With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.*

Just this past Thursday we spoke of the change that had come over Peter and John. Apparently, all the apostles experienced an increase in boldness when speaking about Jesus. Did you notice the title change from disciple to apostle? A disciple is a follower or a pupil; whereas an apostle is someone who is sent out. According to the Episcopal Dictionary of the Church, “The primary NT meaning seems to refer to someone who is a personal messenger of Jesus”. The students became messengers/teachers. We begin our spiritual journeys as disciples. My question is, do we ever become apostles? What about those who are preachers among us? Hopefully their message is guided by the Holy Spirit. I would love to hear your thoughts on this.

Lord, guide me in all things. Amen.

