

Nudges of the Spirit

Meditations for April 14th to April 20th



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, April 14th Psalm 4 / Acts 3:12-19 / 1 John 3:1-7 / Luke 24:36b-48 (written by Carolyn)

Psalm 4:6 *Many are saying, "Oh, that we might see better times!" Lift up the light of your countenance upon us, O LORD.*

I heard a preacher say one time that every generation has a belief that times were better at some time in the past. I know my memories of childhood seem more carefree than today. Back then I didn't know what it was like to have bills to pay, a house to clean and mouths to feed. Perhaps we are all longing for a Garden of Eden. Could it be that we are more blessed than we think? Now, don't get me wrong, I know those words will be difficult for some to read. Still, we know that our redeemer lives and sends His angels to walk through this life with us. That means we are never alone. Verse 8 of this psalm reminds us that in Him we can lie down in peace. What a blessing it is to know the creator of all things is watching over us.

Lord, may we all know your peace this day. Amen.

Monday, April 15th Psalm 25 / Exodus 18:13-27 / 1 Peter 5:1-14 / Matthew:(1:1-17); 3:1-6 (written by Carolyn)

Exodus 18:17-18 *Moses' father-in-law said to him, "What you are doing is not good. You will surely wear yourself out, both you and these people with you. For the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone."*

When I worked in a bank, I had a manager whose favorite word was "delegate." The company had a policy that every supervisor should train at least one other person to be able to walk right into their position in the event that they (the supervisor) should suddenly become ill or leave the company. The concept made sense, and it is exactly what the father-in-law of Moses was saying when he saw how difficult it was for Moses to do all the judging. A worn-out leader is not an effective person to serve under. Perhaps that is why Jesus spent so much time alone and in prayer. Jesus delegated His authority when He first sent the 12 disciples out on their mission, then again later with the 72 (or 70 depending on the source). He's still in the business of delegating and we are His agents. Think about it as you greet a stranger today.

Lord, help me to interact with others as you would have me do so. Amen.

Tuesday, April 16th Psalm 26, 28 / Exodus 19:1-16 / Colossians 1:1-14 / Matthew 3:7-12 (written by Carolyn)

Exodus 19:5-6a (God said) *"Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine, but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation."*

"If" is such a small word, but it's packed with a lot of meaning. We use it as parents, "If you clean your room, you can go out and play." Or how about in the workplace, "If you do your job well and show potential, you may get a raise and/or promotion." All God wanted of the people of Israel was that they keep his covenant and follow Him. Well, over time it would seem they remembered the part about being God's treasured possession and a kingdom of priests, they just forgot/ignored the part about keeping the covenant and instead worshipped other gods. Are we really any better than they were? The good news is, God sent His Son to redeem us and help us out with all the "ifs". Praise God.

Lord, help me turn to you today. Amen.

Wednesday, April 17th Psalm 38 / Exodus 19:16-25 / Colossians 1:15-23 / Matthew 3:13-17 (written by Carolyn)

Exodus 19:16 *On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, as well as a thick cloud on the mountain, and a blast of a trumpet so loud that all the people who were in the camp trembled.*

When you think of the presence of God, what do you think of? The Israelites had seen his power in the plagues and then the wonder of the pillar of cloud that led them out of Egypt by day and the pillar of fire by night. On this morning though, God kicked it up several notches in the thunder and lightning, the cloud and the sound of the trumpet. Later in the reading we're told the whole mountain shook violently. Can you imagine? Can you imagine yourself falling to your knees and asking for mercy? Can you feel the arms of Jesus wrapping around you and then hear him say, "Abba, this is my friend (insert your name). I want her/him with me where I am."?

Heavenly Father, have mercy on me a sinner. Amen.

Thursday, April 18th Psalm 37:1-18 / Exodus 20:1-21 / Colossians 1:24–2:7 / Matthew 4:1-11 *(written by Carolyn)*

Matthew 4:1 *Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.*

Just three weeks ago we walked through Holy Week together and heard the taunts hurled toward Jesus. I invite you to read the rest of the selection from Matthew for today and see if you notice any similarities between the temptations spoken to Jesus by Satan and the taunts Jesus heard at the end of His life (see Matthew 27:39-43). In both places we read the words, "If you are the Son of God...". The temptations you and I face today will never be on the scale of what Jesus faced, yet they are still very real. Jesus never took His eyes off the Father and He used scripture to make His point whenever Satan came around to issue a challenge. We cannot find a better example to follow when we are tempted; for as followers of Christ, we are and will be.

Lord, let me lean on you when I am tempted to walk away from you. Amen.

Friday, April 19th Psalm 105:1-22 / Exodus 24:1-18 / Colossians 2:8-23 / Matthew 4:12-17 *(written by Carolyn)*

Matthew 4:12 *Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee.*

How many people do you know moved back home after being away at college or in the military? I can remember my parents offering me coffee on my first trip home in my freshman year – not something they had ever done before. That weekend I learned that life changes once you've left the nest. So, knowing the reaction He would have in His hometown, Jesus moves away from His boyhood chums and all the people who knew Him as a little tyke. It was necessary for the growth of His ministry. Sometimes, the growth of our own spiritual lives requires us to move beyond the childhood familiar and on to new ground – if not physically, at least psychologically. Is there something you are clinging to from your past that perhaps you should set aside?

Lord, help me to clean house in my inner being. Amen.

Saturday, April 20th Psalm 30, 32 / Exodus 25:1-22 / Colossians 3:1-17 / Matthew 4:18-25 *(written by Carolyn)*

Psalm 30:11-12 *You have turned my mourning into dancing; you have taken off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, so that my soul may praise you and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever.*

When I think of the word "mourning" my mind immediately goes to the loss of a loved one. There are other losses though – like the loss of employment (income) or a physical move away from the familiar (like a job transfer). I know when we first moved to California because of my husband's work, I felt like a fish out of water – nothing was familiar. Depending on who you ask, there are either five or seven stages of grief, with a great deal of overlap in each of the models. Whichever model you find helpful, it's necessary to work through each stage at your own pace. But even when we move at what seems to be snail's speed, the Lord is right there with us. Over time, our healing comes from above.

Lord, be with those who mourn this day. Amen.

