

Nudges of the Spirit



Meditations for January 18th to January 24th

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

Sunday, January 18th Isaiah 49:1-7 / Psalm 40:1-12 / 1 Corinthians 1:1-9 / John 1:29-42 (written by Carolyn)

From the Collect for today: *Grant that your people, illumined by your Word and Sacraments, may shine with the radiance of Christ's glory, that he may be known, worshipped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth...*

When I was pregnant with my second child, a friend made the remark that my skin glowed. Only one other time have I ever been told that I was glowing – and that was when I mentioned to someone that I was contemplating ordained ministry. I like the words of the prayer mentioned above. Oh, that we could all be reflections of Christ's glory in the world about us. Can you imagine what that would look like? The light of Christ being transmitted into the world by each and every believer? We would all be glowing – there would be no place for darkness to hide!

Lord, may we each shine forth your light into the world around us. Amen

Monday, January 19th (Confession of St. Peter) Acts 4:8-13 / Psalm 23 / 1 Peter 5:1-4 / Matthew 16:13-19 (written by Carolyn)

Acts 4:13 *Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated and ordinary men, they were amazed and recognized them as companions of Jesus.*

In my mind I can hear the boldness of Peter in this reading from Acts as it would be spoken by Shahar Isaac, the actor who portrays Simon Peter in the series “The Chosen.” Generally, I find that when reading a book versus watching a screen version the characters have whatever voice my mind gives them – but having said that, I think Shahar does an excellent job in his role. Regardless of the “voice” we hear in our brains, the example that both Peter and John give in Acts 3, which relates the story of the two Apostles healing a lame man and continues on to our verse, is an example for us today. Would any of us be so bold as to say to a lame person, “In the name of Jesus, stand and walk”? Are we so bold as to proclaim to the authorities the healing grace of Christ? We might be tempted to say, “Oh, that’s them, not me.” But it is us. We are all called to be bold for Christ.

Lord, help me to and say what you would have me say. Amen

Tuesday, January 20th Genesis 9:1-17 / Psalm 26, 28 / Hebrews 5:7-14 / John 3:16-21 (written by Carolyn)

Genesis 9:13 (God said) *I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.*

I recently read this description of a rainbow: A rainbow is like the sky's smile after the rain. In reality, it's a optical wonder; when sunlight passes through droplets of water, it refracts and splits into a spectrum – from red to violet. Each droplet works like a tiny prism, and we see the arc only at a certain angle, which means that every person has their own “personal” rainbow. The piece when on to say that the rainbow has no purpose in and of itself. I think the writer of Genesis would disagree with that last statement. Science may be able to define the “how” of a rainbow, but only God can define the “why.” I do like the bit about each of us has our own “personal” rainbow, depending on the angle we view it from. It's as though God is saying, “This is for just you, from Me.”

Lord, thank you for rainbows. Amen

Wednesday, January 21st Genesis 9:18-29 / Psalm 38 / Hebrews 6:1-12 / John 3:22-36 (written by Carolyn)

John 3:22 *After this Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside, and he spent some time there with them and baptized.*

I referenced four different sources trying to get a commentary on the verse mentioned above. Of the four, three of them skipped over verses 22-24 completely and only dealt with John the Baptist's reaction to being told that Jesus was baptizing. The fourth source pointed out John 4:2 which states, "although it was not Jesus himself but his disciples who baptized." So, how does this speak to us today? For me, baptism is a first official step into the life of being a Christian. Whenever there is a baptism today, the people who witness the vows of the one being baptized reaffirm their own baptismal covenant. Sometimes, we just need a reminder of the basics. Perhaps, by having His disciples baptize others, Jesus was actually embedding in their subconscious minds the commitment they themselves were making as His disciples. Perhaps, He does the same for us whenever we witness a baptism today.

Lord, I choose to follow You. Amen

Thursday, January 22nd Genesis 11:1-9 / Psalm 37:1-18 / Hebrews 6:13-20 / John 4:1-15 (*written by Carolyn*)

John 4:6 Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

I don't often think about Jesus getting tired or thirsty, or even needing a nap. I also don't think about him getting sweaty, but the reference to the time of day leads me to believe that the air temperature had gotten quite warm. All this is setting the physical scene for his encounter with the woman at the well and His talk of living water. What Jesus offers the woman is not physical water from a well, but grace that springs from Him. He offers us that same grace. So, when we're tired, thirsty, sweaty, anxious, feeling despair, scared, or any one of dozens of other conditions, Jesus offers us relief – if we only ask.

Lord, pick me up when I'm down. Amen

Friday, January 23rd Genesis 11:27–12:8 / Psalm 31 / Hebrews 7:1-17 / John 4:16-26 (*written by Carolyn*)

Genesis 12:4 So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

If we were 75 years old, would we pack up our RVs (first I would have to acquire one) with our belongings and tell our spouses and nephew to settle themselves in because we're heading out on the open road? I suspect there would be questions like, "Where are we going?" or "How long will we be gone?" or even, "Are you nuts?" But Abram and his clan stepped out in faith. From the world's perspective it may have been foolishness, but from a God perspective it was a test of obedience. I wonder what would have happened if Abram would have said no to God. What happens when we say no to God?

Lord, help me to trust in you. Amen

Saturday, January 24th Genesis 12:9–13:1 / Psalm 30, 32 / Hebrews 7:18-28 / John 4:27-42 (*written by Carolyn*)

John 4:41 And many more believed because of his word.

I heard a praise report from someone who has been attending a bible study at our church on a regular basis for a couple of years. Her good friend and neighbor had encouraged her to "come and see." The report she gave is that after attending the study, asking questions and listening to answers given, she can truly say she now has a relationship with the Lord. Praise God! Oh, that everyone would be open to drawing close to the Lord in whatever manner is best for them. For her, it was study. For someone else it might be working in some form of outreach. Others may find their path through music. The Lord places before each of us a path that has our name on it. Whether we take the path, well, that's our decision.

Lord, lead me in your ways. Amen

