

Nudges of the Spirit



Meditations for February 15th to February 21st

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, February 15th Exodus 24:12-18 / Psalm 2 or 99 / 2 Peter 1:16-21 / Matthew 17:1-9 (*written by Carolyn*)

Exodus 24:17 Now the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel.

How do you describe the indescribable? In human terms, if a person has never seen the Grand Canyon, it's hard to fathom the vastness of it. I can recall the first time our family made a visit there. On the way my husband was very excited, while I kept thinking to myself, "Big deal, we're going to see a ditch." Well, it is SO MUCH MORE than a ditch and, yes, it is very hard to describe unless you have something to compare it to in size. Pictures help, but don't do it justice. So, when the writer of Exodus says that the glory of the LORD was like a devouring fire, we know that he is limited by human vocabulary. I suspect that our very human reaction would have to be something along the lines of WOW!

LORD, we don't have words to express our awe at your Holy Presence, so to You we bend our knees and worship. Amen

Monday, February 16th Proverbs 27:1-6, 10-12 / Psalm 25 / Philippians 2:1-13 / John 18:15-18, 25-27 (*written by Carolyn*)

Proverbs 27:1 Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring.

I think we are all well aware of the sudden changes that can happen in an instant that affect the rest of our lives: unexpected medical diagnoses, car accidents, and boat accidents, to name a few. Just yesterday, a local sheriff officer went to work to do her normal job, yet in an instant her life was cut short. But not all of the sudden changes are bad. For example, the unexpected promotion and salary increase at work, or the announcement of a new life yet to be born, and then there's the phone call from someone you haven't spoken to in years who wants to renew an old friendship. My favorite though is the first-time sudden awareness, and acceptance, that you are a child of the living God. Now, that has eternal life-changing consequences. True, we do not know what tomorrow may bring, but we are not alone in all the twists, turns and changes of our lives.

Lord, thank you for being with us in all things. Amen

Tuesday, February 17th Proverbs 30:1-4, 24-33 / Psalm 26, 28 / Philippians 3:1-11 / John 18:28-38 (*written by Carolyn*)

Philippians 3:7 Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ.

Yesterday I mentioned sudden changes that have life-long consequences. The apostle Paul is a good example of just that. In Philippians 3:4-6 he mentions all of the advantages he had as the world saw him. Yet, the LORD knocked him flat, and it changed not only his life, but the lives of so many more people who heard his story. While none of us may have the influence of Paul, there is someone who needs to hear the story of how Christ has worked in our lives. We may not have the training that Paul had and may feel uncomfortable speaking in front of a group, but that's OK. The Lord will use whatever gift He has given each of us to accomplish His work.

Lord, help me to step out in faith for you. Amen

Wednesday, February 18th (Ash Wednesday) Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 or Isaiah 58:1-12 / Psalm 103 or 103:8-14 / 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10 / Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21 (*written by Carolyn*)

Psalm 103:3 *He forgives all your sins and heals all your infirmities...*

I recently read a piece by someone who made the point that Christianity is not fair but instead is a faith of forgiveness. The author's premise was something along the lines of the fact that when we think of fairness, we tend to think in terms of what benefits us. For example, have you ever heard a child complain that they themselves received the larger slice of cake over that of their siblings? No, more than likely the complaint would be that their piece was smaller than the other. So, given that, do we really want God to be fair with us? Do we really want our just punishment for our wrongdoings? Rather than fairness, what our Heavenly Father gives us is forgiveness – whether we deserve it or not. Today we begin our Lenten journeys again. Over these next 40 days, may we seek to enter into a closer appreciation of the forgiveness we have been blessed with by the sacrifice of Jesus.

LORD, help us to forgive as you forgive us. Amen.

Thursday, February 19th Note to our readers: during Lent this year we will be following the Lenten readings the church gives us rather than those of the daily lectionary. Deuteronomy 30:15-20 / Psalm 1 / Luke 9:18-25 (written by Carolyn)

Deuteronomy 30:15 Moses said to all Israel the words which the LORD commanded him, “See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity.”

Choices. Every day we make choices about something. What do you base your choices on? I knew a man once who asked Jesus what he should do every time he was faced with a choice – literally. If he was driving somewhere, he would check in with the LORD to see what route he should take. When it came to a financial decision of any sort, he would ask the Almighty. In today's reading, the Lord has placed before the people of Israel a choice. If He did the same for us today, what would our pick be? It seems as though there is no contest between the two, of course I would choose life and prosperity. Then there are the details of what that includes, following His will in all that I do instead of my own.

LORD, help me to always follow your will for my life – and ask you first what that will is. Amen

Friday, February 20th Isaiah 58:1-9a / Psalm 51:1-10 / Matthew 9:10-17 (written by Carolyn)

Matthew 9:17 (Jesus said) “Neither is new wine put into old wineskins; otherwise, the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins are destroyed; but new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved.”

For years I read this verse and came away thinking, “Huh?” Then someone explained that when new wine ferments it releases air bubbles which cause an expansion in the container the wine is in. New wineskins can stretch with that expansion, but old wineskins become hard and brittle. Therefore, putting new wine into an old wineskin would cause an explosion of sorts and the wine would be lost. Jesus is using this analogy as an example that He has brought a new message of hope to a people who have been waiting for generations. No longer do the people have to peer into the darkness wondering if/when God will send a Messiah. The message Jesus brought was that He was the long-expected Messiah – and no, it does not fit into the old way of thinking what Messiah would be. Are we waiting for something new, or old?

Lord, open my mind that I may recognize You in front of me. Amen

Saturday, February 21st Isaiah 58:9b-14 / Psalm 86:1-11 / Luke 5:27-32 (written by Carolyn)

Psalm 86:11 *Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart to revere your name.*

Tell me, who among us was born knowing how to walk, talk, ride a bike or drive a car? We all had to be taught those things, and a whole host of other things as well. Granted, no one said, “Now you put out your right foot and step on it and follow that with your left,” but our learning was by watching what other people did and trying

it out for ourselves. The same goes for all those other activities I mentioned. So, I guess it shouldn't be a big surprise to learn that we need to be taught how to walk in the way of the LORD. Who are (or were) your favorite teachers? Have you thanked them?

LORD, thank you for everyone who has passed your love on to others. Amen

