

Nudges of the Spirit

Meditations for August 30th to September 5th



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, August 30th Exodus 3:1-15 and Psalm 105:1-6, 23-26, 45c OR Jeremiah 15:15-21 and Psalm 26:1-8 / Romans 12:9-21 / Matthew 16:21-28 (*written by Carolyn*)

Exodus 3:3 *Then Moses said, "I must turn aside and look at this great sight and see why the bush is not burned up."*

Interruptions. I was trying to figure out what to say about this passage, and thinking I would weave in signs from God, but I had five interruptions, one right after another. Finally, as I was dealing with the fifth one it occurred to me that the Lord was taking me in a different direction. The life of Moses was blessed with several interruptions, but they were all setting him up for a particular role that God had in mind. That's how the Almighty works – He has a hand in circumstances in our lives that lead and/or train us for something He wants us to do later. With me personally, my life had a major interruption with the death of my husband; yet I know the Lord is with me in this season and has plans for my future. He has plans for you as well, regardless of where you find yourself at the moment. May we all be graced with the gift of His discernment.

Lord, thank you for this morning's interruptions. Amen

Monday, August 31st Job 12:1-6, 13-25 / Psalm 25 / Acts 11:19-30 / John 8:21-32 (*written by Carolyn*)

John 8:31-32 *Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."*

Two questions jump out at me when I read these words; the first echo's Pilate's question to Jesus, "What is truth?" The second is, "What does it look like to be free?" I cannot answer those questions for anyone else because all of our circumstances are different. But for me, truth lies in the words of Jesus himself: that we are to love God with all our heart, mind and spirit and love others as we love ourselves. The question about being free may affect how we love ourselves. If I am in constant pain, being free might be a release from that torture. If my mind does not function as well as it once did, freedom might be clarity of thought. If I live in a country that stations a guard on every block, freedom might be that I can come and go as I please. All these might taint how I see myself. But if I see me as a child of the living God, my view changes regardless of my circumstances. I saw a bumper sticker once that read: "My father is a King; that makes me his princess." That applies to you as well.

Abba, help me to see me as you see me. Amen

Tuesday, September 1st Job 12:1; 13:3-17, 21-27 / Psalm 26, 28 / Acts 12:1-17 / John 8:33-47 (*written by Carolyn*)

Acts 12:15 *They said to her, "You are out of your mind!" But she insisted that it was so. They said, "It is his angel."*

This is one of several times in the bible that can be downright funny if you take a step back from the narrative. The very people who had been praying to God to help Peter while he was in prison don't believe God really did help him when (in fact) he was in the flesh at the outside gate. Can't you just see the angels in heaven shaking their heads at the situation? How many times do we pray, but don't really expect God to answer our prayers? Jesus told his disciples that if they had the faith of a mustard seed, a mountain would pick itself up and be thrown into the sea. What mountains are you praying God will move for you? He has faith enough to move them.

Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief. Amen

Wednesday, September 2nd Job 12:1; 14:1-22 / Psalm 38 / Acts 12:18-25 / John 8:47-59 (*written by Carolyn*)

Acts 12:18 *When morning came, there was no small commotion among the soldiers over what had become of Peter.*

I can't help but wondering, "How do we know this?" Regardless, can you imagine the scene? The confusion, the panic, the knowing that this was not going to end well for someone. Then there's the anger of Herod – his prize prisoner that was going to win even more favor with the Jews has managed to escape. In this case his anger is what eventually consumed him. Yes, I know scripture says an angel struck him down and he was eaten by worms and died. But have you ever been so angry that you felt like your insides were going to burst open? It becomes all-consuming and takes over your mind. That, my friends, is not from God. It's putting ourselves before the Almighty. Vengeance belongs to the Lord, not us. Ouch.

Lord, help me turn toward you in all difficult times. Amen

Thursday, September 3rd Job 16:16-22; 17:1, 13-16 / Psalm 37:1-18 / Acts 13:1-12 / John 9:1-17 *(written by Carolyn)*

Acts 13:11 (Paul said) *"And now listen – the hand of the Lord is against you, and you will be blind for a while, unable to see the sun."*

It's interesting that Paul, who formerly persecuted Christians, was struck blind by the Lord and was now evangelizing in the name of Jesus, proclaims to this man who is opposing the message that he will become blind for a while. Then, if we flip over to the reading from John for today, we learn about Jesus healing a blind man. So, it would seem to me that without Christ, we cannot see – maybe not literally, but certainly figuratively. That fits. Verse one of Amazing Grace says, "...I once was lost but now am found, was blind but now I see." Has the Lord opened your eyes to some new truth since you became a follower? I would love to hear about it.

Lord, heal my blindness. Amen

Friday, September 4th Job 19:1-7, 14-27 / Psalm 31 / Acts 13:13-25 / John 9:18-41 *(written by Carolyn)*

John 9:38 *He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him.*

It sounds so simple, doesn't it? But then, Jesus had just healed the man who had been born blind, so perhaps it was easier for him to say the words, "I believe," than it would be for someone else. I think for those of us who read these words centuries later, and know what happens to Jesus later in the gospels, the words can become head knowledge – but are they heart knowledge? Can we look at him in whatever situation (good or bad) and immediately say, "Lord, I believe?" I think that deep belief might include knowing in your heart that whatever the diagnosis, whatever the checkbook says, whenever you hear words that you would rather not hear – Jesus is there and you can take a deep breath and say, "Lord, it is well with my soul because you are here with me."

Lord, help me remember you are always with me. Amen

Saturday, September 5th Job 22:1-4, 21–23:7 / Psalm 30, 32 / Acts 13:26-43 / John 10:1-18 *(written by Carolyn)*

John 10:4 *When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice.*

I was reminded of this verse just this past weekend. My son and his family went out of town for one night and they asked if I would dog sit their 45+ pound-full-of-energy fur-baby for the first time. All went well until we spotted other dogs on one of our many walks. He just wanted to go say hello, but the other dog owners were not too keen on the idea so, I worked hard at keeping him at bay while they went on by. I tried talking to him, but since he doesn't see me often, I could have been speaking to a wall for all the good it did. To say the dog missed his humans would be an understatement. When they arrived to pick him up, he was overcome with joy. So, to relate this to the verse mentioned above, if we are the sheep the question becomes, "Are we overjoyed to hear the Lord's voice?" And a second question, "Do we follow where he leads us?"

Lord, thank you for being my shepherd. Amen

