

Nudges of the Spirit



Meditations for February 22nd to February 28th

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

Sunday, February 22nd Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7 / Psalm 32 / Romans 5:12-19 / Matthew 4:1-11 (*written by Denise*)

Roman 5: 19 *For just as by the one's man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.*

As a young girl I used to love to go to the lake and when it was very calm, we would skip rocks across the top of the water. When gravity took over, the rock would plunge down into the lake, and the ripples would go out from where the rock went down. Our choices can affect ourselves and others because of the ripple effect. In this scripture we see the fruit of being disobedient is separation from God. Being obedient the fruit is being connected with God and being righteous. Once again a choice is presented to us with our gift of free will. As we begin this day, will you choose to be obedient or disobedient?

May we choose to be obedient in all our interactions today as we align our will with your will God. The only way we can do this is with your help. Amen

Monday, February 23rd Leviticus 19:1-2, 11-18 / Psalm 19:7-14 / Matthew 25:31-46 (*written by Denise*)

Leviticus 19:18 *You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.*

This "love your neighbor as yourself" is just not a good refrigerator magnet. God is actually speaking to Moses in Leviticus 19. Moses lived about 1300 to 1500 years before Jesus was born. In Matthew 22:37-39 Jesus is asked by the Sadducees which commandment in the law is the greatest? Jesus says "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself." This is our foundation. Moses was given this commandment by God, and Moses brought this to the people. Jesus studied the Torah, and had direct communication with God, and brought it to the people. This is not just a good idea, it is a commandment.

LORD, transform our resentments and grudges we have into your love. We take responsibility and are ready to repent. Amen

Tuesday, February 24th (Saint Matthias) Acts 1:15-26 / Psalm 15 / Philippians 3:13-21 / John 15:1, 6-16 (*written by Denise*)

Acts 1:26 *And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.*

Back in those days they cast lots to make decisions. Today we draw straws or flip coins. There may be a better way and that is prayer. Prayer and meditation are important tools to live a spiritual life. I have come to the conclusion that my mind does its job really well at thinking. The problem arises when it gets too loud and obsessive. Prayer and meditation help to quiet and slow down the mind so I can hear God's quiet whisper. Matthias becomes the 12th disciple after Judas. Thank you, Matthias.

Jesus, May each of us be a disciple by loving you and others. Amen

Wednesday, February 25th Jonah 3:1-10 / Psalm 51:11-18 / Luke 11:29-32 (*written by Denise*)

Jonah 3:4 *Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, "Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"*

If you haven't read Jonah all the way through, I invite you to do so. My imagination gets on fire, as I am a visual person. I see Jonah lying on the beach completely wiped out from traveling in the belly of a fish for three days and three nights and then being spewed out because the voice of the LORD told the fish to spew him out. He is trying to catch his breath when the LORD speaks again and tells him to go to Ninevah and proclaim the message the LORD will give to him. Now it doesn't say he showered, shaved and put on clean clothes. It says "so Jonah set out." Now imagine the smell and what you would look like after living in the belly of a fish. Jonah does exactly what God tells him. The next part really gets me. The people believed him and did what he told them to do. God can do anything with any one of us.

God, teach us to be willing to go deep in the belly of the fish to become obedient to your call. Amen

Thursday, February 26th Esther (from the Apocrypha) 14:1-6, 12-14 / Psalm 138 / Matthew 7:7-12 *(written by Denise)*

Esther 14:14 *But save us by your hand, and help me, who am alone, and have no helper but you, O Lord.*

We all say prayers, and all have a unique style and use of words. My prayers today are different than they used to be because my conception and relationship with God has changed over the years. I cannot remember the last time I bargained with God in a prayer. I will do this if you do that kind of prayer. I have made promises I could not keep, and had agendas that if God did not do what I asked then I was mad, and thought I was being punished. These prayers were important in my growth. They served a purpose, and with God's help things have gotten a bit clearer. I agree with Esther today. I have support from so many but ultimately God is my helper I go to.

God, Save us by your hand! Amen

Friday, February 27th Ezekiel 18:21-28 / Psalm 130 / Matthew 5:20-26 *(written by Denise)*

Ezekiel 18:25 *...yet you say, "The way of the Lord is unfair." Hear now, O house of Israel; Is my way unfair? Is it not your way that is unfair?*

God is speaking through his prophet Ezekiel in this verse. Sometimes the best thing we can do is get out of our own way. God is so patient with us all. He is always offering us truth, compassion, love, justice, and righteousness. Unless we take personal responsibility for ourselves, stop the stories in our head that we have created, and blaming even God, we stay stuck. Whenever I start thinking about myself, and try to figure out how the world should run, and start blaming others I can easily slip into God is unfair. At those times if I can grasp a moment of clarity, take responsibility for my part in this craziness, and begin praying and reaffirming the characteristics of God, I see the truth. God is never unfair but my idea about God can make him unfair in my mind. God is love.

God, continue to show us the truth! Amen

Saturday, February 28th Deuteronomy 26:16-19 / Psalm 119:1-8 / Matthew 5:43-48 *(written by Denise)*

Matthew 5:48 *Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

Will I ever be as perfect as my father in heaven? I think not. After reading the verses before this one, we see instructions and challenges on how to forgive and love our neighbors. It is very clear that at many times this will not be easy, and we are to not take the easy way out but do what Jesus would do in every situation. This scripture speaks to me of how imperative it is to love all our neighbors. It is so important that there are not any loopholes or excuses to not love our neighbors. We must strive for perfection when it comes to loving others.

Jesus, it is hard sometimes to love people who upset us. Enter our hearts and transform our ill feelings into love. We are striving for perfection, and we are grateful to see progress. Amen

