

Nudges of the Spirit

Meditations for June 28th to July 4th

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, June 28th Genesis 22:1-14 and Psalm 13 or Jeremiah 28:5-9 and Psalm 89:1-4, 15-18 / Romans 6:12-23 / Matthew 10:40-42 *(written by Denise)*

Genesis 22:2 *Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you."*

What the heck? Now Abraham would have been somewhere between 125-137 years old at this time. Isaac, scholars believe, was between 25-37. God and Abraham have spent years in their relationship with each other. God changed Abram's name to Abraham when he was 99 years old, and God told him he would be fruitful and the father of many nations. God told Abraham that he would have a son Isaac and God would establish his covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. Now God is asking Abraham to sacrifice him! Abraham doesn't question God. He believes in God's word, and does what he says.

Lord, we do not understand your ways or your timing. May we have the faith of Abraham, knowing in our heart of hearts that no matter what things look like...you will provide! Amen

Monday, June 29th (St. Peter and St. Paul) Ezekiel 34:11-16 / Psalm 87 / 2 Timothy 4:1-8 / John 21:15-19 *(written by Denise)*

John 21:19 *Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, "Follow me."*

There are so many characters in the Bible. One of my most favorite is Peter. His journey as he matures helps me to see that we as humans think we understand and know what is going on, when most of the time we don't. We love with our heart, but sometimes don't have the discernment and wisdom in our spiritual infancy. I have heard Peter referred to as "foot in mouth Peter." He reacts, instead of pausing and responding with wisdom at times. Do you ever do that? I do. I learn from these mistakes, and I believe Peter did too. God saw through Peter's infancy and saw that he would become the "rock" of the church. Peter never thought he would deny Jesus three times, but he did. He kept going when he made mistakes. Peter died a horrible death, but at his death he had faith and experience to know Jesus promised him eternal life. He is alive in this writing today.

Jesus, thank you for your disciples and your apostles. We learn and grow by their examples, Amen

Tuesday, June 30th Numbers 22:21-38 / Psalm 121, 122, 123 / Romans 7:1-12 / Matthew 21:23-32 *(written by Denise)*

Numbers 22:38 *"Well, I have come to you now," Balaam replied. "But I can't say whatever I please. I must speak only what God puts in my mouth."*

What a beautiful world we would live in if the only time we could speak would be when God puts words in our mouths. Actually, as I contemplate this, this is really how we should all be communicating. We use too many words, and now we have AI to give us more words. Have you ever been talking with someone, and you have a thought in your head of what you are going to say, and something completely different comes out of your mouth? When I do this I want to look around and say "who said that?" My pride, my agendas, my self-righteousness, can cause me to defend myself instead of doing what is best for my neighbor. God always is inclusive, creative, humble and loving.

God, Psalm 19:14 May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer. Amen

Wednesday, July 1st Numbers 22:41-23:12 / Psalm 119:145-176 / Romans 7:13-25 / Matthew 21:33-46 *(written by Denise)*

Roman 7:19 *For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do-this I keep on doing.*

This is quite a theme we have going this week. I am reminded of this scripture so often. It is like: "If I know better, why do I not do better?" I am convinced that any good that you see in me is from God, and any good I see in you is from God. Because of this belief I look for good, I look for God in all things. I find that when someone harms me intentionally or unintentionally, that I have a choice, either I can hold on to this resentment or ask for God's help to transform this low energy into Grace, so that I can forgive them. God has given me so much Grace in my life. I think it is important that I extend this Grace to my neighbors.

LORD, continue to make us aware of our sins, so that we can repent immediately. May your Grace shine through each of us. Amen

Thursday, July 2nd Numbers 23:11-26 / Psalm 131, 132 / Romans 8:1-11 / Matthew 22:1-14 *(written by Denise)*

Romans 8:6 *The mind governed by flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.*

Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice for us. We can now have a direct relationship with God, and everyone has the opportunity to be guided by the Holy Spirit if they choose. If your thoughts are worry, controlling others, managing situations so you are comfortable, fear of finances, obsessions with your weight, alcohol or drugs, your mind is most likely being governed by the flesh and these are death thoughts. If your mind is governed by the Spirit you are aware of your blessings, are full of gratitude, thinking of how you can help others, thinking of the wonderful characteristics of God, your mind is in tune with the living God and enjoying peace that only the spirit can bring you.

God, open our minds and our hearts to you. You are life, and we can always change how we are thinking to think of you. Amen

Friday, July 3rd Numbers 24:1-13 / Psalm 140, 142 / Romans 8:12-17 / Matthew 22:15-22 *(written by Denise)*

Psalm 142:7 *Set me free from my prison, that I may praise your name, Then the righteous will gather about me because of your goodness to me.*

The first line of this scripture is "Set me free from my prison." This to me is bondage of self. This is not a physical prison, but a mental prison. There are no guards, and no keys keeping me locked up. It is me keeping me in prison with my thoughts. What a miserable way to live, to be a victim of my own thinking. There is a way out. Jesus showed us the way out. These lamentation psalms are so beautiful. They teach us we can "wrestle" with God and ask for help by repenting and seeing things differently. I enjoy being around friends who understand that there is a way out. When any of us forget and get caught in our prisons, we can remind each other there is a way out...through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Jesus, Lamb of God, help us see the truth of who you are and what you did for us. Amen

Saturday, July 4th (Independence Day) Deuteronomy 10:17-21 / Psalm 145 or 145:1-9 / Hebrews 11:8-16 / Matthew 5:43-48 *(written by Denise)*

Deuteronomy 10:17 *For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes.*

This is very clear about who God is. My next thought was, what does this awesome God expect from us? Micah 6:8 came forward, "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." God doesn't really expect too much from us, but how many of us make it through a whole day doing what he expects? I hit the bull's eye once in a while. Maybe with some practice and awareness we can strive to follow God's expectations of us a bit better just today.

LORD, you are the Lord of lords! You have made it clear who you are and what you expect from us. May we walk this day together! Amen

