

Nudges of the Spirit

Meditations for October 25th to October 31st



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

Sunday, October 25th Deuteronomy 34:1-12 and Psalm 90:1-6, 13-17 OR Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18 and Psalm 1 / 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8 / Matthew 22:34-46 (*written by Carolyn*)

1 Thessalonians 2:3-4 *For our appeal does not spring from deceit or impure motives or trickery, but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the message of the gospel, even so we speak, not to please mortals, but to please God who tests our hearts.*

Recently, I have been asked several times if preaching has gotten easier the more I've done it. My short answer is both yes and no. Yes, because I've become more accustomed to talking in front of people. No, because I am, by nature, an introvert with a capital I, who has had to adjust to operating in an extroverted environment. But then, another more important answer is that if I am ever at complete ease when I get up to either read or comment on the word of God, I am in trouble; because at that point I will have become cocky and think, "See what a good job I do," and my efforts will be about me and not the Lord. That is a real trap for all of us who profess to be Christians, not just preachers. Pray for each other.

Lord, help me. Amen

Monday, October 26th Ecclesiasticus 19:4-17 / Psalm 41, 52 / Revelation 11:1-14 / Luke 11:14-26 (*written by Carolyn*)

Luke 11:16 *Others, to test him, kept demanding from him a sign from heaven.*

This verse immediately follows Jesus casting out a demon who caused a man to be mute, and those who saw what happened demanded a sign from him. For me it's a, "You want what?" type of request. After all Jesus just performed a miracle in front of them – surely a sign from heaven – and the bystanders want another one. The thing is, Jesus did not perform healings for sport or to show off His power. He restored people to health so that they could be a part of and function fully in their community. We don't know what eventually became of the man whose speech was restored, but what a testimony he would have! I hope he spent the rest of his days praising the Lord. I hope I would do that if I were in his shoes.

Lord, open my mouth and I shall sing your praises. Amen

Tuesday, October 27th Ecclesiasticus 24:1-12 / Psalm 45 / Revelation 11:14-19 / Luke 11:27-36 (*written by Carolyn*)

Luke 11:27-28 *While he was saying this, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that nursed you!" But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it!"*

When I read these two verses, I tend to think about being a mother. Of course, a woman in Jesus' time would think his mother was blessed. And Jesus doesn't say that his mother, Mary, was not blessed, but instead points to the greater blessing that is available. Mary became the mother of Jesus by obeying God; therefore, God is (obviously) the greater. I heard a bishop say one time that the Lord wants to give us the tools to become the best we can be; only sometimes, we settle for good rather than best. It's not that the Lord can't use the good that we offer but just imagine if we could offer our best instead.

Lord, today help me to offer my best – not just good enough. Amen

Wednesday, October 28th (St. Simon and St. Jude) Deuteronomy 32:1-4 / Psalm 119:89-96 / Ephesians 2:13-22 / John 15:17-27 (*written by Carolyn*)

Deuteronomy 32:2 *May my teaching drop like the rain, my speech condenses like the dew; like gentle rain on grass, like showers on new growth.*

Living where we do, we know about the different kinds of rain that fall from the sky. There's the thundering hard downpour that beats on the earth; there's a persistent all-day on and off kind of rain that causes us to take our umbrellas everywhere we go; and then there is the gentle almost misty rain that soaks into the ground and/or softly kisses flower petals and leaves. They all have their purpose, but after a long dry spell I wonder if plant life gets more benefit from that last kind – the gentle drops that absorb into what they land on. When we use the rain as an analogy for teaching the word of God, I can see where loud, thundering might wake someone up – but might the gentle word seep into our thirsty souls more readily?

Lord, teach me your ways. Amen

Thursday, October 29th Ecclesiasticus 31:12-18, 25–32:2 / Psalm 50 / Revelation 12:7-17 / Luke 11:53–12:12
(written by Carolyn)

Luke 12:1 *Meanwhile, when the crowd gathered by the thousands, so that they trampled on one another, he began to speak first to his disciples, “Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees, that is, their hypocrisy.”*

Did anyone ever say to you, “Do as I say, not as I do?” I associate that phrase with something a parent might say to one of their offspring, telling them to not partake in an activity that they themselves do – like smoking or drinking. Quite frankly, the phrase always struck me just a tad odd because if the parent knew the activity was not healthy for their young, why would it be OK for them? Wasn't it also important to protect what went into their own bodies? When Jesus warned His disciples about their hypocrisy, it wasn't about smoking or drinking – but rather noting the difference between what they taught and what they actually did. Put in today's time: if (for example) I teach others to honor their father and mother, and then never call or visit, am I really honoring them? I'm betting you can come up with examples of your own.

Lord, guide me in your ways, always. Amen

Friday, October 30th Ecclesiasticus 34:1-8, 18-22 / Psalm 40, 54 / Revelation 13:1-10 / Luke 12:13-31 (written by Carolyn)

Luke 12:25 *And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?*

I will be honest; I am preaching to myself here. There have been times when I have worried and fretted over something, and the very thing that caused such angst never happened. I doubt seriously that all the worry and fretting resulted in any sort of increase in my life span. So why do I continue in such behavior? I think it comes down to control. Who exactly is in charge? Me or God? That's an obvious answer if ever there was one – it's certainly not me. Jesus tells us to relax and let Him handle the hard stuff. So, I open my hands and give it to Him. Will you join me?

Jesus, I lay all my worries and anxieties at the foot of your cross – and I leave them there. Amen

Saturday, October 31st Ecclesiasticus 35:1-17 / Psalm 55 / Revelation 13:11-18 / Luke 12:32-48 (written by Carolyn)

Ecclesiasticus 35:12 (aka Sirach from the Apocrypha) *Give to the Most High as he has given to you, and as generously as you can afford.*

If I take this verse seriously and literally, I first have to consider what it is that the Lord has given me. That takes self-examination, which is not always a comfortable thing to do. So, what has the Lord given me? He knew me before I was born and chose to have me enter this world into a loving and comfortable family. In other words, He gave me life. A long time ago, a friend gave me a plaque that read something like, “Your life is a gift from God;

what you do with it is your gift to Him.” If I take the words of the plaque to heart, then the words of the verse quoted above have to do with more than finances. What natural gift, talent or ability can I offer back to the Lord?

Take my life Lord, and let it be always only for you, my King. Amen

