

Devotions:

Monday: We are Blessed

This morning's scripture is John 1:16 – "From the fullness of His grace we have all received one blessing after another."

From the fullness of Christ's grace, we have received one blessing after another. Stop a moment, beloved, and ponder the astonishing gift of salvation; by grace through faith in Christ. Because it's entirely a gift; not as a result of works; this salvation is secure. Our part is just to receive what He accomplished for us on the cross, believing with the faith that was given to us. This undeserved Love and favor is ours forever. His grace has infinite value!

Multiple blessings flow out of grace because of its extraordinary fullness. Guilt feelings melt away in the warm Light of His forgiveness. Our identity as children of God gives our lives meaning and purpose. Relationships with other people improve as we relate to them with love and forgiveness.

The best response to His bountiful grace is a heart overflowing with gratitude. Take time each day to think about and thank Christ for the blessings in our lives. This protects our hearts from weeds of ingratitude that spring up so easily. Be thankful!

Stay safe, stay healthy, take care and God Bless! Pastor Mary Lou

Tuesday: Light of Life

This morning's scripture is John 15:13 – "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends."

As you come to know Christ more intimately, you grow increasingly aware of your sins. This presents you with a choice: to focus on your flaws and failures or to rejoice in His glorious gift of salvation. When you keep your focus on His sacrifice for your sins, you live in the joyful awareness that you are wonderfully loved. There is no greater Love than Christ's, and it is yours forever! The best response to such a fathomless gift is to love Him with all your heart.

Tragically, many people think they have little, or even nothing, for Christ to forgive. They've been deceived by the prevailing lie that there is no absolute truth. They believe god and evil are relative terms, so they see no need for a Savior. These deluded ones do not seek His forgiveness, and their sins remain unpardoned. The evil one's deceptions have darkened their minds. But Christ is the Light of the world, and His Light can shine through you into their lives. Because you are His follower, you never walk in darkness, you have the Light of Life!

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Wednesday: Looking for Lasting Joy

This morning's scripture is Romans 15:13 – "May the God of hope fill you with all joy."

How often have you found what you were looking for in life, only to realize it didn't bring you the satisfaction you thought it would?

It is life's ultimate frustration, thinking we will find fulfillment in the things of this world. But they can never bring lasting happiness. As one bumper sticker has expressed it, "All I want is a little more than I have now."

We look for love, security, and happiness through our jobs, our possessions, our relationships, but if they really brought lasting joy, wouldn't we have testimonies to that effect from millions of people all over the world? Instead, we find emptiness, discontent, and hopelessness.

Try putting Christ first and watch how your life is turned around. You will discover that He alone is the source of the love, peace, and joy you have been searching for.

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Thursday: You Can Trust

This morning's scripture is 1 Peter 5:7 –“Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.”

We can trust the One who died for us. In this world of spin and scams, people often find it hard to believe anyone. They talk about requiring others to “earn” their trust by proving themselves. Christ is the quintessential Person who has earned the right to be trusted. For our sake, He left the glorious perfection of heaven and began life in our world as a helpless, stable-born infant. He resisted all temptations for thirty-three years so the His sacrifice for sinners would be sufficient. He lived a perfect life and freely gave His body to be tortured and executed; to pay the full penalty for sin. As the result of Christ's death and resurrection, whoever believes in Him has eternal Life!

Jesus wants us to rely confidently on Him, not only as our Savior but also as the God-Friend who is taking care of us. He has already proved how trustworthy He is. Now He invites us to relax in His loving Presence and to confide in Him. Tell Christ our hopes and fears. Cast all our anxiety on Him because Jesus cares for each and every one of us.

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Friday: Discover God's Grace

This morning's scripture is 2 Corinthians 1:12 –“We have conducted ourselves with godly sincerity and pure motives in the world, and especially toward you. This is why we are confident, and our conscience confirms this. We didn't act with human wisdom but we relied on the grace of God.”

Is God's grace really sufficient in times of trouble? Can it sustain us in the midst of life's storms? How about today?

Yes! But to be honest, sometimes it's hard for us to rely on God's grace instead of ourselves. We think we have to grab control of our lives, and we believe the responsibility for shaping our future must be in our hands.

When troubles come, therefore, we resist them instead of depending on God to see us through. Alexander Maclaren, the distinguished British preacher, once wrote, “What disturbs us in this world is not trouble, but our opposition to trouble.”

Put God to the test when troubles come. He won't let you down. In the midst of a painful illness Paul begged God to intervene and take it away. But God replied “My grace is sufficient for you” (2 Corinthians 12:9). I was sufficient for Paul, and it will be for you, too.

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Saturday: The Honor of Serving

This morning's scripture is Luke 10:27 – “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

Our culture emphasis on self first may influence us to view caring for others as a chore to be endured. These days, a life dedicated to serving others is deemed less desirable than a life spent pursuing one's goals and ambitions. But the Bible highlights the privilege of putting others first. God honors those who serve.

Ruth, the heroine of a famous Old Testament story, is honored for caring for her mother-in-law. Others esteemed her for that and agreed that God would repay her richly.

In the New Testament, Jesus always put others first. He didn't cling to any of His rights. He laid them down to serve. And Jesus encouraged His followers to do the same.

In Luke 10:30-37, Jesus made it clear whom His disciples were to serve; their neighbors, by telling them the story of the Good Samaritan, a man who went out of his way to show extravagant mercy to a stranger. Jesus exhorted His listeners follow the hero's example.

Each day brings many opportunities for us to follow such examples and practice the great commandment: “Love your neighbor as you love yourself.”

Let's approach each opportunity to care for another today with extravagant mercy. May our acts be motivated by love for our "neighbors" and a desire to please Jesus. God sees our acts and seals each one with His stamp of approval.

Ask God to help you to value caregiving as He values it. Let us see serving as a privilege, and thank God for providing the opportunities to love our neighbor and serve Him in the process.

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