



task as a sheep in His pasture is to keep on trusting Him, the perfect Shepherd of our souls. Find rest in Him alone, for He is a surrounding stronghold of unfailing Love.

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

**Wednesday:** Peace

This morning's scripture is John 14:27 – "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

Christ's Peace is such an all-encompassing gift that it is independent of circumstances. Though we lose everything else, if we gain His Peace we are rich indeed.

Let that be a deep comfort to each of us, especially amid the many aspects of our lives over which we have no control! When we are feeling at the mercy of our circumstances, His all-encompassing Peace is exactly what we need, even though we sometimes feel unable to receive it. Perhaps that is because we cling to other things; our loved ones, our possessions, our reputation. It is as if we are wrapping our fingers tightly around a small copper coin while He is offering us unlimited supplies of pure gold. His desire is to help us treasure His Peace above everything in the world; recognizing it as a supernatural gift, bequeathed to His followers shortly before His death.

A man who knows he will soon die wants to leave something precious with those he loves. Therefore Christ "willed" His Peace to His disciples and all who would follow Him. He knew this was a difficult gift to accept, especially in the midst of adversity. So, after His resurrection, the first words He spoke to His disciples were "peace be with You!" They needed this reassurance to reinforce what He taught them before He died. We also need to be reminded of the divine nature of this gift, for it is not the world's peace He gives us: It is Peace that transcends all understanding!

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**Thursday:**

Depending On Him

This morning's scripture is Philippians 4:7 – “And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

God's Power flows most freely into weak ones aware of their need for Him. So take heart: Though the journey we are on is one of faltering steps, such steps of dependence are links to His Presence.

Today you feel the journey more than usual. It is a challenge just to take the next step. Sometimes you get discouraged about your ongoing weaknesses. You know that dependence on Him brings spiritual blessings, yet at times you feel trapped by your limitations. Only the knowledge that He is with you keeps you out of the pit of despair.

Awareness of your need for God is what creates a strong connection to His Presence. His Power flows into you continually: It gives you strength to take the next step, strength to resist discouragement and despair, strength to know Him in intimate dependence. Only his Power can enable you to live abundantly in the midst of your limitations. Your day-to-day perseverance, in dependence on Him, is every bit as supernatural as an outright miracle. So don't think that your difficulties signify lack of faith or lack of blessing. They are means to help you stay on the path He has chosen for you.

Though the way before you may be steep and rocky, it is nonetheless the path of life. It is where you encounter His luminous Presence, radiating Peace that transcends all understanding.

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**Friday:**

Thankfulness

This morning's scripture is 2 Corinthians 9:15 - “Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!”

Whenever we are tempted to grumble, let us go to God and talk it out. As we open up to Him, He will put His thoughts into our minds and His songs into our hearts.

There are so many things we would like to be different: in ourselves, in others, in the world. Our natural tendencies are to brood over these matters rather than to talk them over with God. The longer we focus on these negatives, the more likely we are to become disgruntled. Even when we control what we say out loud, our thoughts tend to be full of complaints. Let Him help us think His thoughts.

Trust Him by opening up to Him consistently. Don't wait until we are already discouraged to bring our concerns to Him. As we talk about these matters, remember to thank Him. In spite of how we are feeling, we can thank Him for listening and caring; also, for loving us enough to die for us. Your gratitude will provide a helpful framework for the things that concern us. As we talk about these things with Him, let the Light of His Face shine upon us. Eventually, this heavenly Light will break through the fog in our minds, enabling us to see things from His perspective.

Our communion with Him will bless us in another way also: We will find in His Presence irrepressible Joy. Whether or not He changes our circumstances, we will discover He has given us a new song; a hymn of praise.

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**Saturday:** Worry

This morning's scripture is Matthew 6:34 – "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

Do not worry about tomorrow. This is simple straightforward teaching, but Christ's followers rarely make it through even one day without breaking this command. It is good that we recognize our inability to live according to this instruction. Our ongoing struggle protects us from self-righteous striving: trying to be good enough to deserve His Love. Nonetheless, He does want to help us with our tendencies to worry.

Because our minds are in a fallen condition, they will sometimes wander across the timeline into tomorrow's trouble. However, early intervention can minimize the damage. As soon as we realize we are worrying about tomorrow, take action: Simply leave those thoughts where they are (in the unreality of the future), and come quickly back to the present. Since the future has such a strong pull on our minds, it's helpful to direct our thoughts to something that appeals to us in the present, an interesting activity, beautiful weather, a dear friend or family member. At times when nothing about the present seems appealing, His Presence lovingly awaits our attention. He is always near, so turn our thought to Him is an excellent option at all times. Come into His joyous Presence, and He will delight us with unmerited Love.

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