

The Little Church on the Prairie Lakewood Grace



*Lenten Devotional
Booklet
2021*

A Look Back To See Forward

Monday, March 1, 2021

GOD'S GIFT GIVEN FREELY

READ: Romans 3:21-26; Leviticus 16:15-16

OPENING PRAYER: Lord, thank you for your grace, given freely to us. Help us to remain grateful each day, in these uncertain times, that we as believers can hold tight to the truth that you have justified us, even though we fall short. Thank you for loving us beyond our understanding. Amen.

MEDITATION: This is a wild world that we live in, where unrealistic expectations of perfection are often imposed upon us. It can be easy to seek our worth and identity in many things: our career, our financial status, our successes and accomplishments, our belongings, what others think of us, and so on. It is easy to forget this most important truth that defines our worth in a way we could never have achieved on our own. And this truth is all the more amazing and overwhelming because as Paul reminds us, we all fall short of the glory of God.

The justification we were given through Jesus Christ not only wiped the slate clean, it came with the inheritance of salvation! We sometimes struggle to grasp this, as it is given to us freely, not earned. When we can let go of trying to completely comprehend God's gift of grace and justification, we can receive it and be freed from the weight of trying to be "good enough" yet we never can be.

Praise God we weren't left to work out salvation on our own! We are made new when we accept God's gift and find our hope and identity in him.

CLOSING PRAYER: God, thank you for sending Jesus as a means of justification for our sins. Help us to cling to this gift from you, and to remember that it is you who defines our worth. Thank you for being our strength in difficult times, a constant in changing circumstances. Amen.

Heather Epperson

Tuesday, March 2, 2021

LOOKING BACK TO SEE FORWARD

READ: John 6:44-51; Isaiah 54:13

OPENING PRAYER: Heavenly Father, enter my mind and heart as I try to understand your words. Amen.

MEDITATION: Jesus is explaining that only by first being drawn in by God can your path lead to Jesus. Learning the teachings of God, as explained in our Bible, is necessary for us to come to Jesus. By believing in Jesus, we have eternal life. We need to learn the way of a Christian Life as taught by God (Isaiah 54:13). By our regular reading of the Bible, we will learn the Christian Principles. Our charge is to live a life that will reflect these principles.

CLOSING PRAYER: Dear God, may we feel your presence as we try to live the teachings in the Bible. Amen.

Darrel Stutesman

Wednesday, March 3, 2021

JESUS IS GOD

READ: Hebrews 1:5-9; Psalm 2:7, 2 Samuel 7:14, 1 Chronicles 17:13

OPENING PRAYER: Dear heavenly Father, be with us as we read and think on these verses. Help us to understand your word. Amen.

MEDITATION: Paul says that God the Father called Jesus his Son and that he will reign over us and the angels forever. God said for all the angels to worship him. Can we do anything less? His kingdom is uprightness and has no end.

Colossians 1:16 says that Jesus created all things and that he is God. There is nothing created that he did not make! Some religious groups claim angels are not created beings, but the Bible says that the Son, as the image of God created the angels. So that even Satan as a fallen angel was created by him.

CLOSING PRAYER: Dear God, please be with us in our worship of you. Amen.

John Wickliffe

Thursday, March 4, 2021

PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE

READ: Mark 9:11-13; Malachi 4:5

OPENING PRAYER: Lord, let us learn from the past and look forward to the present as Christians. Amen.

MEDITATION: In these verses, Jesus is talking to Peter, James, and John after their return from the Transfiguration. In the book of Malachi, it was recorded that Elijah does come first and was sent to restore the people of Israel back to God by changing their ways and by having them repent. He was rejected and suffered. This was a view of what was to come for Jesus.

Most thought of Jesus as a prophet, or teacher, or even a miracle worker, but not the Messiah they were waiting for. John the Baptist was in respects like Elijah due to the fact he came to prepare the people for the coming of Jesus.

Once Elijah's mission was completed on earth, he did not die but was swept directly to heaven.

CLOSING THOUGHT: During this Lenten season, we are reminded of the death of Jesus, who was buried, and rose from the dead. With his resurrection and thus victory over death we have the true meaning as Christians to celebrate Easter.

Doug Berglund

Friday, March 5, 2021

WAS JESUS NEEDY?

READ: Matthew 25:31-46; Isaiah 58:6-9

OPENING PRAYER: Dear Lord, open my eyes and ears to all who need help. Amen.

MEDITATION: In this passage Jesus tells us to help the needy. Who are the needy? The person on the street corner? The person living on the street? These are just a small portion of the needy. Everyone we meet should be seen as needy. Jesus said, "Whatever you did for one of the least of these, you did for me". We should see Jesus in everyone. We should help not only the people we see as "needy" but even the ones we don't see that way: the new kid in school, the not so popular one. How about the new person at work? Someone who can't reach the top self at the supermarket?

When Jesus came into this world, he had no place to lay his head. During his ministry he had no place to stay. Was Jesus needy?

If you are a follower of Christ you will treat others with kindness. If you do this, you will serve them as if you were serving Christ himself.

The good works in the parable are not the cause of salvation but the effect of salvation. We will be known by our good works and acts of kindness, not by our words.

CLOSING PRAYER: Lord, thank you for being so understanding. We are all sinners and in need of help. Amen.

Don Becker

Saturday, March 6, 2021

IN OUR DARKNESS, HOPE

READ: Hebrews 4:12-16; 2 Chronicles 7:14, Isaiah 41:13

OPENING PRAYER: Lord, may you give me eyes to see me as you see me. Amen.

MEDITATION: When John opens his Gospel with a series of metaphors – God as the Word, God as light, God as life – he eventually arrives at a line that summarizes the Gospel story: “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” (John 1:5 NIV). This introduction tells us all we need to know: This is a story of hope. Jesus’ very human and grace-giving death is not the end.

We can see this same language repeated in Hebrews, but whereas John and the Gospels are accounts of Jesus’ life, Hebrews is an argument for the necessity of belief.

Every basic argument structure can be broken into two steps: First, you must prove the problem, then you must provide the solution. In the passage above, the author of Hebrews begins with the problem (verses 12-13): our dark sin doesn’t stand a chance beneath God’s penetrating light.

The solution (verses 14-16), is a God who is capable of empathy because he was also human, yet blameless. In these two paragraphs, we are presented with a neat argument for belief; a reminder of the need for the resurrection but beneath the blinding light of God we have hope of salvation.

CLOSING PRAYER: Lord, may I have confidence in your grace and mercy, so that I may believe that all you see in me has been forgiven. Amen.

Adie Kleckner

Third Sunday in Lent, March 7, 2021

THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT?

READ: Matthew 22:34-40; Deuteronomy 6:5, Leviticus 19:8

OPENING PRAYER: Lord, open our understanding of your word today. Amen.

MEDITATION: Religious leaders who had been following Jesus began to see that many of his teachings were quite different from theirs. One of them, a lawyer/expert in religious law, posed this somewhat tricky question: "Which is the greatest commandment in the law?" He wanted Jesus to pick one commandment as the most important, the greatest.

Many of us are familiar with Jesus' answer: Love God and love your neighbor. The whole Law of God hangs on these two. Nothing is greater. First: Love God. Second is like it: Love your neighbor.

Ask yourself: Do I really love God? An easy answer isn't there, is it?

Do I really love my neighbor? Or am I satisfied enough to just be nice to my neighbor? How do I love my neighbor? Do you answer, "Not very well"?

As Pastor James has said: "When you love God, you love what God loves. When you love God, you love the people for whom Christ died."

Do you love what God loves? God the Father loves the Son (John 5:20) and because the Son fulfilled all the commandments, we are free to love him and our neighbor through Christ in us.

CLOSING PRAYER: Change my heart, O God, and teach me how to love you and my neighbor well. Amen.

Ray Larsen

THE CHARGE TO EACH OTHER

Go out into the world in peace;

have courage;

hold on to what is good;

return no one evil for evil;

strengthen the fainthearted;

support the weak, and help the suffering;

honor all people;

***love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.***

From the Book of Common Worship