

Crossroads Daily Guide
Week of June 12, 2016
Three Most Important Day in Our Lives



Sunday, June 12, 2016

Psalms 139:14 Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it.

Reflection: On the day you were born the world changed forever. There is no one else just like you. You are wonderfully complex – a mixture of shadow and light. You bring you to the world and the world needs the unique gift of you. How does it feel to hear how special you are? What might keep you from believing that you are a gift to the world, not for what you do but just for who you are? With your unique combination of personality and gifts how are you offering God’s unconditional love to others who are also wonderfully complex?

Breath Prayer: Inhale: *I am...* Exhale: *wonderfully complex*

Monday June 13, 2016

Matthew 3:16-17 And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.”

Reflection: At Jesus’ baptism we hear the voice of God declaring who Jesus really is. He is the beloved of God and God is pleased with him. Of course we expect those words to be said at Jesus’ baptism, but what about our own? In his baptism Jesus is representing all of us. We too are the beloved sons and daughters of God. Baptism declares that this is our truest identity and nothing can erase it. This reality can help us say “no” to some of the destructive and hurtful temptations we face. How does it feel to be called the beloved of God? How hard is it for you to accept this identity? What does it mean to be the beloved in your everyday life?

Breath Prayer: Inhale: *I am...* Exhale: *the beloved of God.*

Tuesday June 14, 2016

I Corinthians 12:13 For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Reflection: In our baptism we are marked as the beloved of God. Practically what does that mean for us in our everyday lives? Jesus is our model. As the beloved son of God we see him offering an unlimited welcome to all people, no questions asked. In today’s scripture the Apostle Paul says the same thing by declaring that Jews, Greeks, slaves and free are all baptized alike. It may not strike you at first but that is a very radical statement to make. Go back and slowly read it with an eye looking for the great differences between the people Paul names. Sometimes it is easy to see baptism as just an institutional ritual that makes us part of a particular group – think member of a church. There is some truth to that, but more importantly our baptism should remind us that we all drink of one Spirit – the Spirit of God’s compassion, forgiveness, service and wisdom which is for all people not just church members. As a part of the Body of Christ how might you, with no boundaries, offer the compassion, forgiveness, service and wisdom seen in Jesus to someone today?

Breath Prayer: Inhale: *The Body of Christ...* Exhale: *is beautifully diverse.*

Wednesday June 15, 2016

Joshua 24:14-15 So now, revere the LORD. Serve him honestly and faithfully. Put aside the gods that your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates and in Egypt and serve the LORD. But if it seems wrong in your opinion to serve the LORD, then choose today whom you will serve. Choose the gods whom your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you live. But my family and I will serve the LORD."

Reflection: The children of Israel were about to enter the Promised Land. Obviously Joshua, their leader, was a bit concerned about the many choices - the many little gods - which they could give their lives to. Joshua declared that before they entered the new land the people needed to be clear whom they were going to follow in the days ahead. In a very simple yet powerful statement he said, "...my family and I will serve the Lord." That ancient statement summarizes what families declare as they present a child for baptism. Baptism is important for the child or person being baptized but it is also a declaration of what is important to the family. What does it mean to declare that your family will serve the Lord? If part of the way you serve is by example, then how are you living in the way of Jesus' compassion, forgiveness, service and wisdom within your family? Your extended family? How are you helping your children to know what is most important in your family? What might they say is seemingly most important?

Breath Prayer: Inhale: *As for me and my family...* Exhale: *we will serve the Lord.*

Thursday June 16, 2016

Deuteronomy 6:5-9 Love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your being, and all your strength. These words that I am commanding you today must always be on your minds. Recite them to your children. Talk about them when you are sitting around your house and when you are out and about, when you are lying down and when you are getting up. Tie them on your hand as a sign. They should be on your forehead as a symbol. Write them on your house's doorframes and on your city's gates.

Reflection: Jesus often referred to this ancient text as the foundation to the most important teaching of all – Love God, love others and love yourself. This teaching was so important that Jewish families regularly recited the words to their children. As a family they talked about the meaning of the teaching. They had symbols to remind them of its importance. They even wrote the words on their doors. More formation happens in our families than anywhere else. That makes the family the greatest forming center of all. How does this all important lesson get shared in your family? There is a saying that states: 'in the family more things are caught than taught.' If that is true, then what are the most important teachings your family members are catching, sensing to be true?

Breath Prayer: Inhale: *Love of God, others and self...* Exhale: *is most important.*

Friday June 17, 2016

1 Peter 2:9-10 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people who are God's own possession. You have become this people so that you may speak of the wonderful acts of the one who called you out of darkness into his amazing light. Once you weren't a people, but now you are God's people. Once you hadn't received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Reflection: This passage was used in some of the earliest baptismal liturgies. These words declare that all of us are "priests". All of us, not just the ordained religious leaders, can speak about the wonderful acts of God. No one needs a pulpit or a platform to do this. All we need to proclaim God's wonderful acts is our story of how we encounter God's unconditional love in both the darkness and the light; how we receive God's mercy and grace in times of struggle; how we receive for ourselves and give to others the compassion and forgiveness we see in Jesus. It is our story of transformation – showing how I once was this but now by God's grace I am this - that is most powerful and attractive to others. Think of some transformational moments in your life story. How might your story of transformation help someone today? Telling our stories of struggle and

transformation is not the same thing as preaching, maybe that is why storytelling is so effective. Your story is sacred and at some point someone will need to hear it.

Breath Prayer: Inhale: *My life story...* Exhale: *is a sacred story to be shared*

Saturday June 18, 2016

Matthew 5:13-16 "You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its saltiness, how will it become salty again? It's good for nothing except to be thrown away and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world. A city on top of a hill can't be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a basket. Instead, they put it on top of a lampstand, and it shines on all who are in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before people, so they can see the good things you do and praise your Father who is in heaven.

Reflection: At first glance this teaching of Jesus can feel a bit judgmental. Have I lost my saltiness? Am I hiding my light? When the answer is yes, then we feel guilt and shame. But what if instead of going to self-judgment we offer compassion for ourselves by saying, "Some days I am a healing presence and some days I need to be healed. Some days the light shines through me and some days I need the light to shine into me." The reality is all of us are both healing and hurt. We are both light and shadow. When we can name that as our reality that is the most powerful way to let our light truly shine. Think about the people you know who are vulnerable enough to tell their story of failure and pain and how God's grace held them through it all. Those are the stories that give us an unwavering hope of transformation. How hard is it for you to see yourself as being a person of both healing and hurt and light and shadow? If we can see ourselves this way we will be less apt to project our hurt and darkness onto others and instead shine as the bright light of God's unconditional love at work within us.

Breath Prayer: Inhale: *I welcome...* Exhale: *the light of God's compassion and forgiveness.*