

Daily Reflection on Scripture Week of October 30



When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" Simon replied "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." Jesus asked a second time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Simon replied, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Take care of my sheep." He asked a third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was sad that Jesus asked him a third time, "Do you love me?" He replied, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. I assure you that when you were younger you tied your own belt and walked around wherever you wanted. When you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and another will tie your belt and lead you where you do not want to go." He said this to show the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. After saying this, Jesus said to Peter, "Follow me!" John 21:15-19

If you would like to receive the Sacred Pause on your phone, text "crossroads" to 41411.

Sunday Oct. 30, 2016

John 21:15 When they finished eating, Jesus asked Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" Simon replied, "Yes, Lord, you know I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs."

Reflection: When you read the full text of John 21:15-19 for this week you see Jesus repeatedly reminding Peter of what he is to be about, that is, caring for people. People are the "lambs" Jesus references in this scripture. He makes it clear to Peter that the best way to show his love for Jesus is to care for people. How does this scripture speak to you about your life and your desire to move beyond mere belief in Jesus as God's son to putting faith into action by caring for people? How might you need to care for yourself?

Sacred Pause: Whenever and wherever you meet God face to face it changes things. Search for God in the face of everyone you meet today. Notice the difference it makes in you.

Monday Oct. 31, 2016

Colossians 3:13 Be tolerant with each other and, if someone has a complaint against anyone, forgive each other. As the lord forgave you, so also forgive each other.

Reflection: Throughout the Bible forgiveness is a recurring theme. This scripture reminds us of God's forgiving nature toward us as taught many times by Jesus. Yet, conflict and hostility continue to fester in our homes, our families, our nation and the world. Forgiveness is hard and not easily achieved on our own. It requires a soft and open heart and willingness to rely on the Spirit to help us overcome our natural human emotions of hurt and hostility. Forgiveness is a spiritual practice and if committed to, it will become easier over time. That's why we call it a practice. A practice that takes us beyond just saying, "I believe in forgiveness". How might you practice forgiveness for self and others today?

Sacred Pause: Every day brings conflict. What is your current conflict? Is there someone with whom you need to reconcile? Pause and ask God to help you practice forgiveness.

Tuesday Nov. 1, 2016

Zechariah 7:9 This is what the Lord says, Make just and faithful decisions; show kindness and compassion to each other.

Reflection: In this week's story from John's Gospel, Jesus practices exactly what this Old Testament verse describes. He knew that Peter had betrayed him with his denials but even more he saw the potential in Peter to build a faith community for the future. He showed justice, compassion and kindness to Peter. He encouraged and sent him into the world forgiven and free of the failings of the past to make a difference in the world. Reflect on your own life. Are there some failings of the past that you are carrying? Beyond just believing that Jesus forgives, practice forgiveness for yourself today. This practice will help you to be more forgiving of others.

Sacred Pause: Today practice forgiveness and grace for yourself. Practicing forgiveness for yourself will lead you to becoming more gracious and compassionate toward others.

Wednesday Nov. 2, 2016

Matthew 18:21-22 Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord how many times should I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Should I forgive as many as seven times?" Jesus said, "Not just seven times, but rather as many as seventy-seven times."

Reflection: This conversation between Peter and Jesus comes before the conversation that Peter and Jesus had in this week's story. In today's reading Jesus said, "Forgive as many as seventy-seven times". In the story from John's Gospel we see Jesus practicing what he believed. Jesus not only forgave Peter for his betrayal but affirmed his call to go out and care for the people of the world. What gratitude Peter must have felt for this conversation with his beloved friend Jesus! Just think of the gratitude that others might experience when you practice what Jesus taught and what you believe about forgiveness. Is there someone with whom you could have such a conversation, leading you both to gratitude and joy?

Sacred Pause: Name three things for which you are grateful. Ask God to help you forgive any hurts and to focus on gratitude. This practice of gratitude can change your day.

Thursday Nov. 3, 2016

Isaiah 43:19 Look, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth do you not perceive it?

Reflection: This is such an optimistic verse because God is reminding us that everything is being made new constantly. Just as the very cells of our body are constantly regenerating and sloughing off the old, the love, grace, compassion and forgiveness of Jesus are always at work transforming us. No matter what we have done or not done. This new work is happening in us as individuals and as a church. Can you feel the fresh wind of the Holy Spirit blowing among us as a faith community? Can you feel the Holy Spirit blowing into your life today? Take a moment to reflect on any change that might be happening in your life right now and be grateful.

Sacred Pause: While outside today pause to feel the air around you. Breathe it in deeply. Let it remind you of God's Spirit in and around you. Notice the difference?

Friday Nov. 4, 2016

Psalms 139:23 Examine me, God, Look at my heart! Put me to the test! Know my anxious thoughts!

Reflection: It is good for us to know our own propensity to fail so that we won't judge others so harshly when they fail. Sometimes we need to confess our sins and wrongdoings. Like everyone else we need to ask for forgiveness. A simple prayer of confession is an opportunity to start over knowing we will always receive God's forgiveness. Take a moment and reflect on your own heart. Is there something for which you need to ask forgiveness? Do it and experience the freshness that comes to you when you know you are forgiven. This practice of confession can empower and enable you to practice forgiveness for others.

Sacred Pause: Love Jesus? More than just saying, "Yes, I love Jesus" practice it today by caring, forgiving, offering compassion and serving others. Remember, love is a verb.

Saturday Nov. 5, 2016

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from everything

we've done wrong.

Reflection: This is a most treasured promise and we can count on God's forgiveness each time we ask for it. It is part of the process of renewal in our lives. God forgives us so we can forgive ourselves and then we can forgive others. It is a cycle we have to repeat over and over again. Look back over your week. How did you experience this cycle of God's forgiveness? What part of the cycle do you need to give more attention? Each little step helps you move to a new place of practicing the ways of Jesus beyond just your intellectual beliefs about Jesus.

Sacred Pause: In this moment receive God's forgiveness. God forgives so you can forgive yourself and others. Ask God to help you practice forgiveness of self and others.