

Devotional

Jesus is Greater than Moses

March 15, 2020

Note: Brent Showalter and Pastor Seth developed this devotional to go along with Brent's sermon on March 15. Brent will not be preaching on the 15th, but this devotional is here for you to enjoy!

Monday

Read 2 Timothy 3

The Apostle Paul is writing to Timothy, a man Paul took on his missionary travels and mentored him to become an evangelist and pastor. Paul increasingly trusts Timothy with ministry assignments and Timothy grows to become a co-worker in Paul's preaching before Timothy stays in Ephesus to be the pastor/governor of the church in Ephesus.

Paul is writing to Timothy with important advice and counsel in conducting his pastoral work. Chapter 3 warns Timothy against associating with evil-doers and their corrupt ways. In verses 10-17, Paul now draws a sharp distinction between these corrupt people and Paul's own way of life.

According to Paul, what is the function of Scripture in Timothy's (and our!) life? In other words, what is it useful for?

Paul says that Scripture is God-breathed. Both the Hebrew and Greek languages use the same word to refer generally to breathe, wind, and spirit. God chooses to work through people to bring His Word to His people. God is calling you to be inspired by His Word to bring His message to others.

Tuesday

Read Deuteronomy 21:22-23 and 1 Samuel 31

In ancient times, it was common to execute somebody and then hang their body up as a kind of warning to others or as a display of your victory – a kind of trophy. This is the case in 1 Samuel 31. Saul kills himself in a vain attempt to prevent his execution and humiliation. But the Philistines are just as happy to find the bodies of Saul and his sons and desecrate and parade them around as symbols of victory over Israel. It was a curse to your people for your body to be treated in such a way.

Jesus is executed by crucifixion, which was meant to be a painful, humiliating, degrading warning to anyone who was associated with the executed. But what humans mean for a curse, God means for salvation: Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"... (Galatians 3:13). We are saved because Jesus is cursed on our behalf. As we continue our Lenten journey towards the events of Jesus' death and resurrection, reflect with gratefulness on how Jesus was made a curse so that you could be in grace.

Wednesday

Read Hebrews 3:1-19

The Book of Hebrews was actually an epistle (letter) likely intended originally for a group of Judeo-Christians who had recently converted to Christianity in the first century. However, their foundation was based in Judaism, which was complicating their newfound religion/faith in Christ, and they were beginning to struggle with their walk, even beginning to revert back to their old ways and, whether intentional or not, mistakenly raising Moses up to the same level as Christ. We oftentimes find ourselves in the same place...making things more complicated than they need to be...perhaps while ordering a grande-toasted-white-chocolate-mocha-frappuccino as opposed to one black coffee...or while reading tongue twisters while an app on our phones jumble our words! We live in a complicated world that has been deeply impacted by the evil intentions and actions of the Enemy. It's important we don't allow our own faith to become worldly or complicated. Our faith in Christ should be simple.

Find time today to distance yourself from the complications of the day...find a quiet spot to just listen to God. Pray. Read. Be.

Keep it simple.

Thursday

Read 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

As our brother Paul addresses divisive issues in the young church at Corinth, he is forced to assert over and over again the young Christians' freedom ("by grace [which is a gift] are you saved") while living in a wholesome community in a pagan world. This situation means that all manner of issues come up: food and drink, hairstyles, prostitution, lawsuits, and the list goes on. So to believers trying to find their way in such a society, Paul returns again and again to the slogan-like admonition, "all things are lawful, but not all are beneficial."

The human body is good, not evil, as some ascetics would assert. After all, our Lord rose in body from the grave. Our Lord owns my body and your body. His Spirit is within. So during Lent, perhaps we should examine how we use the body God has gifted to each one of us. Do we work too much? Eat too much? Loaf around too much? Join me in asking yourself, What balance can I find today as I work and live in loving community with other followers of the Risen One? – by Rev. Dr. W. Fred Graham

Friday

As we prepare for Sunday worship, please read and reflect upon Genesis 14:13-24 and Hebrews 4:14-5:10.