



*St. Matthew A M E
Church*

2010

**Lenten
Devotional**

**Reginald T. Jackson,
Pastor**

February 11, 2010

Dear Sisters and Brothers:

God by His mercy and grace has blessed us to see the beginning of another Lenten Season, a time of renewal and repentance when we seek a closer and stronger relationship with God as we walk with Jesus the road to Calvary.

Again the ministerial staff, Stewards and disciples in this congregation have compiled a Daily Lenten Devotional to assist us during this season. I ask and urge you to use it to enhance your daily devotions during the days of Lent. Read the Scripture, the meditation and the prayer. Also included are daily hymns to accompany your meditation and prayer. You may find most of the hymns through the St. Matthew page on [Facebook](#) or at stmatthewame.org.

Lent is the most important time of the year for Christians. We make a conscious and deliberate effort to become more like Jesus. This requires us to practice self-denial and sacrifice, to engage in earnest prayer and do some soul searching. Practices and habits which prevent us from being more like Jesus we seek by the help of the Holy Spirit and fasting to be delivered from and to overcome. In a word we seek to be “crucified with Christ” that we may “rise with Christ.”

Each Wednesday during Lent we will have Bible Study at 6:30PM and “Revival Service” at 7:30PM. Mark the dates on your calendars and plan to be in attendance. Begin now to pray that God will bless our revival and speak to us through His servants. I also ask each of you to join with me in the “Daniel Fast.” This is explained and described in the back of this devotional. There is also a calendar of activities for the Lenten Season here at St. Matthew.

I pray that as individuals and as a congregation we will recommit ourselves to be more like Jesus during this Lenten Season. That we will again hear the call of Christ to “follow me”, and that we will take up our cross and follow.

God be with you on the journey.

Yours and His,

**Reginald T. Jackson
Pastor**

Ash Wednesday, February 17, 2010

Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after me, let him take up his cross, and follow me"

St. Matthew 16:24

Today is Ash Wednesday, the beginning of another Lenten Season, a time of preparation, renewal and sacrifice when we are called to follow Jesus the way that leads to Calvary. In this contemporary age in which we live we must read, hear and understand these words of Jesus. For too many Christianity has become a religion of convenience and comfort. If it's not hard, doesn't require inconvenience or discomfort He's got us, but if it calls for sacrifice and denial count us out.

Let's be honest, mentally and emotionally we are conditioned to the ways of the world, not the way of the cross. The world wants convenience, comfort, gratification and indulgence. The way of the cross is denying the flesh, sacrificing our desires and saying no to self.

Jesus said if we want to follow Him, be His disciple then we first have to deny ourselves. We have to learn how to say no to ourselves before we will follow Him.

As you begin this Lenten Season ask yourself are you able to deny yourself? Your answer will tell whether you are following Christ. Which leads to the more important question, do you want to?

Prayer: Dear Lord, as I begin this Lenten Season help me to be honest with myself. Through being honest may I make life changing decisions which will bless me to say no to self, to say yes to you. Amen

Pastor Jackson

Thursday, February 18, 2010

A Christ like attitude

“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus” PHILIPPIANS 2:5

As a Christian we are called to become involved in other peoples' lives. We are called to have the same attitude as Christ: (to be a servant). We should pray daily asking God to show us or lead us to someone who needs help or someone who just needs someone to talk to and listen to them. Sometimes we get so involved in our own personal gain that we fail to see someone who is in need and hurting in our family or neighbor. It is easy to say that we don't want to get involved in with someone else's problems, but as Christians, we should think and act as Christ would. In other word, what would Christ do? Often time one may say I don't know what God would have me to do. As Christian we should allow the Holy Spirit come into our lives and show us when and where to become involved in the life of a person or group that needs our help. We have to be willing to be used by the Holy Spirit to serve others and help them meet their spiritual needs.

Pray: Lord we come this day as humble servants thanking You for another opportunity to do your will. Lord, help us to be better today than we were yesterday. Holy Spirit you are welcome in our lives. We pray for love, strength, courage, and the desire to help others, and to be like Jesus. Lord we give you all honor and glory. **AMEN**

Terry Spicer

Class # 8

Friday, February 19, 2010

Wait.

Scripture: 1 John 4:18 – “There is no **fear** in love, but **perfect love casts out fear...**”

As I have grown in the things of God, one of the areas of my life that has been a continued challenge for me is waiting. As per my parents, I was born 6 weeks early, and walked and talked way before my 1st birthday. I grew up in the 70s/80s with the comforts of the “instant” generation – microwaves, computers, remote controls. I often say that I started out life in a hurry in a joking manner, however my impatience and inability to wait has caused a lot of issues and has caused some level of a negative impact on almost every area of my life – personal, work and social. I would rush to do so many things because I had a fear of what the outcome might be if I didn’t do them. Even when I had help offered to me for any given task instead of taking the help, I would rush to do it myself for fear that it wouldn’t get done or that it wouldn’t get done “right”. I would buy things in excess for my family or for myself for fear that if I didn’t buy it right then, I might not have it when I needed it. Sometimes I would do this with no regard to things like cost or interest rates or other things that were sensible. Finally, I would ask God for things and then get ahead of his plan and take matters into my own hands causing one disaster after another.

I remember praying so many prayers asking God to please show me the true root of my impatience because I was starting to get on my **own** nerves, then one day I had an epiphany. The anxiety that I was allowing to cause me to be impatient was really fear. I began to see the thing that truly motivated me to get ahead of God or to spin myself into frazzled mess wasn’t really because I craved instant gratification, but because I was fearful. Getting this “Revelation” has done so much to set me free. I have however grown enough in the things of God to realize that when my house is “cleaned” from something, something must come in to replace it so that I able to combat the challenge that I have been delivered from. For me, that has been the realization of God’s perfect love. “There is no **fear** in love, but **perfect love casts out fear...**”

When I start to feel that impatience and fear raising its ugly head – I stop. I sometimes say a quick prayer right where I am standing or retreat to a private place and pray earnestly to God. I first and foremost thank him for knowing what I have needed of before I can even ask. I then feel that anxiety subside because I know that the one who paints a sunset and keeps the stars in place has it under control – Selah.

Prayer: Father God I come to you now worshipping and praising you for the awesome God you are. I ask you to search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts, and to please forgive me for the times that I have sinned by thought, word or deed. I pray that you would continue to give me the grace and the strength to trust and believe you at your word which speaks of your perfect love for me. Because of that love dear God, I can rest and be at peace. I ask this all in the name that is above all other names – Jesus and in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost I pray, Amen.

By: Veronica Morton – St. Matthew AME Steward/Class Leader

Saturday, February 20, 2010

God Is In Control

“The mind of man plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps.”

Proverbs 16:9 NASB

We as believers often find ourselves in a position where we try to control our destiny. We become influenced by the materials and status of others and become consumed with trying to attain the same level of prestige. Most often, in times of despair or uncertainty, we become anxious and decide that God is not moving and we therefore need to take control of our lives. Seemingly almost every motivational speaker or self-help expert in the 21st Century has validated our decision to take control by exercising some variation of the phrase, “You have the power to control your destiny.” While this phrase sounds catchy and empowering, it is in complete contradiction to God’s Word. Numerous passages in the bible tell us that God has ultimate control over our lives. Proverbs 16:9 tells us that while we make plans, God makes decisions for our lives. Jeremiah 29:11 tells us that God has plans for us to prosper and give us hope for a future. 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10 tells us that God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through Jesus Christ, so that we may live eternally with Him. Therefore, since God has determined our future, then we have no control over it.

So, what can we control? God gives us control by allowing us to exercise free choice.

We can *choose* whether or not we are going to *fully surrender our will to God’s will*. While in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus was burdened with the extreme bitterness of the cup of wrath He was given. Jesus prayed and repeatedly asked the Father to “remove this cup” from Him. However, after each request, he surrendered His will to God’s will (Luke 22:42). In the midst of his despair, Jesus knew that regardless of his desires, **God is in control**, and in order to please God, we must surrender our will to God’s will.

We can also *choose* whether or not we are going to be *obedient*, regardless of the road ahead. Deuteronomy 11:1 tells us that we should love God and keep His commandments. Jesus knew specifically of the betrayal, disrespect, agony, pain, and torture that He was going to endure in order to save us. Although God denied Jesus’ request to “remove the cup,” Jesus remained obedient to the Father.

God is in control and has assured us throughout His Word that he loves us and has a plan for our lives. When we get the urge to control our lives, we should surrender our will to God’s will, listen for His direction, and obey Him.

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for being control of my life. I ask your forgiveness for trying to control my life in your place. I ask that you will help me to surrender my will to yours and to be obedient regardless of the road ahead. Lord, help me to remember that even in the face of the toughest times in my life, that YOU ARE IN

CONTROL!

Amen

Submitted by: Kimberly Tolbert
Class #17

Monday, February 22, 2010

Ecclesiastes 11: 3 If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth: and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.

Life Experiences and Challenges

I believe that the Lord wants us to live knowing that He has control over every aspect of our being. Therefore; we must trust Him. He is involved in our daily living. We are faced daily with experiences and challenges in our lives. They can sometimes seem bleak; let's allow God to direct our path. It will allow us to embrace changes that affect our lives. We are then blessed by the Lord who never stops providing, protecting, and caring for us. We are His believers who have faith in Him. He knows what we need today and tomorrow. Accept Him because He keeps His Word and will not let harm come our way.

Prayer: Father, we thank you for your Word. Your Word stays the same and touches lives that are changed forever. There's nothing in this world that compares with the wisdom and joy You give every day.

Nathaniel Mae, Sr.

Class # 16

Tuesday, February 23, 2010

A Disciple Is:

One who responds in faith and obedience to the gracious call of Christ. It's a lifelong call and process to follow Him.

We must deny ourselves every day and be humble to follow Christ. It's not about us, but the Love we have in Jesus Christ.

To take up our cross and follow Jesus, means to follow His will for our lives, not our will.

Jesus calls us to walk the road He walked for eternal life.

Luke 5:1-11

Dear Heavenly Father, with all of your Holiness, I thank you for dying on the cross for the sins of the world and rising on the third day.

Amen

Have a Glorious Easter

Sis. Barbara Warfield

Wednesday, February 24, 2010

ARE YOU CHANGING?

Romans 12:2

“Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is.”

(NLT)

The renewing of our mind is an ongoing process. We cannot be the person God wants us to be unless we allow the Holy Spirit to work in us daily. Unless we know we need to change and are willing to do so, we will not grow spiritually. We have not “arrived.” All of us have a distance to go. The Word says that we are a peculiar people. Therefore, we are not to fit into the world’s mold. To some extent, we are all affected by the world, by the culture in which we live. We are fighting a spiritual battle and need to put on the full armor of God everyday so that we can be strong in the Lord and live victorious lives.

Only by changing and growing in Christ can our lives be aligned with the will of God, can we live an abundant life, a productive, a fruitful life that will be pleasing to the Lord.

The Lenten season is an excellent time to evaluate how and if we are growing. If we have advanced to another level in the past year and feel that we have a closer relationship to God, to Christ than previously, we know that we are making progress. We can ask the Holy Spirit to show us what still needs to happen in our spiritual development so that we can be more like Jesus.

Lord God, thank you for how you are working in my life. Daily, may the renewing of my mind be occurring and may your love be reflected in my words and actions so that others may see Jesus in me and be drawn to Him. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.

Rev. Dr. Shirley Roberts

Thursday, February 25, 2010

I am the way and the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me.

John 14:6

There are many people who are very nice and pleasant to be around. They show compassion to those in need. They are generous and understanding. They are there when you need them. You can confide in them with no worry of broken confidences. You can trust them with anything. It appears that people like that have it all together. You never see them experiencing any hardships, always so happy, always smiling. They have a great job, a great family, and wonderful home...they have "arrived!" Face it; we can all appreciate friends like that.

What about the soul? What about eternity? Is being a good person enough to get you into the Kingdom of Heaven? Sorry to tell you that it is not. It would be a shame to see that your name is not written in the Lamb's Book of Life after your life on earth ends. Jesus is eternal life and he is the only way one can be guaranteed eternal life. You can refuse to confess it now, but please be advised that there will come a time when...

...That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:10-11

Material possessions may break or wear down; people can move or pass away. Why don't you put your trust in God, the creator, not the creations. Get to know Jesus for yourself. Don't delay because tomorrow is not promised to you.

The choice is yours. God gives us free will. He loves everyone and wants all to love him. Just think about how we treat those we love. We want to please them. Not because of what they can do for us. We do it out of love.

We have to make the decision to choose Jesus. He said:

I am the way and the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me.

John 14:6

Prayer: Lord, I confess that I am a sinner I acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord and died for my sins. I believe that Jesus the Christ has risen, sits on the right side of the Father, and will come again. Jesus, please come into my heart. I accept You as Lord of my life, as my personal Savior. In His name I pray, Amen.

Further study: John 14:5-14

Terrie Roberts Class #25

Friday, February 26, 2010

*'Put On The Full Armor Of GOD So That You Can Take Your
Stand Against The Devil's Schemes' Ephesians 6: 11*

On Christmas Day, December 25, 2009, 23 year old Umar Farouk Abdulmatullab, son of a wealthy Nigerian banker boarded a Detroit bound plane with the intention of blowing up the plane over American soil. In spite of all our International Intelligence and Airport Security, he was successful in boarding the flight to Detroit.

In our daily walk of Life, we secure ourselves with The Full Armor of GOD. However, THE LEAST CRACK IN THE ARMOR gives the devil all the space he needs to cause havoc in our lives.

FATHER GOD, thank you LORD that when the devil has his way with us, we are able to turn to YOU for forgiveness. In JESUS name we pray.

John Clark
CLASS # 10

Saturday, February 27, 2010

Voices of Wisdom

Job 32: 6-10

So Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite spoke out and said, "I am young in years and you are old; therefore, I was shy and afraid to tell you what I think. I thought age should speak, and increased years should teach wisdom. But it is a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty gives them understanding. The abundant in years may not be wise, nor may elders understand justice. So I say, listen to me, I too will tell what I think."

Job, going through all of his trials, was convinced of his own innocence and was blaming God. His peers, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, gave up trying to show Job that he was wrong, when Elihu, a young man paying attention to the conversation, became agitated and insistent that Job listen to his point of view. What impressed me was the fact that this young man had plucked up his courage to join in the argument and present his point of view with conviction to his elders. I thought that this situation frequently happens as adults see a problem, discuss and debate it, and often ignore the younger folks (in the family, in the meeting) waiting to chime in with their opinions until finally one has the nerve and skill to make him/herself heard. And many times the contribution made by the younger person turns out to be well received but would have otherwise gone unshared.

The book of Job does not tell us how Job and his companions received Elihu's arguments, because after Elihu finished speaking, God spoke. So in trying to find out more, I turned to the internet and discovered that Elihu is a bit of a controversial figure. Some think that he was totally wrong and out of place in confronting his elder, in essence, calling Job out. Others think that Elihu didn't contribute anything new to the argument but rehashed what Job's peers had already put forth and there are those who think he is a theological hero. After learning this, I began considering whether or not my initial appreciation for Elihu was valid and I came to the conclusion that it was. You have the "children should be seen and not heard" or "wait to be spoken to" camp which is certainly non-productive. Then, if in trying to make a convincing argument, a younger person simply paraphrases what has already been said, at least you know they have been paying attention and internalizing values, which is not a bad thing. But in the last instance, a young person, on fire and enthusiastic may bring just the new perspective that a situation needs and that can be a wonderful thing.

Heavenly Father, we thank You for the blessing of our children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews and all the other young people in our lives. Please open our ears and our hearts that we might truly hear their voices. Help us understand that we don't know it all and that, just as You have blessed us, You also have blessed them with the ability to think and reason. Help us to be patient, open-minded and encouraging so that they will grow with the discernment and confidence necessary to make good decisions and develop the ability to speak up and offer solutions to problems so that we as individuals and as society in general will have a prosperous future. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Leslie Allen

Class #30

Monday, March 1, 2010

The Gift

Scripture: John 5: 25 -26

Verily, Verily, I say to you, the hour is coming, and, now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the son of God : and they that hear shall live. For as the Father has life in himself; so has he given to the Son to have life in himself.

Meditation: As we celebrate this Lenten season let us remember the reason for the season. Jesus died so that we may live. We must be mindful of what, love God has for us. To give Jesus life up on this Earth, so that he might rise again to save us from our sins. Yet so few of us can even bow our heads to say thank you Father. This Easter let us be mindful of why we were created, for his glory and pleasure. Jesus it is all about you!!! and we thank you for the gift.

Prayer: Dear gracious and heavenly Father, I come today to give you praise. I thank you for loving me. You are my rock and my strength and for that I thank you. Father you guide my feet to keep me out of harm's way. Lord you open doors that; I thought would never be open, for that I thank you. Father I thank you for the greatest gift of all, Jesus my Savior.

Amen.

Leroy Collins

Tuesday, March 2, 2010

Just Ordinary People

Nehemiah 6:15-16

Nehemiah was a common man, a layman, not a prophet. He was motivated by his relationship with God. He demonstrated excellent leadership. Through careful planning, teamwork, problem solving and the courage to get the job done, he accomplished a seemingly impossible task. You know the story: Nehemiah was the Kings' Cupbearer, he had a good job but, the walls of Jerusalem were still in ruins and it broke his heart (Neh. 2:3). He talked to God about it and God gave him a plan. Like Tom Cruise, in "Mission Impossible" Nehemiah set out to accomplish his mission. Well the rest is history! The walls were rebuilt in record time, despite the resistance of others, by an ordinary man who allowed an incredible God to use him to do this seemingly impossible task. Often time we see needs in our communities, churches, schools, etc. and typically do very little or shamefully nothing at all. We need the people of God to not only meet and discuss what changes need to be made but rather to take action and do something about it.

We all can make a difference in this world. When we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior we enter into a personal relationship with him. When we confess Salvation we are gradually and dramatically changed, thus we are transformed into new creatures. We are the children of God, saved by grace through faith in His son Jesus (Rom. 10:9). He then sanctifies us, sets us apart for His special use (II Tim. 2:21), to accomplish great things in His name, for His glory.

God is still in the business of working through His people to accomplish seemingly impossible tasks. In order to do more for God we all must pray, persevere and sacrifice like Nehemiah. He was not a Pastor, Steward or Chairperson of an organization but he was motivated by his relationship with God. His integrity, administrative gifts, and wisdom paved the way for the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. No matter our race, gender, age, or class we each have a special calling to do God's work. God will use our unique ways to accomplish His purposes. We have "A Divine Hook-up". What's the vision God gave you? Is there anything too hard for God (Gen. 18:14)? The task at hand may not be easy but I believe we can do all things through Christ (Phil. 4:13)! Let's put God to the test. Pray, plan, persevere, sacrifice, and step out in faith. Applying God's Word is a vital part of our relationship with Him. We can make a difference in the world because we have an intimate relationship with the Almighty God through Jesus Christ.

In His Service,

Divinia E. Stewart

Wednesday, March 3, 2010

The Bloody Bridegroom

Exodus 4: 24-26

In reading this chapter in Exodus, I thought these verses were oddly placed in the middle of the story. I found it strange that after telling Moses that he was going to be used by God to deliver the people of Israel, that God would try to kill him, so I decided to do some research. The commentaries on this passage seem to indicate that Moses had neglected to circumcise one of his sons. He did not follow the law God had instituted, that of circumcising every male on the eighth day of life. Circumcision was a procedure that indicated a covenant with God, and it had to be followed, or else it would result in death. Moses was so near the point of death that he could not circumcise his son, so his wife, who was repulsed by the process, had to do it for him in order to spare Moses' life. She calls Moses "a bloody bridegroom".

As I read those words I remembered that we are the bride of Christ, and yes he is our bloody bridegroom or our redeemer. Our sins required our punishment of death, a debt we could not get ourselves out of, so God did something merciful for us. He allowed the blood of Jesus to be shed on the cross so that we would not be killed; in the shedding of Jesus' blood our sins are forgiven and we too are spared from death. Thanks be to God that through the death and resurrection of Christ our relationship with God is restored.

Blessings,

Donna Ho-Shing

Thursday, March 4, 2010

What's Our Role in this Battle?"

Everyday can seem like a battle. Every decision can seem like a test. Scripture reads, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Ephesians 6:12), therefore as Christians our belief is to be that this is not our fight, right? We also quote passages that say, "No weapon formed against me shall prosper" (Isaiah 54:17), therefore are we supposed to simply sit back and be a Christian spectator? The answer to that is a resounding "No!"

While the answer is no, let me assure you that the scriptures still remain very much true. As we get deeper into the Word, it is critical for us to know the whole story and to always be reminded to do as Jesus has taught in His example. While we are told that weapons will not propose, we are not told that we will not be attacked. However, the instruction from God is for us to stand. "[So] that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand" (Ephesians 6:13). Due to our battle with the flesh and all the weapons that seek to distract and destroy us, "standing" can sometimes seem like a tremendous task. However in spite of that I say to you as Paul wrote in his letters to the church at Corinth, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord"

(1 Corinthians 15:58).

Prayer:

"I'm stronger, I'm wiser, I'm better... so much better. When I look back over what he brought me thru, I realize that I made because I had You to hold onto."

Lord, continue to grant me your peace and bless me with your strength. Lord, as these days ahead are yet unpredictable, give me the confidence to stand firm in all circumstances as Your Will would have me to do.

Shannon L. Stukes

Youth Ministry Director

Class #36

Friday, March 5, 2010

Turbulent Times

Phillipians 4: 6-7

Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Living in today's world we are confronted with many challenges. We are bombarded with situations that require us to make good decisions and choice that will impact our present and future. We see the increasing violence, the value of education decreasing, declining resources and most of all the absence of genuine love and caring for one another. We are currently in a recession, so many people unemployed and others worried about losing their jobs. There are much too many home foreclosures and we are engaged in two wars. The threat of terroristic acts abound.

We are living in a global world where things that affect one country impact other countries, such as the economy. We have all kinds of natural disasters, such as earthquakes, tornados, hurricanes, etc. Yet the Apostle Paul writes that we are to be anxious about nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God and He will give us peace which passeth all understanding through Christ Jesus. We must pray. It is wonderful us to know that we serve a God that loves us so much that he sacrificed his only begotten son that we may have everlasting life. God wants us to live a victorious life, although we live in turbulent times God's remains the same, He is the constant in our lives that never changes. He is the great I AM.

During this Lenten Season as we relive Jesus' decision to die on the cross for us so that we might have redemption and be saved.

We must reflect on the price that was paid and realize that we must live according to God's will and purpose for our lives. Therefore, no matter what happens we are assured that God keeps His promises. We can experience the love, joy, and peace of God through Jesus Christ.

Dear Loving Father, thank you for your love that you give to us unconditionally. Thank you for your Grace and Mercy. Forgive us of all our sins; wash us in your blood that we may be made whole.

Amen

Shirley Grundy

Saturday, March 6, 2010

1 JOHN 4:12 “ No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us.”

KNOWING GOD’S LOVE FOR YOURSELF

God loves us more than we can ever know because He lives in us and we must have confidence in Him. The bible says there is no fear in love. God loved us before we knew and understood what love was all about. He loved us before the creation of the world. God knew you and loved you.

Our blessing is having an intimate relationship with God. We must know that God is our Father and God wants us to obey and trust Him. Some of us find it difficult to believe that God loves us just as we are. 1 John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world that he gave His one and only son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” God sent his son Jesus into the world to save the world through him.

We can talk to God anytime because he is always there. The way that we love one another can distort how we perceive God’s love. We put conditions on our love. We are emotionally involved and use our emotions for the wrong motives. God’s love is unconditional. God takes us just as we are, the lowly, the brokenhearted, the down-trodden, the drug addict, the alcoholic, the prostitute. Jesus says, “Come to me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” He says, “Take my yoke, for my yoke is easy and my burdens are light.”

Isaiah 53:5 says “But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed.” He heals us of sickness whether it is physical, mental or spiritual.

We talk to God by the reading and hearing of God’s word - the Bible and knowing how to pray by the scriptures (God’s word).

If a man loves Me, he will keep My words; and my Father will love him and we will come unto Him and make our abode with Him.

Jesus says if you love Me you will obey My commandments and I will ask the Father and He will give another comforter to be with you forever.

My prayer for today is:

Almighty God, I love You and thank You for filling my life with joy. I thank You that I am so blessed and cannot be cursed. I thank You that in all things You cause me to triumph. I thank You for Your strength within me that comes from that joy. I thank You for loving me. I give You the honor, the glory and the praise, because You are worthy to be praised.

In Jesus’ name I pray,

Amen.

EVANGELIST DOLLY RYAN ROBERTS

Monday, March 8, 2010

Who is really the Head of Our Life?

We often hear people say, God is the head of my life and in most cases this is not the case. We live according to how we think and the images that are in our minds. To often Christians have been bombarded with so many negative images, God have been pushed to the back of our minds. When this happens the devil has taken over and our thoughts and behavior are not in line with having God as the head of our lives. Galatians 5: 19-21 describe the type of life we live when we do not have God as the head of our life. Our lives can not be fulfilling, loving, and joy filled or pleasing to God.

During this Lenten season let us do some soul searching and mind cleansing. Instead of giving –up behaviors for the season, let us get rid of anything that hinder us from having God as the head of our lives. Let us set our minds on the word of God so that we can have prosperity and peace (3 John 2).

Robert D. Jackson

Tuesday, March 9, 2010

God Has The Master Plan

JEREMIAH 29:11

“FOR I KNOW THE PLANS I HAVE FOR YOU, DECLARES THE LORD. PLANS TO PROSPER YOU AND NOT TO HARM YOU, PLANS TO GIVE YOU A FUTURE.”

GOD has a plan for our lives! While GOD knows the plan he has for us, sometimes we do not. Because we do not know, sometimes we do not follow the blue print he has provided for us. The adversary knows GOD has a Plan as well, for he also has a plan. His plans are of evil not good. Plans to destroy our future and unravel the ultimate destiny GOD has planned for us. The key here is he needs our help to do so. The adversary puts temptations in our path that lead us to make wrong choices. He takes great pride and joy in introducing just the right temptations to steer us off course. The good news is the adversary cannot rob us of our destiny, to believe so is to believe God is less powerful. The adversary may cause delay, but it is not “how quickly we finish the race but how we finish.” Those who believe, trust and have faith in GOD will finish victoriously, despite detours that may have caused delay. Choice can be a blessing or a curse depending upon how we use it. Some wrong choices we make are innocent while others are deliberate acts of disobedience born of anger, fear, frustration ... Who amongst us have not made a bad choice. Sometimes the consequences of bad choices can paralyze us, cutting off our ability to pray, have faith and hope for a new beginning. GOD always grants the opportunity to get back on course. There is nothing we can do about our past except learn from it and move on, with the assurance that our past does not define our future. The moment we turn our focus toward GOD a new self emerges and a new beginning awaits. Our future becomes brighter than our past. GOD will lead us to higher ground and everything the adversary sought to steal and destroy GOD will give it back more abundantly. Indeed the master architect has a plan for our lives. “Plans to prosper not to harm, plans to give us a future.”

Prayer:

Lord you promised to provide me with all my needs. I SHALL NOT WANT.

You have given me a spirit of power. I SHALL NOT FEAR

With you Father, nothing is impossible. I SHALL NOT BE BOUND BY LIMITATIONS

You are a light unto my path. I SHALL NOT GO ASTRAY

You are peace in the midst of a storm. I SHALL NOT BE ANXIOUS

You promised to renew my strength. I SHALL NOT GROW WEARY

Help me lord to remember that you have a divine plan and purpose for my life. Help me to recall your divine word when exercising the gift of choice so that I make decisions that are in line with your will and your purpose for my life. Lead and guide this day. Help me to live it to the fullest.

AMEN.

Betty Neal Mantion (Class #26)

Wednesday, March 10, 2010

Unanswered Prayer (Romans 8:22-27)

Not ours to know the reason why

Unanswered is our prayer,

But ours to wait for God's own grace

To lift the cross we bear.

The Lord in his wisdom does not grant every prayer. Oftentimes I have come to thank the Lord for not granting some request of mine. There are other times we may request things that God will not give us because they are completely contrary to his plan for us. Yet we ask anyway.

Even when Paul did not receive everything, as he sought at the throne of grace his "thorn" was not removed; he was just given grace to bear it (2 Corinthians 12:7). Of one thing we can be certain: If our goal is to glory God, he will give us what we ask, or what we would have asked if we could see as he sees.

We must always remember that God's thoughts are not our thoughts, nor are his ways our ways (Isaiah 55:8). When He says no to us, He has a very good reason for not granting our request.

Prayer: Lord God I come to you with all that I am and all that I have, I ask for your forgiveness in all things that I have done wrong in your eyes. And I seek guidance in all things that you are to have me to do. I ask for your understanding in all things that I do not understand, the things that happen in the world, I truly seek your understanding and trust that you will lead me to know your way. These and all things I asked and claim in you.

In Jesus name I pray Amen

Doretha Simpson

Class 13

Thursday, March 11, 2010

In The Meantime

Isaiah 40:31: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

Life is filled with so many ups and downs. There is no shortage of desire we have and need. So

we find ourselves in constant prayer. So what happens when you really want something? It is not outside of God will so you pray about it. It might be a new job, a spouse, children, to get out of debt, or assist in the care of an elder. Along with your constant pray you continue to thank God for all that he has done, is doing, and will continue to do that supplies all of your needs. But, you still have these desires so you keep praying. But, God is quite about it and you are left waiting.

It is the waiting time that I call "the meantime". It's not easy to wait for months and years. But there are times when we must wait. God moves and responds in His time which is different from ours. His reasoning is supernatural and there is no way for us to ever understand how and why God moves in the way that he does. So how do we wait? We see others promoted on the job, getting married, becoming pregnant, and still others who appear to have enough money to cover their needs and their elders. And we wonder when will it be our turn? Why are we waiting so long and how do we turn to God, truly have the faith of leaving it in God's hands and being patient in the knowledge that He will respond to our desire in His time.

Isaiah 40:31 tells us that we have to wait on the Lord and that He will renew our strength. So we must pray for strength for the journey and have confidence to know that God will give us the strength to wait; the strength to be patient. We are told that He will make us so strong that we will not faith or grow weary.

Lord, God, Heavenly Father, I thank you for being the awesome God that you are. I thank you for providing all of my needs. Father, there are so many desires that I have. I know Lord that you have heard my prayers and I trust that you will respond to them in your time. I thank you God and I ask you to please give me the patience in the meantime. It's hard for me Lord, but I know that I can do all things through you because you strengthen me. Thank you Lord—Amen

Karen Deas – Class #5

Friday, March 12, 2010

Road Blocked

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”

Hebrews 12:1-3

Do you ever wonder why your prayers go unanswered? Do you think maybe God is not hearing you? Have you ever pondered maybe its me? If you answered yes to any of these question, you're spiritual journey has hit a **Road Block**. During our Christian journey sometimes we allow sin to creep into our lives and it entangles us, it becomes a distraction with our relationship with God.

As we embark upon this Lenten season, let's look at this as a time to remove those things that may hinder us from having a closer and personal relationship with Christ. Totally surrender all those things that weigh you down to Christ. Let us keep our minds, hearts and eyes fix on the One who can remove all road blocks.

Prayer

All to Jesus I surrender, humbly at his feet I bow, worldly pleasures all forsaken take me Jesus take me now

I surrender all; I surrender all; all I to thee my blessed Savior, I surrender

Donnessa Victor

Saturday, March 13, 2010

The Little Ones

Beware that you don't despise a single one of those little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels are always in the presence of my heavenly *Father*." In the same way, it is not my heavenly *Father's* will that even one of these little ones should perish.

Matthew 18:10, 14

Children are watching us more closely than we know. We nurture or destroy their sense of right and wrong, depending on how we respond to our own conscience. As we make choices today, we should stop and ask ourselves, *How will this affect the young hearts and minds that depend on me for guidance?*

What we have seen *God* do for us and what He has done for His people throughout history must be passed on to the little ones. Their future depends on it. Teach your children well.

A love of God's Word is very important to successfully transferring faith from one generation to the next. The little ones need to develop a relationship with Christ that is based not on rules but on a deep love of Jesus.

Whatever their age, love them unconditionally. Help them learn to love God's Word. Show them how to have a deep love for Jesus.

PRAYER:

LORD, I PRAY for these children. Show them what is right and wrong and how to be a true child of yours. I pray that each one will discover your love and abide in your grace.

Amen.

Debra Thomas
Class #23

Monday, March 15, 2010

*“...Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.
For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or
whether it be evil.”*

Ecclesiastes 12: 13-14.

*These final words from the book of Ecclesiastes remind us of our life's duty and our purpose
which is to fear God and keep His commandments – not just some of them but all of them. We
fear God because we recognize his omniscience and awesome power. Because we fear Him we
strive to please Him by living a life that is holy and pleasing to Him. We give reverence to Him
through our praise and worship.*

As we behold God's creation we see evidence of who He is and what He can do. In the 89th Psalm
it is written: For who in heaven can be compared to the Lord? Who among the sons of the mighty
can be likened unto Him? God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be
held in reverence of all them that are about Him.” Therefore, His enemies should fear Him
because He is sovereign over all things. Everything and everyone are subject to Him. As His
children we fear Him and give reverence to Him because we are thankful for His love. A love so
deep and strong that he gave His only Son, Jesus Christ as the perfect sacrifice to atone for our
sin. In His life, Jesus set for us the example of how we should live and He taught us how to pray
and give God praise. The good news though is that Jesus lives. He snatched victory from death
so that we can be with Him for all eternity.

Our God is an awesome God and He is worthy of our praise. He is to be honored above anything
and everything. If we fail to give Him the glory and honor that He is due, then we will suffer
disappointment and broken fellowship with our Creator, the Lord of the universe.

Jerry Roberts

Tuesday, March 16, 2010

Proverbs 13:24

He who spares his rod hates his son. But he loves him disciplines him diligently.

It is not easy for a loving parent to discipline a child, but it is necessary. The greatest responsibility that God gives parents is the nurture and guidance of their children. Lack of discipline puts parents' love in question because it shows a lack of concern for the character development of their children. Disciplining children averts long-range disaster. Without correction, children grow up with no clear understanding of right and wrong and with little direction to their lives. Don't be afraid to discipline your children. It is an act of love. Remember, however, that your efforts cannot make your children wise; they can only encourage your children to seek God's wisdom above all else!

Prayer

Father God, in the name of Jesus please help me as a parent to be obedient to your word and be a better parent to my children. This I ask in Jesus name; Amen

**Presented by: Charles Brown
Steward Class # 33**

Wednesday, March 17, 2010

WHAT DO YOU DO?

Psalm 24:1 The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it.
The world and its entire people belong to him.

On Jan. 12, 2010, the lifestyles of a people in an already poor country of meager resources came to a sizzling halt. A major earthquake took over the island of Haiti--and in its fierceness, demolished homes, offices, churches and other structures in that country.

What do you do when in a flash your hopes and dreams of a future are buried under the rubble, along with family and friends?

What do you do when even the after-shocks seemingly signal that the God you believed in, trusted, and served has forsaken you?

What do you do when in the midst of a technological age, lights, telephones, and computers don't work and the basic needs of the human body--like water and food--are denied and can no longer be safely fulfilled?

What do you do when at the apex of the turmoil, ships from other countries, laden with food and medicines, cannot dock in a rubble clogged port--and airplanes, carrying search and rescue equipment, have no instructions for landing, from a demolished tower, or a level enough area to land?

What do you do?

"Seek the Lord while you can find him. Call on Him now while He is near" (Isaiah 55:6) God has not abandoned you. He will never leave nor forsake you. In times of difficulty, seek God; In personal discomfort and struggle, seek God; In a national crisis, seek God and encourage others to do the same.

Accept His nourishment without money,
Accept His shelter with or without masonry,
Accept His love which lasts forever,
And in due time, you shall seek your reward, if you don't give up. The earth is still the Lord's and its fullness still belongs to Him; the world and we that live in it are also His. So He is in control.

Prayer: Please hear our prayer, O Lord and grant us Your peace.

Dr. Grace C. Haislip

Thursday, March 18, 2010

Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.
Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him.....

Psalms 32:1-2

The hardest part of forgiveness is of self. We walk around feeling ashamed for the wrong in which we have committed. However, we should understand, once we have confessed that we have sinned, and ask God for his forgiveness, we should not constantly punish ourselves. Shame has you so heavily weighted you cannot live victoriously, this is all a part of Gods' perfect plan.

May I suggest, lift your head up, stand straight, and live as though you know that you are still a child of the Most High God.

We do not serve a God, who constantly reminds us, I forgave you, not one time, but repeatedly, and I still love you. Remember the very second you asked God to forgive you, he did; and what was so wonderful, after he forgave you, he let it go. Your lack of self-forgiveness, allow you to tote around your shame.

"Let it go".

Sister Wanda Warren,
Class 27

Friday, March 19, 2010

HUMBLE YET STEADFAST WITH LOVE

When we read certain Scriptures we find that the Scriptures consistently teaches us that happiness is not in self-centeredness, but in love service and giving of one's self, of time and service to others in need. There is nowhere more eloquent than here where we are exhorted to "Let this same mind be in you as it is in Christ Jesus." We are to rejoice in the Lord. There is unspeakable Joy, in addition to Joy is Peace; believers are to have gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance against such there is no law. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Which in to be evident to all. Why be gentle? Because the Lord is near. This refers to the Rapture not to His presence with His own at all times.

It is belief that in God's Wisdom, He has revealed to us that self-centeredness results in pain and broken relationships, self-giving love brings Peace, Joy and Love, it Heals and invigorates relationships. Since people cannot work hard enough or pay enough, to warrant God's favor they must accept it as a free gift.

Therefore He deserves our praise and adoration for measures of grace that we received of God the Father through sanctification of the spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

O' Gracious Master Father of Grace and Master I come to Thee to share in the joy of the psalmist who said "I was glad when they said let us go in the house of the Lord", may our Holy Spirit bless this hour of worship in your house that we may be refreshed after the toils and burden, the sins and failures of the week day world.

I need so much my Savior's invitation, "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and lean on Me for My yoke is easy and my burden is light. Teach me to come into your presence with a contrite heart confessing my sins and shortcomings, and rejoice because your grace is sufficient for me.

I acknowledge that you are the Lily of the Valley, the Bright and Morning Star, the fairest of ten thousand to my soul. Restore me daily and give me the strength and courage to face tomorrow knowing that you are the source of my joy, look with favor upon me and mercifully help as I face difficult times in my life. Be with me as I face hardships and irritations or temptations of Satan, and the sins and doubts of my own heart. Graciously take me by the hand and lead me on the journey of life as I render service to you and all people. Keep out of my day all harm and danger both of body and soul. Keep my family and church family from all harm and danger of body and soul. Let us live continually in your presence. I pray for my Pastor and his family and that he will continue to preach your word, spreading Gospel where the opportunity arises.

In the name of Jesus I pray.

Amen

Christine Alexander

Saturday, March 20, 2010

I Am Secure!

Trusting the Lord

Trust the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will direct your paths. Don't be impressed with your own wisdom. Instead, fear the Lord and turn your back on evil. Proverb 3:5-7

You can lie down without fear and enjoy pleasant dreams. You need not be afraid of disaster or the destruction that comes upon the wicked, for the Lord is your security. Proverbs 3:24-26

Several years ago at Bible Study I was asked "What do I want out of life" and before giving much thought I responded by saying "I want to be secure" Since then I have learned and changed my focus on what it is to be secure.

We need not be impressed with our material items or our bank statements; if you want to be secure you must be anchored in the Lord and his Word. All other understanding is what we make up which fails to include Christ. We may be able to withstand the economic times we are presently facing, we may have the health benefits we need, and we have a home to go to only because He blesses us with His grace and mercy from one day to the next.

We need to pray that we never forget whose we are and who we serve no matter how successful we may seem to feel or be.

Prayer: I am thankful father for your gift of security, you have wrapped your arms around my family and friends, and you have protected them from hurt and harm. There is no other joy surmountable to your blessings. I know the power of your love, understanding, and forgiveness. I know who to trust therefore I am Secure!

Amen

Joe Allen

Monday, March 22, 2010

There is a duty to lead the children
the way they should go and when they are old they will not turn from it” Proverbs 22:6

“Train them in

Children are a gift from God. Far too often this gift is neglected, unappreciated or ignored. God has tasked us to be good stewards over all that he has given us. He has given us dominion over the earth and all that is in it. He has commanded that as shepherds, elders, leaders we train the children in the Holy Word.

I have borne witness countless times in my journey, years where the neglect, suffering and ignorance of the children have led to the breakdown of our society. Let it not go unsaid that our lack of concern or inability to lead, educate or mentor allows the enemy or devil if you will, take hold of our charges and manipulate them to a no good end. Since it is the ultimate goal of the devil to bring about the decay of society, what better way than to start with our children.

How do we accomplish our goals to educate and mentor our children and beat the devil at his tireless game? First we consult the greatest instruction manual of all time “the written word”. The word says lead by example. “The righteous man leads a blameless life; blessed are his children after him.” Proverbs 20:7. It is written that as overseers we are entrusted with God’s work, as such we must be blameless, not overbearing, quick tempered, violent or in the pursuit of dishonest gain. The word says that we must be hospitable, love what is good, holy and disciplined. We must hold to the word as given so that we can encourage the children and refute those who oppose it. Titus 1:6-9. We must not accept excuses and reject disobedience. Since the beginning of time God has given countless examples of his divine majesty and his love of the righteous man. Therefore there is no reason for man to act or think to the contrary. Likewise the children are admonished to heed the written word. They should respect the wisdom of their elders, honor thy mother and father, for that which is to be gained is priceless. We as elders/leaders must give the children opportunities, things to do. Open their world to new things. Introduce them to that which they have not seen before. Occupy their minds, for “an idle mind is a playground for the devil”. We must teach the written word “Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.” Deuteronomy 6:7

In closing I’d like to echo the words of the Apostle Peter who wrote in an open letter to persecuted Christians about their faith in God and hope for the future.

“To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ’s sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away. Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” 1 Peter 5:1-5

Dear heavenly Father lead me not to temptation but deliver me from evil, guide my footsteps as I pray that my actions will be pleasing in your eyes, give me the wisdom to lead as I humbly except the duty to which I have been charged, for I truly believe that I am my brother’s keeper, and father when my faith dwindles and my flesh becomes weak I ask that you lift me up and allow me to defeat my enemies, father I pray that the lost generations be found and the future generations be raised according to your word in order that they may receive your blessing. These things I ask in the name of my savior The Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

Durwin Coppock Class #1

Tuesday, March, 23, 2010

Laboring and Prospering with the Lord

Scripture: Psalms 127: 1-5

Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.

It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows; for so He gives His beloved sleep.

Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward.

Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth.

Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them; they shall not be ashamed, but shall speak with their enemies in the gate.

Meditation:

As a babe in the faith, I often think of the song I learned as a child "He Has The Whole World In His Hand". Before recognizing that God's hand was always at work in my life I would often comment that 'whatever happens to me, no matter how bad I think it maybe at the moment – always turns out to be the best thing for me'. I never knew that it was God working in my life; guiding me, protecting me, teaching me. Now that I'm older I do recognize God's grace, mercy and favor in my life, for that I continually thank Him. As my faith grows I'm learning day by day to take nothing for granted. There are many others in the same situation, where God continually intercedes on their behalf yet they do not recognize and give God the honor and the glory. They believe that it's luck or even worse – they believe that it's their own doing. One thing Christians must guard against is self edification. As spiritual beings living in a human experience we must guard against self glorification. The best way to guard against this is to pray. Pastor Jackson has said many times that prayer is our invitation to God to interfere in our lives. If we do not consciously invite God to interfere in our lives; He still may do so however, if God's grace is continually misconstrued as luck or something else He may take his hand off of our lives and leave us to our own devices. I think of King Saul who knew not that God had left him. This is the scariest thought of all. That's why a consistent prayer life is essential for growth. Consistent prayer let's God know that we recognize him as our sustainer. It gives Him the honor and glory due him. The more we glorify God, the more he intercedes on our behalf...and one thing that I am sure of is all things work together for good for those who love God. I am sincerely thankful for that.

My Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, help me to not lean on my own understanding but in all things to trust and obey you. Thank you for being my Father and Mother. Thank you for having your hands at work in my life. Help me to be more like you day by day...continue to give me your peace, your love and your understanding. Help me to acknowledge you in all thy ways and to continually give thanks to you. For you are the one true sovereign God. In Jesus' holy name. Amen.

Y. Raymond Reeves

Thursday, March 25, 2010

Grace

*“Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it from me. But he said to me, **“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”** Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weakness so that Christ’s power may rest on me.”*

(2 Corinthians 12:8-9)

This scripture came to me as I was reading my Our Daily Bread devotional book. I wondered what it really meant to have God’s grace and did I truly understand how His grace is revealed in my life? So, with dictionary in hand, and a desire for better understanding, I decided to look up the definition. This is what I found. The Webster’s New Explorers Dictionary defines grace as “unmerited divine assistance.” The prefix “un” means, in opposite of, or not. Something that is merited means that it is earned, so to be unmerited means to be unearned. Divine is defined as, relating to, or being God and assistance is defined as help. Add these definitions together and grace can be interpreted as *unearned help from God*.

Armed with this new knowledge I revisited the devotional which started this whole thing. You see, 2009 had been one of the most challenging, frustrating, discouraging, wearisome and humbling years of my life. I was overjoyed to see it leave. I felt lost, defeated, uncertain, tested, tired and angry that God hadn’t answered my prayers and delivered me from this difficult time. I had dealt with crazy co-workers, egomaniac bosses, job instability, personal disappointments and educational set backs.

The devotional reminded me that the Lord didn’t take away Paul’s difficulty either. Instead, He gave Paul the *unearned help from God* to live with it. The NIV Bible tells us that human weakness provides the ideal opportunity for the display of divine power. I believe that is what the Lord means when He says “my power is made perfect in weakness.” Like Paul, the Lord did not remove my difficulties, however He gave me the grace, *the unearned help from God* to get through 2009 and I trust that His grace is not done with me yet, so I look forward to 2010 because His grace is sufficient!

Father God, thank you for your Grace which gives me the strength to continue in this season of struggle. Thank you for your power that rests on me in my weakness. Thank you for being enough, all I have ever and will ever need. Please forgive my short-sighted impatience in wanting to end this season of difficulty in my time and not yours. Help me to boast gladly of my weaknesses so that I may be a better witness for Christ.

Amy Fowlkes Class #31

Friday, March 26, 2010

'BE QUIET! GOD IS TRYING TO TELL US SOMETHING'

**JAMES 1:19 EVERYONE SHOULD BE QUICK TO LISTEN, SLOW TO
SPEAK AND SLOW TO BECOME ANGRY**

Sometimes the wrong tone of voice or choice of words can cause hurt feelings. JAMES 1:26 tells us to keep a tight rein on our tongue. Once hurtful words are spoken, apologies don't help much. JAMES 3:1-12 tells us how man can tame all sorts of animals and birds but not his tongue. The tongue is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. Who would believe that this tiny organ can do such damage?

The LORD wants our words (tongue) to bless, comfort, uplift & cheer others.

We're also to PRAISE OUR LORD with our mouths HALLELUJAH!

The way we live must also be a reflection of the words we speak. We can't say one thing AND LIVE THE OPPOSITE.

Scripture admonishes us (Col 4:4) to let our conversation always be full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

PRAYER

Lord, always let the words of my mouth be acceptable to YOU and others.
In Jesus name I pray. Amen

Miriam 'Mippi' Clark, President
HARRIET TUBMAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY

Saturday, March 27, 2010

Love

This topic of "Love" should never be taken lightly. Loving one another is not an option. It is a commandment (John 15:12). For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have ever lasting life. (John 3:16)

Man's way of loving is conditional. It is based on emotions. It is also based on selfishness. When our "feelings" are hurt, we are tempted not to love. However, when it becomes hard to give love, this allows God the opportunity to work on your behalf. When we are tempted not to love someone, remember that God never gave up on you.

Love is patient. Love is kind. Love is humble. Love is not envious. Love is not conceited. Love is not rude.

The love of God is the true power of God. Love causes us to change and that change affects others. It is not our "good works" that will get us into the Kingdom of God, but our demonstration of his love.

Prayer: Father help us to love one another, the way you love us. Father, please replace of hearts of stones with hearts of love, Amen.

Karen Taylor

Monday, March 29, 2010

Getting Our Attention

Come back to the Lord your God, because he is kind and shows mercy. He doesn't become angry quickly, and he loves us.

Joel 2:13

How far does God have to go to get our attention? If God had to choose between our eternal safety and our earthly comforts, which do you hope he'll choose? What would happen if God moved us to another not state or City, but to a different Country, like Abraham? Or maybe you were enjoying retirement, sort of like poor Moses? Just like Jonah and his whale? Better yet how about that promotion (like Daniels')? or Samson's demotion,? Wouldn't that just take our wind away? Do you think God could get our attention then?

God will do what it takes to get our attention. After all isn't that what the Bible is all about? We are seeking God. God on the hunt for a willing spirit

God in search for us, looking under the bed, hoping he won't ask us to do anything, but mostly, he's searching for his lost sheep, giving us the opportunity to be found, Praise God! that he loves us, and never gives up on us.

Prayer: My Father and my God, I praise you for your faithfulness to me. I know that today and every day, I can depend on your Love.

Sis. Teri Corum
Class#11

Tuesday, March 30, 2010

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, who is in heaven.”
St. Matthew 5:16

God has given each of us gifts and talents to use to enhance his kingdom. Our gifts and talents are unique to us alone. God did not give us these gifts and talents to be hidden under a bush or be kept for your use only. Each gift that we possess is created to work in synergy with the gifts of others to carry out God’s master plan. God’s greatest gift to us was Jesus who came that we may have everlasting life. But he didn’t stop there. He gave us each something that we have a love for or a special talent that blesses us and others. Maybe you have a love for cooking or sewing, or driving or writing or talking to people. You could be an accountant or teacher or social worker. The list goes on and on. Whatever it may be, use it to the glory of God. Let your talk and actions be more like Jesus every day.

PRAYER: Lord, I thank you for Jesus who is the perfect example of giving his all. Help us to give our all to you.

Bro. Mike and Sis. Diane Brown

Wednesday, March 31, 2010

Beloved, let us love one another: **for love is of God**; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; **for God is love.**

1 John 4:7-8

I pose to you a question. Can I love unconditionally? God's love is with out condition. God's love is everywhere. All year long, all day long and all night long. His love never ceases. During this Lenten season, throughout the month of February, as the season begins to change I pray that how much God truly loves us will reflect in our hearts and minds. How He gave His only begotten Son as a sacrifice for our sins. How the body and blood of Christ is delivered as a constant reminder of just how much God is in love with us. How do I show God that I love Him? I Thank Him! Tell Him in prayer. Tell Him in song. Meditate on His Scripture. Praise Him in the morning. Praise Him throughout your day. Show you love Him by showing your love to someone. Sacrifice your time for someone new. Go above and beyond. Send someone flowers. Tell your family you love them. Hug someone, Kiss someone. Forgive someone. Pray for someone. Show your love at home, on your job, in the street, at your church. Read about love, spread love, receive love, love yourself and love with out conditions. Spread the Lord's message of love in all you do and say. What a wonderful foundation to build your life on. **For God is Love.**

It is my prayer that each and every one of us will bless God with our love for one another. And His promise to you is reveled through scripture and our daily journey with Christ. Amen. **I Love You.**

Eric Reynolds

Thursday, April 1, 2010

Giving Your Best – Your ALL

One day David blessed the Lord before the people. He prayed to God realizing that the people's generosity could only have been realized because God had provided. They were just giving back. A true form of Worship!

Across the world each Sunday we sing "All things come of Thee O Lord, and of Thine own have we given Thee". The scripture states that before David prayed, the people had given their "Best" with a whole heart. Generally when we sing this offertory song we think of money, tithes and offerings. The challenge this Lenten season is to think beyond the baskets of money that our held up each Sunday.

Let's start with one day. Let's start this coming Sunday. We can bless God in our conversation as we enter the sanctuary. We can enter to Worship. Let our conversation be words of encouragement to uplift. Uplift the spirit of a person who was down or shout with them because the Lord has healed them from sickness or illness. Usher in the Spirit with a smile. Let worship be in our smile - even if the first person to come through the doors was the last person last week to give us grief. Maybe our best is in the ministry of song or dance, let our best be in coming to rehearsals, knowing the songs and dance, allowing the Holy Spirit to take and use our talent with which He blessed us. No matter where we sit from the choir stand to the doors, whether we come from a big income or no income at all. We might come from down the street or on the street. Whoever we are and wherever we come from there is some way that we can give our best – which will bless God. They did it in days of old and we can do it now!

As we go through this Lenten Season, let us remember that God gave His only begotten Son (His All – His Best). Jesus died on the cross for ALL who would accept Him. He gave His life (His All –His Best). So when we come to celebrate the Sabbath and we prepare to sing the Offertory song – let us make sure that at least that day we have given (Our all – Our best).

I Chronicles 29:14

¹⁴"But who am I and who are my people that we should be able to offer as generously as this? For all things come from You, and from Your hand we have given You.

Can we pray this prayer today? Prayer: Lord each day I want to give you my best. When I don't, please forgive me. Yes, all things do come from Thee and Lord all to you I owe. Lord I want to start today.

Rev. Marian Sykes-Johnson

Friday, April 2, 2010

"I Don't Believe He Brought Me This Far To Leave Me"

⁴⁶**About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"—which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"** Matthew 27: 46 (NIV)

When Katrina hit the summer of 2005, I was glued to the TV. I was so emotionally affected, I couldn't stop talking about it. My friends thought I was obsessed. I joined the Red Cross and I told my boss I would take a leave of absence without pay to be deployed to New Orleans. In 2010, we have Haiti...I can't even look at the images of this helpless population dying by the thousands in holocaust like massive graves in the streets. You have to think, Why Haiti? the poorest country in the Western hemisphere which has suffered so many natural disasters in its history.

I can only find comfort that God is in control and he will never leave us or forsake us. We've come this far by faith and by trusting in him. A large majority of Haitians practice Catholicism and their faith is being put to the ultimate test. However, it is also their faith that will allow them to survive this devastation. They must believe in God's promise. God's promise is found many times in the Bible from the Israelites in the Old Testament

... Joshua 1:5 (NIV) No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you.

... Psalm 94:14 (NIV) For the LORD will not reject his people; he will never forsake his inheritance.

The ultimate suffering is what Jesus experienced on the cross where he cried out to his father. **"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Matthew 27:46 (NIV)**. We know that God did have a plan and on that third day, Jesus did rise and ascended into heaven and he sits at the right hand of God. God saved us by sacrificing his only son and his promise to us, is, if we believe this, then we will have everlasting life.

My prayerGod, I continue to keep Haiti in prayer, Katrina survivors and all that are going through. I know that you have a plan for my life and others and you are in control. I know it will not always be easy but I thank you for your son, my comforter and provider to get me through. Thank you for always being there for me when so many in my life have not. I love you with all my heart, mind and soul. I give you all the honor, glory and praise. Thank you God.

Your humble servant,

Sherrill Austin

Hymns for Lenten Devotionals

These hymns of the church are provided to assist you with your daily devotions. They may be found on youtube.com or you may look them up on the internet. As read your daily meditation, say your prayer, also listen or sing these hymns. This is an opportunity for you to also learn some new hymns.

February 17th – [I Am Thine O Lord](#)

February 18th - [Amazing Grace](#)

February 19th – [How Firm A Foundation](#)

February 20th – [Rock of Ages](#)

February 22nd – [Abide With Me](#)

February 23rd – [Why Should I Feel Discouraged](#)

February 24th – [Breathe On Me Breath of God](#)

February 25th – [Close to Thee](#)

February 26th – [Sweet Hour of Prayer](#)

February 27th – [Have Thine Own Way Lord](#)

March 1st – [He's Sweet I Know](#)

March 2nd - [How Great Thou Art](#)

March 3rd – [Where He May Lead Me](#)

March 4th – [I Must Tell Jesus](#)

March 5th – [I Need Thee Every Hour](#)

March 6th – [I Once Was Lost In Sin](#)

March 8th – [All to Jesus I Surrender](#)

March 9th – [Is Your All on the Altar](#)

March 10th – [Precious Lord, Take My Hand](#)

March 11th – [Softly and Tenderly](#)

March 12th – [Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus](#)

March 13th – [When We Walk with the Lord](#)

March 15th – [Am I A Soldier of the Cross](#)

March 16th – [Farther Along](#)

March 17th _ [Jesus Is All the World to Me](#)

March 18th - [More Love to Thee](#)

March 19th _ [There Is A Fountain](#)

March 20th – [Jesus Paid It All](#)

March 22nd - [King of My Life](#)

March 23rd - [I Come to the Garden Alone](#)

March 24th - [When Peace Like A River](#)

March 25th - [Nearer My God to Thee](#)

March 26th - [Great is Thy Faithfulness](#)

March 27th - [Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross](#)

March 29th - [On A Hill Far Away](#)

March 30th - [What A Friend We Have In Jesus](#)

March 31st - [Must Jesus Bear the Cross Alone](#)

April 1st - [Down at the Cross](#)

April 2nd _ [Alas And Did My Savior Bleed](#)

April 3rd _ [At the Cross](#)

The Daniel Fast

During the Lenten Season disciples/members of St. Matthew who will be asked to join in what is called the “Daniel Fast.” The Daniel Fast is modeled after the spiritual practices of Daniel in the Old Testament. Basically, the Daniel Fast is to eat only what comes from the ground and that has not been refined or processed. The fast does not stand alone; it is a part of a larger spiritual practice that includes regular and consistent prayer.

In Daniel 10, we learn that Daniel received a revelation that he did not understand until he had fasted 21 days. On the 24th day he had the vision of a man who explained the revelation to him. For 21 days Daniel and Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego ate no “choice” food (meaning he refused to eat the king’s food). At the end of the first ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the men who ate the royal food. He exercised spiritual discipline by denying the body “pleasant food” so he could have deeper spiritual understanding. It is this excellence of spirit we desire as we pursue a stronger relationship with God in fasting and prayer.

During a Daniel Fast we pray three (3) times a day like Daniel. This means in the morning, afternoon and evening.

The foods we eat are:

Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts and seeds, legumes (beans) healthy oils, water, herbs, spices, vinegar, and vegetable juice.

The foods we don’t eat are:

All refined and processed foods, white flour products, white rice, dairy, meat, sugar, honey, bread, fried foods, unhealthy fats and sodas.

St. Matthew AME Church Lenten Activities Calendar

Bible Study 6:30 PM & Lenten Season Services 7:30 PM Wednesdays starting February 17, 2010

February 17th - Rev. Jerry Sanders, Fountain Baptist Church Summit, NJ

February 24th - Rev. Janet J. Sturdivant, Asbury AME Church, Chester, Pa

March 3rd - Rev. Dana Owens, Messiah Baptist Church, E. Orange, NJ

March 10th - Rev. Robert Burkins, Elmwood Presbyterian Church, E.O.

March 17th - Rev. Matthew Watley, Reid Temple AME, Dalton, MD

March 24th - Rev. Kim Anderson, Metropolitan AME Church, NY NY

April 1st – 7:30 PM Maundy Thursday Service

April 2nd – 12 Noon – “Seven Last Words”

April 4th – 6 AM – Easter Sunrise Service

April 4th – 9 AM – Church School Easter Service

April 4th – 11 AM – Easter Worship Service

Epilogue

More than a Leap

When my boy was about eight or nine years old he enjoyed playing a funny game with me. Anthony would climb up on a desk, a dresser or anything high in a room. He would close his eyes open his arms and yell, "Catch me, Daddy!" He would leap into the air without fear or hesitation expecting me to catch him. Fortunately, I always did. Anthony would then laugh and run away in delight.

One day after he performed his stunt yet again, I realized how much trust my child had in me. He *knew* I was going to catch him every time. There was no doubt in his mind. And then I realized that I loved that little boy for the trust he had in me. The recognition almost brought me to tears.

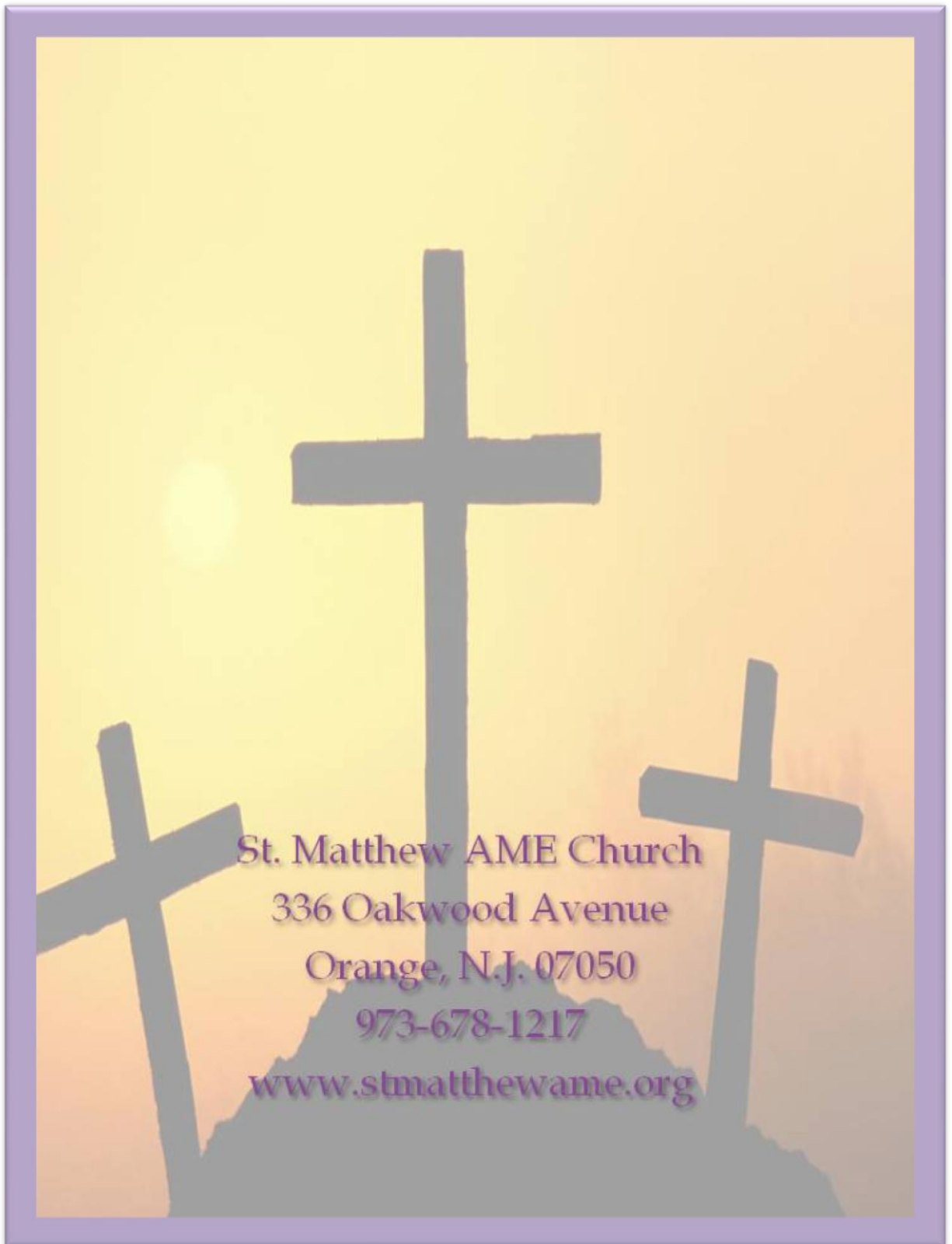
At that moment, I understood that God had been speaking to me through young Anthony.

The Lord wants us to jump into his arms with as much faith as my boy had in me. God would never drop us. And His response to our faith is immeasurable love. *Trust in the Lord*. It's an ancient command that is just as important, meaningful and powerful as it ever has been.

Many years have passed since dear Anthony has yelled, "Catch me, Daddy." He's now a wonderful 190-pound man. Yet there is no doubt in my mind that if he climbed up on a dresser and leaped into my arms—we would both see God real soon!

Isaiah Tremaine
Class Number Twenty

Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; He is the faithful God, keeping His covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love Him and keep His commands. (Deuteronomy 7:9 NIV)



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