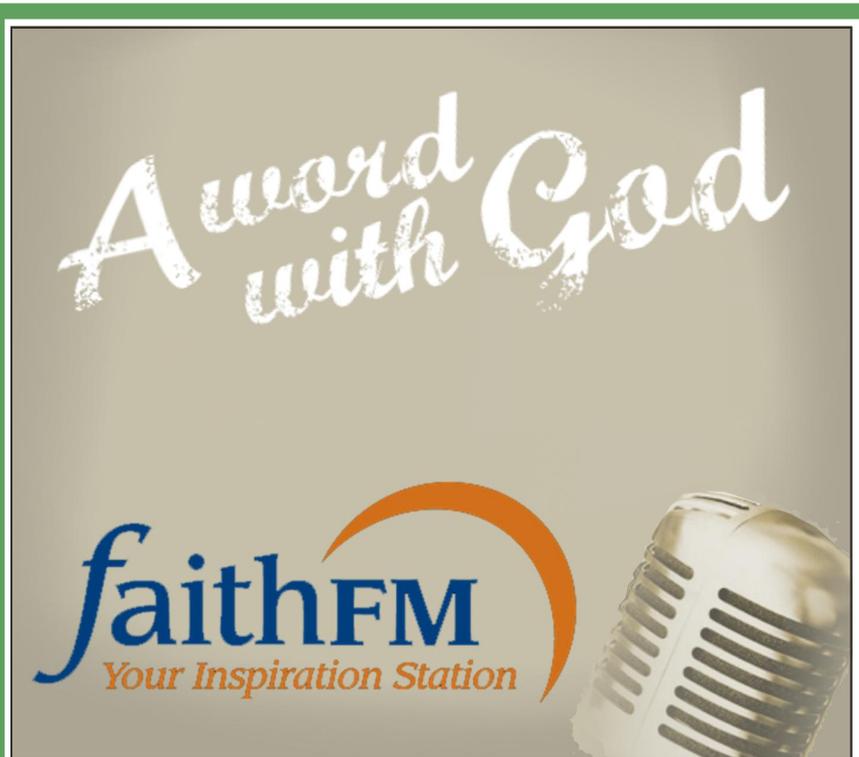


A word with God



A Word with God daily devotional guide contains inspirational short stories that show real people trying to live faithfully in real-life situations.

August 2015



Join us every
Monday night at 9pm on
94.3 Faith FM Kitchener

All Scripture references are from the NASB Bible
Printed in Canada
© 2014

112 Spadina Road West
Kitchener, ON N2M 1G1
(519) 745-8151

www.evangelcommunity.com
info@evangelcommunity.com

August 1, 2015

The Grand Idea - Encountering Sickness Part 1

Lori and I have gone through a longer than normal season of not having taken a break from the day to day routines of life and ministry. I think that there are some ways that this tendency of mine (she knows better than I do), of not liking taking time off, is part of my personality, and some of it is just part of the makeup of those who Pastor churches. What can I say? I like being with the people that God has called us to serve, and I hate missing our times of worship and prayer together.

We had come to the conclusion (led by my wife, who is far smarter and perceptive than I am) that it was time to take a few days away. We have good friends who care about us deeply and let us crash at their cottage from time to time. They again were willing to let us (including Bennaiah) spend some time just hanging out together, away from phones and computers.

We left after having a short Sunday afternoon nap, and it wasn't long before we were heading down the highway in anticipation of time spent reading, connecting with each other, and resting. We stopped for supper at Webers Hamburgers on highway eleven, and later gathered supplies at the local "Metro" grocery store. Finally we turned into the long awaited driveway, unloaded our few bags, and settled into a dreamy evening of watching Anne of Green Gables. (Hey... what can I say? It's an awesome story) One thing that I do love about this place is the ability to set things aside, take in the beauty of northern Ontario, and put the rest of the world away from my thinking.

Father, I want to thank You for the great privilege of serving You. Thank You for putting someone like Lori in my life who serves alongside and is so good for me. Thank You for giving her the wisdom to know what I need, even when I don't know – or don't remember that I need it. Thank You for friends who are willing to share the things You have placed into their hands, and for the way that You use us in each other's lives.

Father, it seems that our world swings to and fro from a pendulum of extremes. We either hear the call of leisure and self-indulgence, or we fall to the side of obsessiveness and all-consuming work. Help us to follow the life of Jesus which was lived out in such sufficient example of one who knew when to withdraw from the world, in order to draw close to You. Amen

Stan Starkey

Matthew 11:28

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

Anita Vandermeer, Katrina Fortin-Tangie, Josiah Fuller

August 2, 2015

Reciprocal Blessings

This day the LORD thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and judgments: thou shalt therefore keep and do them with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. Thou hast avouched the LORD this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice: And the LORD hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that *thou* shouldst keep all his commandments; (Deuteronomy 26:16-18)

These verses are the highlight of a passage on instructions about tithing for when the chosen people were to arrive in the Promised Land. God promised his blessing if the people would demonstrate their faithfulness by offering him the firstfruits of the land (after all, it is entirely God's land that he was allowing the people to live on).

Tithing should be no less a privilege for us. It is wonderful when, at times, we hear God's voice in our lives! There are many intrinsic benefits to "walk in his ways", keep his statutes, commandments and judgements. And we should eagerly desire to be his "peculiar people". All of these things are linked to tithing. Seek God first in all things "with all thine heart, and with all tine soul" – he will keep his promises!

Father, I thank you for providing for my needs. I thank you also for the privilege of tithing, and ask that you alone would be glorified in it. Amen.

Steve Wiseman

Deuteronomy 16:17

Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the LORD your God has blessed you.

Bev Gooden, Halima Fuller, Tessa Talat

August 3, 2015

Dealing with Ants

Over the last couple of years an ant hill has been growing in my backyard. Every time I would cut my grass I would see what these little black creatures were building. I really don't like it when these little ants are taking over a part of my back yard so I finally decided to do something about it.

After giving some thought to my options, I chose to go to Sheridan Nurseries and find a mature person who would be knowledgeable as to how best to deal with ants. I found an older man who told me that he had to deal with the same problem a couple of years ago and he recommended a solution that worked for him. So I bought a bottle. When I put the liquid on a rock by the ant hill the ants started coming, then more and more ants came. They went crazy, racing back and forth as they drank the liquid. Obviously they were enjoying their treat. Two days later my ant problem was solved and there were no more ants.

Spiritually speaking people are led into sin because it looks so attractive. Little do they know what the final outcome will be. Someone has said, "You can choose what you want in life but you can't choose the consequences of those choices". Satan never warns us about the suffering that sin brings. The Bible tells us that "The penalty of sin is death". For this reason we need to be alert to Satan's temptations and learn to resist the temptations he brings.

Even when we do yield to those temptations there is a solution. The good news of the Gospel gives us hope in knowing that life can take a turn for the better if we will only confess and repent of sin. Jesus paid the penalty for sin through His death on the cross. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses and transforms one's life.

Father give us discernment and strength to follow your leading, resisting Satan's temptations.

Ivan Preston

Romans 6:23

"The penalty of sin is death."

Susan Thomson, Pam Wright, Cheryl Borsi

August 4, 2015

Call of Duty

In the movie, “The Incredibles,” Bob Parr mildly asks his manager in the insurance corporation, “Are you saying we shouldn’t help our customers?” forcing Mr Huph to the hilarious admission between gritted teeth, “The law requires that I answer no.” The dictionary would say that Mr Huph has fulfilled his legal obligation, he has done his duty. No one is fooled to think Huph respects Insuracare clients, though.

I used to despise the word “duty”. There can be something slavish about the word. We frequently meet people who are just performing their jobs, smiling and saying, “Have a nice day,” because their job description demands it, but in the next flicker of a second they have forgotten us and the smile fades faster than a speeding bullet. Even some who act from a “sense of duty,” we suspect care for us not a fig.

Yet people at other times thought doing their duty was very admirable—“noble” they called it. Read what many English Victorians felt about duty “to God and the Queen,” and you find they highly honoured those who did what they were morally or legally required to do even though it might be dangerous or distasteful to them. Today we talk about “being responsible” and “taking ownership” and I think we are talking about the same moral duty. The word “duty” has gone out of fashion, but the goodness of “a [man] doing what a [man’s] gotta do” (put your own age or gender or role in there), remains. What do you think?

Lord Jesus, your word says it is required of stewards that they be faithful. You gave us lives to use for you. You command us to love you and that makes it an obligation—yet how can love and obligation co-exist?

Clare Fuller

I Corinthians 7:3 (NIV)

The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband.

Sherri Nickerson, Susan Ozua, Francis Paloum,

August 5, 2015

Loving Your Enemies

I have always had a tough time with the Beatitudes. John 3:16, the Great Commission...those are easy. But the repeated moral punches given by Jesus time and time again throughout his ministry...now these can be difficult. While delivering the life-shattering Sermon on the Mount, Jesus challenged contemporary understandings of the law and its application to human life. Brushing past human reasoning, Christ cut right to the heart of the matter, revealing a tainted human condition far worse than most cared to admit. Those difficult sayings must be taken seriously, remembering that here the Law was being illuminated by the very Lawgiver himself.

Recently, the Lord has been reminding me to pray for my enemies. This was always something I had great difficulty with. You mean I'm supposed to pray for people that beat me down, as if that behaviour is to simply be overlooked? No, when people hurt us, it is important to recognize that they are living and operating out of a place of hurt themselves. When we pray for our enemies, we are not to merely ignore their opposition to us as followers of Christ, but rather we are to pray for healing and God's work in their hearts and lives. Take some time to pray for your enemies today. Pray for the healing power of God to produce a deep change in their hearts. Pray for reconciliation where it is needed. Pray because we all need healing. Pray because Christ commanded us.

Father, please teach us to feel what you feel. In your great compassion you send the sun and rain to aid us all. Please grant us a genuine desire to pray and seek after you. Please continue to accomplish your will here on earth. Amen

Josh Wilhelm

Romans 12:14

“Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse them.”

Remy Salvatore, Alice Shantz, Santos Siguenza

August 6, 2015

Eat Worms

When I was a kid we'd sometimes sing a little song that went like this:

“Nobody loves me, everybody hates me. I'm going to the garden to eat worms. Long, slim, slimy ones, short, fat juicy ones. Itsy, bitsy, fuzzy, wuzzy worms.”

The song went on and on forever. We'd make up crazy lines as we went along. But we have enough of it here to get the point! We may think this is just a funny kid's song and so it is but how often do we come to the conclusion that nobody loves us and everybody hates us and we just may as well go to a corner and cry (eat worms)?? I'm sure we've all been there.

Even King David had his days when he felt down and depressed. In Psalm 42 verses 5 he says: “Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad?” and in verse 6 “Now I am deeply discouraged”. I'm thinking on this day David was ready to go eat some worms!

David knew how to get through those times of despair and depression. In verse 5 he goes on to say “I will put my hope in God! I will praise Him again – my Savior and my God!”

When we're down and discouraged do we just curl up in a ball and go eat worms or do we put our hope in God and Praise Him? It's amazing how we can praise our way right out of depression! King David taught us how to do it!

Lord help me to remember the lessons King David taught us on how to deal with depression and the blues and put them into practice.

Donna Preston

Psalm 3:3

“But You, Lord, are a shield around me, my glory, the One who lifts my head high.”

Livia Stanca, Lori Starkey, Dave Doherty

August 7, 2015

Standards

The other day I heard a story about how lady who had set standards for how she lives her life. If she is at work and goes into the kitchen area and cookies are sitting on the table, she won't take one, unless there is a sign that says, "Please take a cookie". Another rule is, if she is walking down the street, and there are beautiful flowers growing but are by the road, outside of the ditch, she will pick them, but she will not cross over the ditch and pick flowers that are on the other side of the ditch. One day when walking home she saw beautiful lilacs growing. They were growing right on the ditch, basically where she had set the rule for not taking them, but the house was so incredibly far from the road, and the lilac bush was enormous, that she figured they were growing wild, and no one would mind if she cut off a little bit. So she took a few of the lilacs, and kept walking. As she was walking a car drove past her very quickly. A few minutes later, the same car pulled up alongside where she was walking, rolled down the window, and an man yelled out to her, "Where did you get those Lilacs!?" Ashamed, she stated how she had taken them from the lilac bush growing in the ditch a little further down the road. The man quickly informed her that those were his lilac bushes, and that she had stolen the lilacs and should be ashamed in herself, and then he turned around and went back home.

This lady had set rules for herself, and a guideline that she did not want to cross. On this one occasion, she decided that it was okay to step outside of these boundaries she had set for herself, and to take some of the lilacs. In the end she realized, it would have been better if she stuck to her standards, and had not compromised. She was embarrassed and ashamed not only because she had been caught, but because she had let herself down. In life it is hard at times to live up to the standards that God has set for us. It proves to be a challenge to continually make decisions based upon how we know God has called us to live, and yet when we decide to step outside of the boundaries, and to set our own rules, we often quickly realize that God has given us specific guidelines, for a very good reason. What are some areas in your life that you had promised yourself you'd never tippy toe the line, or you would never lower your standards? Let us bring those areas to God today, and ask that He be our plumb line in life.

Kimberly Heintl

2 Timothy 3:16-7

All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work

Stan Starkey, Emma Strong, Brendan DePhillippeaux

August 8, 2015

The Persecuted Church

After we had just finished reading "The Voice of the Martyrs" publication we realized anew the great persecution many Christians are still facing regularly.

We have been challenged to pray for those who live in fear and dread. Please join Ron and I in prayer on behalf of the lonely and rejected throughout the world

A Prayer For the Persecuted Church

Lord, Your love increases my sensitivity to needy people in today's world.

I bring my prayers to you:

For those who suffer pain...for those who live behind bars;
for those who have been maimed by violence; for those who
have been disgraced and wounded by other people's
wrongdoing; for those who have lost a loved one....

Help me, Father, to make myself available to those who
need help, that in practical and in spiritual ways I may convey
Your love to them. - Bryan J Leech

Father, may we never become complacent in our prayers
for those who face persecution in our world today.

Lois Byers

1 Corinthians 4:12b,c

When we are reviled we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure

Mike Strong, Linda Summers, Sherry Curry

August 9, 2015

Working Away

As I've gotten older, I've started to realize that I have some ideas about life itself. One of these is the idea that one day the work will just be over. I've always thought that, if I can just work hard enough now, and get it all done, I'll be free to do whatever I want with my life. It's been an odd source of motivation for me. However, I've observed a weird phenomenon that comes from living this way. It's like I work so hard to get to the weekend, but when the weekend rolls around, I suddenly don't know what to do with myself. I get anxious because I'm not doing anything or getting any work done. I've realized that I tend to live like work isn't really a part of life, and is an obstacle to get out of the way so I can do what I want. But I've found that trading one part of life for another, work for rest, actually ends up damaging them both, because they are part of the same life God has given us. In Genesis, God gave Adam a task in the garden before the fall. He was told to name the animals, and he and his wife were to multiply and have dominion over the earth. He and Eve were also told to multiply and have dominion over the earth. He didn't specify much more than that, just said, "Here's everything! Get to it!" It seems to me that the task would have been fun, expressive, and revelatory. That means they would have learned more about themselves, God and creation as they worked. Even God himself worked and rested in the same week, proving that both are good. But here's the ugly side: in Genesis 3:18 and 19 it says that sin caused our work to become toilsome, and it caused creation itself to resist our efforts. We're still doing what we were built to do, which is good for us, but it's mixed with brokenness and corruption. So, as Christians, we have to recognize these two sides of work: God made it good, but it's been corrupted. But that's why Jesus' coming is so important to think properly about work. In him God proves to us that he is dealing with sin and corruption, forgiving or condemning. This means that the New Earth won't have sin, and work will be freed from toil. It will be a delight for us to work. It will be what it was meant to be. Maybe this week, you've been dragging a bit at work, racing to get through it, or just getting sick of it altogether. I think maybe the key to truly committing (and perhaps even enjoying) our work is to remind ourselves of Christ and what his life, death, and resurrection means for us in the daily grind.

Father, thank you for the privilege of serving you. Even though we must toil sometimes, we recall the attitude of Christ, who "for the joy set before him, endured the cross." May we, through your Spirit, receive the same attitude, so that we may do our work joyfully and expectantly, always remembering who it is we are serving, the one who made work perfect, and who is redeeming it.

Brendan DePhillippeaux

Colossians 3:23, 24, NIV

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward."

Naomi Strong, Andrew Talat, Carlie Earl

August 10, 2015

Looking to the 'End'

The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death. (Proverbs 14:32)

Our final moments on this earth are sometimes considered in our musings. It is almost as if our final breath will be the defining moment – as if our final words will be the achieving summary statement of what our entire life has meant – and indeed it may be so. But what a despondent circumstance those who reject their Creator have put themselves in. To be driven away from this life; to fail in that describing moment of transition to an everlasting condition; to blunder the significance of the meaningfulness of the life and breath with which the Creator himself has endowed mankind; and to be driven from the glorious presence of the loving, almighty Creator.

What a contrast to those who stand right before God. For us there is great hope – yes it is the end of this life – but on the other side it is the beginning of a new life in the presence of our faithful Creator. WE have much to look forward to, the wicked have only this present life to enjoy.

Thank you LORD God for your mercy and grace in opening my eyes. It is humbling to consider your great love for us all. And I pray for those who do not know you that they would turn to you and find healing and salvation. Amen.

Steve Wiseman

Revelation 21:4

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away

Dave Thomson, Josh Wilhelm, John Borsi

August 11, 2015

Winners & Losers

Everybody wants to be a winner and on a winning team. Even my young grandsons at the ages of 6 & 7 always wanted to win their early morning hockey game. If they won their game they were always excited and upbeat and at times even hyper. Regardless of your favorite sport you always cheer for your team and are always excited to see them win.

On the other hand, who likes to be on a losing team or even loose a board game? Even when we cheer for our favorite sports team we come away feeling a little down when they loose (you Leaf fans know exactly what I'm talking about). The only time you're content to lose might be if you're a grandfather and you want to make your grandson's day by letting him win.

A recent speaker at one of our Oasis rallies talked about losers and he said this: "Find what you're after, but a life lived outside Jesus Christ will mean you are a loser". How true! That, in my opinion is a very profound thought.

A person may be wealthy, well educated, with a winsome personality but will miss out on the most important thing and that is eternal life in heaven. He will be a loser. Oh how sad.

To be a winner and gain eternal life can be done only through faith in Jesus Christ who was crucified in our place. He is the way, the truth and the life.

Confess and repent of your sin and invite Jesus to come into your heart today and become a winner of the crown of life which is eternal life.

Ivan Preston

John 3:36

"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them."

Earl Gooden, Becca Mundy, Clare Fuller, Robert Goodale

August 12, 2015

A Bucket Kitten

My daughter's kitten Beauty grew up to become a mother cat of kittens herself. Being basically predators, kittens must explore. They started with the big screened-in back porch with all its jumbled boxes and toys. We introduced them to the dogs, which went rather well. Later we took them into the walled back yard and prepared them for their inevitable distribution to new homes.

Suzanna decided to play with one kitten using a bucket on its side. Sure enough, the kitten was interested in going in. (We have the photograph.) In my experience, cats can't resist going into hiding places like crinkly paper bags or other small containers—but only when there are openings to get out. Maybe their heightened sense of hearing is intrigued by sounds in the confined space—maybe as we like to put a sea shell up to our ears. And they hate being trapped.

The kitten made the bucket roll when trying to get out by walking on the sides like a treadmill. My daughter thought it was amusing to set the bucket upright to see what happened. "Mieaou! Let me out!"

Curiously, domestic cats—known from ancient times in neighbouring Egypt—are not mentioned in the Bible. Some of the big cats are named with respect, however: cheetahs, leopards and especially lions.

Dear Father in heaven, you made us curious about our surroundings as well, but as we grow we sometimes narrow our interests to things that give us an immediate payoff. Thanks for being the door; you do not trap us, we come and go and find what you call "pasture".

Clare Fuller

Revelation 5:5

Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals."

Steve Wiseman, Victor Pomerleau, Marlyn Starkey, Brad Borsi

August 13, 2015

Ministry

Have you ever wondered what the Pastor does all day? Over the many years we have spent in ministry, we learned quickly that pastors are called upon to do a lot more than just preach on Sunday, marry folks and bury folks!

A few years ago when we were ministering in Mexico I wrote this. In case you think these stories are just made up, they are not. They all are people in our church that we have had the privilege to minister to. A young father decides he has the right to leave his wife and family. After all, they were only married in a civil ceremony before a judge, not before the Lord, so therefore they were never really married! Besides all they have are debts! God is not answering his prayers and making things better. He leaves. He has another Christian woman on the side. Well, he says that she's a Christian. Anyway, he leaves and is living with a friend. He says he needs time to get his heart straightened out, but he does not come to church. His wife is broken hearted. How would you minister to this family?

A young lad is run over by a transport truck. He is in hospital with internal bleeding and a fractured pelvis. The church pray and the Lord gives wisdom to the doctors etc. and he is now home, but has to stay in bed for something like 5 weeks. People are advising the family to really push for a payment – but the driver of the truck has no money, no insurance, and lots of bills. If the family put a charge against the driver, he will end up in jail! Who knows for how long? This is Mexico! The father of the boy says, “What if this was the other way around? I would want mercy. And maybe we can minister to the driver and his family”. How would you advise and minister to this family?

Lord, help me to pay attention to the needs of people. Help me to listen to them with my heart, not just my head! Please give me wisdom from above on how to help folks. Amen
To be continued next month.

Donna Preston

Acts 20:28a

“Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers”.

Sarah Wiseman, Larry Shantz, Mike Salvatore, Dan Bennett

August 14, 2015

Pushing Through - Encountering Sickness Part II

It was later on the Monday evening, that I had my first inclination that there was a problem. When I am up at our friend's cottage, I like to sleep out in the Muskoka room. For those of you who do not know what a Muskoka room is, it is a room where the main outside wall, is a bank of windows that open up, leaving a complete wall of screening, meant to keep the bugs out and let the amazing fresh northern air in (My most favorite thing in the world is to sleep in this virtual outdoors while it is raining, and if possible during a tremendous thunderstorm).

Anyway, that evening I began to feel a bit more stuffy than usual. I almost always have a stuffy nose, and when I am at a cottage there is always a bit of mustiness that comes when a house has been closed up for a while – leaving a bit of a tickle in my chest... this was to be more than just a tickle. Tuesday was spent clearing my throat and trying to get beyond the feeling that I was coming down with a real bad summer cold.

There is something in me that wants to push through being sick. I think that it is how I was raised, to keep on working and act as if you aren't sick, and then you will eventually begin to feel better. I have always felt that if you lay down and give in, then you will just get sicker and you will feel even worse. I think that in some ways this has served me well, and yet on other occasions it has caused me to do things that have made it harder for me to receive healing.

Father, all my life I have tried to push through the hard things of life. I have tried to pretend that I have the strength to overcome and handle the difficult times, all by myself. There is a part of me that thinks "if I just keep putting one foot in front of another, I will make it through to the end". The truth that I have come to see, is that what I really need is to learn to rest in You. What I really need is to stop fighting blindly against the thing I don't want to give into, and trust You to bring the much needed healing. Amen

Stan Starkey

Psalm 73:26

**My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart
and my portion forever.**

Rachel Wiseman, Mary Salvatore, Gord Salm, Winni Bankazo

August 15, 2015

The Wheels Fall Off - Encountering Sickness Part III

It was about seven thirty on Sunday evening, and I was feeling miserable. My cough had deepened and my head was now fully plugged, and Pink eye had totally taken over my left eye, and breathing had become a little laboured. Lori had asked if I was going to the hospital to get looked at, and having come to a time in my life when I now realize that she is usually right in her discernment of what is good for me.

So I gathered my things together and stopped off at Tim Hortons to lay in supplies to go through the dreaded and inevitable line up that lay in front of me. I know that there are many of you who have had horrible experiences in the emergency room – but all things being equal I have found that we enjoy a great level of health care. Having traveled in the developing world, we have what much of the world only dreams about.

I had made it through the triage station and had been registered. The decision was that I was a green dot (what this means is that almost any other person walking into the emergency room is at a higher priority than you are). Then began the four hour wait to see the doctor on call. I watched as many who were sicker than I was, were also waiting to be seen – some, children in tears as they were held in their mothers arms. A few teenage girls who had that totally disgusted and aloof look for their mothers as their moms tried to make things better for their daughters. There was even another old fella like myself who was intent on making everyone's lives as miserable as he was feeling, swearing at the nurses and insisting that he needed a bed to lay down on since it was obvious that he was sicker than anyone else who was there.

Eventually I was seen in turn and given a chest x-ray, seen again and prescribed a course of antibiotics and sent home to recoup. The whole thing took a little less than five hours and now I was ready to begin my journey of recovery, which in my mind would only take a couple of days. I was to find out that recovery can sometimes be elusive.

Father, first I want to thank You for the privilege that I have of living in this amazing country. Many look through their windows of poverty and corruption, and cannot even imagine what it is that we have. Help me to remain thankful in my overflowing world of plenty where the tendency is to desire and to expect more – not less. Help me to remain patient when things do not move along as quickly as I would hope they would and pain and discomfort wear away at the fabric of my resolve to be kind and pleasant to those around me. Father, help me to remain in a place where I do not come to expect the answer that I would like to see but that I would be willing to receive from You, Your best answer to my situation. Amen

Stan Starkey

1 Chronicles 16:34

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.

Ainsley Salvatore, Jesse Wiseman, Bob Puersten, Lois Byers

August 16, 2015

Missed Opportunity

The other morning I woke up earlier than needed, got out my journal and Bible and sat down to have some quiet time before the day began. I read through the scriptures, and wrote my prayers down in my journal. I concluded with praying for God to help me see His children in need that day, and to open my eyes to individuals that might need to see His love. I concluded my quiet time, and began to get ready for the day. I sure did feel good about myself.

A few hours later my friends asked me what we were going to bring for food with us to the beach the next day. We were going to go to church and then leave right from church to the beach, and we would all enjoy lunch at the beach together. We decided since we were all so indecisive to go to the grocery store, and look around. We figured having options in front of us would prove beneficial. After a bit in the store, we all came together and had gathered enough food for our trip the following day. We went to the till, and got ready to check out. When I looked up at the young man who was going to check out our stuff, I realized he was holding in tears. I looked at my friends, hoping one of them would say something, but no one pointed out his crying. We all tried to be super friendly, and even made a few jokes hoping to cheer him up... but nothing seemed to work. We paid for our groceries and left the store. If your heart just sank, and you feel a giant pit in your stomach... I'm with you. If need be, let yourself sit with that for a moment as you imagine this scene. I sat in the car on the way back replaying this young boy's face in my mind, watching as he struggled, as he cried right in front of me, and I did nothing. Throughout the day, this image kept coming to my mind. It was way later that evening when I was thinking through the whole situation again that I realized.... I had prayed that morning for God to open my eyes to those who needed to see His love. I tried to rationalize my failed response. I tried to justify myself by saying that God is a God of grace, I tried to make myself feel better by praying for this young boy, and trusting that God would bring someone else to encourage him, but I had to admit to myself, that I missed an opportunity. I missed an opportunity to express the love of Christ, I missed an opportunity to tell someone that they were not alone, I missed the opportunity of learning about his story, and being able to advocate on his behalf if that was what was needed, or to pray with him if that was what he needed, or to simply listen if that was what he needed.

Sometimes we cannot justify our missed opportunities. We simply have to accept that we missed out, and then pray and trust that God had a plan B knowing that us, as His plan A, would fail. I hate being the failed plan A, and missing out on an incredible opportunity. My prayer for all of us is that we won't miss these moments... we won't fail to see what God is calling us to do, and when we do miss out, we will search for ways to redeem the situation. Whether it is returning to the grocery store daily until you see that same young boy again, or you write a letter to a friend from the past that you never shared your faith with, even though it has been years since you've seen each other... whatever it may be for you today, may we not miss out on the opportunity to be a part of building God's kingdom and helping His children find love, and freedom.

Kimberly Heintl

Galatian 6:7-9

Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.

Ben Wiseman, Jack Priolo, Ivan Preston, Ron Byers

August 17, 2015

Tired of Trail - Encountering Sickness Part IV

It was now Tuesday morning and I was getting so tired of being sick. This was my third day on antibiotics, and I had expected to feel better by now. The feeling better had not happened, in fact I was feeling worse. I had been in my office since six that morning, trying to get a few things accomplished before the messiness of the day took total control of what was going on. I had slowly noticed that it was becoming more painful to breathe. Not only was it painful to breathe, but the amount of air entering into my lungs, was becoming less, and less.

Our office manager, Kim, had been at her desk for only about a half hour, and I knew that I had to do something quickly. It had come to the point where I could not pull air into my lungs, and neither could I push it out. I had begun to sound like Benaiah, softly panting in and out, I had begun to feel the trickle of sweat rolling down my back, caused by the exertion of energy to breathe. I opened the door between our offices and got the words out, "Kim, you need to drive me to the hospital".

This time, as I stumbled into the triage area of the hospital, there was a helpful nurse who printed off my registration paper for me and then shepherded me into triage chair. Things moved more quickly and before I could collect my thoughts, I was in an exam room, being hooked up to an EKG, to make sure that the pain and shortness of breath was not the beginnings of a heart attack.

Bloodwork and vitals were taken and it was not long before it was determined that my airways were closing in. Choices of medication were made and finally a mask was placed over my face and the cool mist of the mask and the medication that it held, flowed beautifully. It is like trying to drink a McDonald's shake through a coffee stir stick. That is perfect!

Father, there are times when I have this great need for You. I am surrounded by sin and am immersed in a world that suffocates. I go through the experience of trying to draw You into my life and find that I have the same trouble as I had of trying to draw life giving oxygen into my lungs. I am all stuffed up, I have so much gunk in my life, that I can't get what I really need, down deep in my life where I need it. And then I call on Your Spirit, I call out in my need and in all of my brokenness, and the cool of Your Spirit flows into the starving depths of my Spirit. When I am about to give up. When I am about to falter. When I am taking my last gasp of faith and hope... there You are, at just the right time bringing life to me again, as only You can. Amen

Stan Starkey

Deuteronomy 31:8

The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.

Donna Preston, Heather Pook, Kerry Petker, Ricardo Moreno

August 18, 2015

The Litmus Test of Your Character

¶ He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the LORD: but he that is perverse in his ways despiseth him. (Proverbs 14:2)

This is a good litmus test for the direction of your walk with the LORD God. It answers the question of whether you are walking in obedience to God and his expectations, or if you are following a way of your own choosing: there being many other paths to choose from.

As you read the Bible, and you happen upon a passage that convicts you in some of your behaviours – or a scripture that disagrees and challenges your world view or way of thinking – pay very close attention to your reaction. Do you prefer to ignore the challenge, defer the decision to change to some nebulous time in the distant future, or just decide that you yourself, in your own circumstance, are right about this? Ask yourself honestly, “Do I, at this time despise the LORD, or fear him?” Fearing the LORD emboldens obedience, which is a good place to walk... in uprightness!

LORD God, change me and challenge me. Help me to walk in uprightness, and to put you first in my thoughts and in all things. Help me to fear you, and trust you, and know that you do know better than I. Amen.

Steve Wiseman

Psalm 119:105

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path

Willy Ozua, Naomi Nzisa, Natalia Jackson, Christian Jiminez

August 19, 2015

Reasonable Service

Those of us that have been born of the Spirit of God and have come to know a new life in Christ now have new desires. Because of what Christ has done for us, dying a sacrificial death for our sins, we now have a desire to serve Him.

God has a plan for each one of His children who have passed from death unto life. He has given each one talent and abilities for service in His Kingdom. When we use those talents and gifting following His leading, He is glorified through our lives.

Paul, in writing to the Romans urged them to, “present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable, and perfect, will of God”. Romans 12:1&2 KJV

Paul also exhorted Timothy to be cleansed and then he would be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful for the Master and prepared to do any good work.

Father, we pray that grace may be extended to us, leading us into a life of holiness, useful and ready to serve in Your kingdom. Amen

Ivan Preston

11 Timothy 2:22

“Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”

Sam Nordquist, Sunday Ozua, Steve Nickerson, Olga Culpic

August 20, 2015

Obligations

Most of us are familiar with the obligations we accept by way of a contract: you take a job and the manager tells you deliver packages to XYZ Company. We say we “have to do it.” It is an obligation. Before you agreed to the job, you were free from the obligation, and if you quit you would probably be free from the duty.

There is a whole field of law called “torts”, I understand, that deals with “breaches of contract”. In English-type law, a person cannot be forced to perform a contract, but they can be sued for compensation if they don’t. I’m sure I have it all muddled: you’d better talk to your lawyer!

But there are other kinds of obligations that we come into just by being born: we didn’t agree to them and we can’t get out of them, though we try. Some are practically universally assumed by the whole human family, except in some ideologically-driven societies. I’m thinking of the common demand for some kind of obedience or respect to parents, or mutual support between siblings.

How is it with us and God? The Bible says we are made by God and therefore...certain obligations exist between us. God **requires** us to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with him. To get to that point, we **must** be born again. Have you checked with Jesus about that?

Dear Lord Jesus, even you “**had to**” go through Samaria one day, and taught that it was **necessary** that the Messiah suffer certain things and enter into his glory. As long as it is day, we **must** do the work of him who sent you. (Jn 9:4a)

Clare Fuller

Isaiah 45:9a,10

Woe to him who quarrels with his Maker, to him who is but a potsherd among potsherds on the ground. Does the clay say to the potter, ‘What are you making?’...Woe to him who says to his father, ‘What have you begotten?’ or to his mother, ‘What have you brought to birth?’

Samson Alia, Rebecca Nordquist, Tasha McLimont, Natalie Jackson

August 21, 2015

I have decided to follow Jesus

Last year at Golden Getaway Jim Reese told us a story. He said that years ago a missionary from China was visiting at his dad's church. This missionary had watched as Chinese Christians had been gathered up and made to walk to a large trench that had been dug. When they got there, they were gunned down. On the way to their death they sang in their language "I have decided to follow Jesus, no turning back, no turning back." Wow! What a powerful testimony to God's grace in the lives of each of these people.

I too have sung that little song but I'm not so sure I'd be singing it in the above circumstances. I trust I would, but I know that only God can give the grace needed to be able to stand that kind of test.

I read recently in the news about some parents who were told by terrorists that unless they denied Jesus, they would have watch as their children were beheaded. The kids told their folks not to give up Jesus. They were ready to die. Don't back down. So these children lost their lives. This family had decided to follow Jesus and there was no turning back.

This little song has another verse. It says "The world behind me, the cross before me – no turning back". At times it is difficult to leave the things of this world behind and follow only Jesus. Many of us would never make it through the third verse. "Though none go with me, still I will follow". Are we willing to follow Jesus even if we have to go it alone? We desperately want others to go with us but are we willing to follow Jesus even if our husbands or wives or parents or children or friends leave Him? Will we follow Jesus even if it's only us and Him? How hard it is to follow.

Lord, help me to constantly follow You and not give up or compromise. Help me to be true to You even if it costs me my life!

Donna Preston

Matthew 16:25

"If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it."

Nehema Ozua, Jeremiah Nordquist, Seth McLimont, Kyle Vandermeer

August 22, 2015

Valuing Each Other

One of the great privileges we have had as a church, is the ability to be involved in the lives of some of the students who have made their home at Emanuel Bible College. Over the last ten years we have seen dozens of young man and women pass through our doors as they pursue their education and their vocation. What this has done, is given us an opportunity as a church, to play a special role in these students lives.

There is however, the inevitable time that their journey through college is complete and it is time for them to leave Evangel and either pursue another degree or to begin their career. These are bitter sweet occasions. We have been working towards this end and yet four years goes by all too swiftly and then it is time to say goodbye.

This next fall we will see four students moving on. Two will be married and move to British Columbia to pursue more education and married life. One is on his way to Chicago and life as a student at Trinity Divinity School, and one is staying in Ontario and working on a Master's degree from McMaster in Hamilton.

All of these students have given so much of themselves to this church and they have left their mark on the body as a whole and on many individuals. There are many in churches who do not see the value of pouring into the lives of young people who are "just passing through". They get frustrated when those who are taught and trained move on, just when they are gaining skill and great usefulness to the ministry.

My view is that the kingdom of God is active and alive, all over the globe. We need a long view of the kingdom. When we invest in the lives of our students, in a very real sense we are paying forward into the kingdom, somewhere else in our own country and eventually all around the world.

Father, You have blessed us with the lives of some pretty amazing students. I want to thank You for the great opportunities that You have intrusted to our church. Our prayer is, that You would use the lives of these young people in a powerful way. We pray for them as they continue to follow You, and as they build into the great and wonderful kingdom that is yours. Amen

Stan Starkey

Philippians 1:3

I thank my God every time I remember you.

Grace Ozua, Haley Nordquist, Mark McLimont, Martiza Moreno

August 23, 2015

My Companion Through Sickness

Some of you give me a hard time when I write about Benaiah. Just to set the record straight – Lori is my favorite, my most treasured, friend and companion, but there is something about a dog, and the relationship that a guy has with his dog, that if you don't get it, you just don't get it – that relationship has a different kind of feel to it than a human to human relationship has. It is less. It is more one sided. It is more about one that is utterly dependent on the other for all that the other needs to survive, and it is about the devotion that springs from the one who depends towards the one who is sufficient to meet the needs of the one in need.

I have learned so much about devotion from this last six years with my dog. I have seen things in how he responds towards me, that have caused deep thought about how I should respond to the one who holds my life in His hands. I would hope that I could come to a place where I could hold devotion for Jesus in such a simple yet complete and unwavering way.

One thing that I have noticed this last month as I have gone through this extended sickness, is how close Benaiah stays by my side. I have been sleeping in my Lazy Boy chair and there have been many times that I have woken up coughing and having to deal with difficulty breathing – and each time he is there, checking me out to see that I am ok. He has even taken to sleeping on the end of our downstairs couch so that his head is no more than a few inches from my arm which is draped over the sides of my temporary bed.

Now God is never in need of us. In our relationship with Him, we are not checking in on Him to make sure that He is ok... but we do need to be devoted to Him and to the things that He is doing around us. Benaiah has taught me that the one you love, is the one that you stick close to. They are the one that you watch every move to see what it is that they are doing, and you commit yourself to them wholeheartedly.

Father, my prayer is that You would captivate the entirety of my life. Would You cultivate in my heart a desire to be so close to You that I would never stray from being in intimate contact with Your presence. Amen

Stan Starkey

Psalms 64:5

How blessed is the one whom You choose and bring near to You To dwell in Your courts We will be satisfied with the goodness of Your house, Your holy temple

Fiona Ozua, Gabrielle Nordquist, Matero MacKenzie, Thomas Fuller

August 24, 2015

The Value of Working Together

I grew up in a time when people still got together to accomplish large tasks as a group. We would gather together to build buildings, accomplish agricultural tasks, can and prepare vegetables... almost any event, where working together would lighten the load and provide an opportunity to be together and provide community with one another. I think that is one of the great things that we can recapture in the church. In fact I would say that this is a mandate that we have, to work together and function in a unit together, which is focused on accomplishing the great things of the kingdom of God.

I have the great privilege of working with the hospitality team in our church, and I would say that this is the attitude that pervades our team. We love getting together to accomplish great things, whether it is a large bag of potatoes that have to be prepared, or onions that need to be washed with the salt tears that come from peeling and chopping. There is great comradery that is experienced as we talk about life and living for Jesus while performing tasks of love for those whom we serve.

In the middle of these acts of service we learn about each other and the lives that we lead and have led. We begin to understand the quirks in our personalities and the trials that we have lived through which have shaped our lives and our attitudes, and the things that bring tears to our eyes and a lump to our throats. These times together leave us feeling that we are indeed on Holy ground encircled by sticky hands, dirty dishes and acts of service.

Father, You have surrounded us with such a host of brothers and sisters who enter in and give of themselves. We experience all that You have done to make them who they have become... and You have included us in their journey of faith. Your church is such a blessing. Your provision of companions who have been ordained to accompany us on our discovery of what it is to be Your follower – is so unique – so special.

Father, it is my prayer that we would take time to rediscover what it is to come together. Teach us to spend the time that is necessary to truly appreciate all that You have done to change the lives of those who we live life with in the day to day. Thank You for the unity of heart, mind and spirit that comes through the fellowship of the saints and the unifying work of Your Spirit. Amen

Stan Starkey

Psalm 133:1

Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!

Abigayle Nordquist, Anna Ozua, Judy MacKenzie, Maria Arteaga Motilla

August 25, 2015

Synthesis

Recently I've been thinking about the word synthesis. It comes from a Greek word that's made of two smaller words mashed together. One is "syn" which means "with" and the other is "tithemi" which means "put" or "place." It literally means "to put together" or to combine two things, maybe even weave them together. I guess it dawned on me that life itself is something of a synthesis. Firstly, God made everything good, so that means that everything in existence has some original goodness in it. Without God's craftsmanship, it couldn't exist. But the second fact is that everything has become corrupted. I don't fully know what that word corrupted really means, but I guess the closest I've gotten is to say that we live in a synthetic world, a mixed world, one with its original goodness and introduced chaos tangled together, forming a corrupted creation. It does function, but imperfectly, brokenly, in a downward spiral. I think most people, no matter what they believe, can admit that this world is messed up, but everyone has a different way of trying to resolve this problem in their minds.

There's a big push nowadays towards positive thinking. But the problem is that everything in creation is a corrupted synthesis, so it's really impossible to focus on anything that's 100% positive, because nothing really is. Stare at anything long enough and you'll see its flaws. So what's the solution for us as Christians? Is positivity even possible for us, given what we know about the world? A wise man once said something to me that I don't think I've ever really understood until now. He said, "Brendan, you've gotta focus on the positive, because the Devil's gonna get you focusing on the negative, and he'll try to bring you down." I always dismiss the world's approach to positivity, but when said by a well-seasoned believer, positivity seemed possible to me. It struck me that, unlike the rest of the world, Christians have something 100% positive to focus on, Jesus Christ, God himself in the flesh.

We have the choice between thinking about someone who's absolutely perfect, or focusing on the world that is corrupted and sinful. We can abide in our freedom by again and again refocusing our minds on the one who has set them free, Jesus Christ. By doing so, we can look at this broken world in a different way, with compassion instead of fear, and work to bring restoration to it. We also learn to unravel the synthesis in our minds, to perceive what is good and excellent in the world and work towards strengthening those things for God. Christ gives us a new outlook on life that can be positive without being ignorant.

Thank you God for the gift of your Son, who has redeemed us from a corrupted and damaged existence. Draw our minds once again to this truth so that we may perceive the change you want us to make in this world you created.

Brendan DePhillipeaux

Philippians 4:8

"Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things."

Brian Ozua, John MacKenzie, Levi Kusaula, Mike Gore

August 26, 2015

Discouragement

If we have served the Lord for any amount of time we will have faced discouragement.

Some years ago this small article found its way unto the leaf of my Bible. I would like to share it with you.

Do not let discouragement drench your spirit or flood your soul despite howling winds of circumstances and the under current of the enemy. Press on in the power of the Holy Spirit as you firmly hold to the rudder of faith. Scan the horizons for a fleet of like mined ships, vessels who adore and serve the King, the Lord Jesus. Once you find them, forsake your isolated wanderings for the protection, fellowship, and instruction.

-- Unknown

What wonderful advice. We can never live our life as an island! God means for us to function as a Body.

Father, may we always be aware of our need to surround ourselves with our fellow members of your body.

Marlyn Starkey

Romans 12:5

So we who are many are one body, of Christians and individual members one of another.

Clarisse MacKenzie, Lea Kusaula, Glenn Keohn

August 27, 2015

Patience

Somewhere within catholic theology is a list of seven “virtues” or heavenly character qualities. They were meant to oppose the seven deadly sins, which most of us have probably heard about. Whatever you think about categorizing these virtues, it’s safe to say that they are desirable. But one of them is really elusive to me; I often fight against it without realizing it: the virtue of patience. Our culture isn’t a big fan of this one. We like results, and we’d like them right now, if it’s not too much to ask. Me, I’m totally a product of my culture, because I hate to wait for anything. But the truth is, there is something deeper going on that informs the way our culture thinks. You don’t just all of a sudden decide, “Hey, I’m gonna be a patient person,” or “Hey, I’m gonna be stressed and anxious, always trying to get ahead in life.” Those behaviours come out of our beliefs, how we view life. Our culture, by and large, doesn’t believe in the God that we do. This means that they have no solution to the problem of death. They are running out of time, and must race to do what they deem important before that happens. Some people do exactly what it says in 1 Cor. 15:32, “let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!” They try to live it up before the lights go out. Other people try to climb the social ladder, achieving as much as they can before it’s their time to go. Others work hard to rationalize death, saying that it’s just a natural part of our existence, and should simply be accepted. Still others commit to a strict religious system and make massive sacrifices to try and save their souls. You may notice, none of these solutions involve peacefully waiting, because the reality is, there’s still a problem that’s not fixed. Scripture says that Jesus came to “free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.” (Heb. 2:15) Because we’ve been forgiven, we are going to continue living after death in a redeemed world where Christ is king! This means that patience, for us, is based on a blessed reality. It means that we can live as people who have no reason to fear death or to think that God isn’t on our side. Life can be lived on God’s timetable, doing what he wants us to, at the speed he knows we ought to go. That means we can wait joyfully, not anxiously, for him to provide, show us the next step, or to endure hardships. If this is a season of waiting for you, remember who’s in control of your calendar, and remember that he is working in your life, even when you can’t see it, and that his plans are worth being patient for.

Thank you God for the freedom we have. Remind us once again that we do not live lives of fear, but lives of freedom, peace, perseverance, anticipation, patience, and joy. Remind us of the truth, that you are making all things new in Christ, which is worth waiting for and working toward.

Brendan DePhillippeauz

James 5:7b, 8

See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord’s coming is near.

Bailie MacKenzie, Cyprien Kusaula, Lynn Johnston

August 28 , 2015

Guarding the Tongue

¶ Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof. (Proverbs 18:21)

Every once-in-a-while we need to be reminded of this message. It seems that we can be quite forgetful creatures, unless – of course – something else is at play. And that is that there is a battle between the ‘flesh’ and the ‘Spirit’ (Galatians 5:17), and as long as we walk this earth, in this present life, this combat will continue.

What should be noticed in this proverb is that ‘death *and* life’ are in the power of the tongue, and not ‘death *or* life’. The point is that those who ‘love’ the ‘power’ of the tongue will eat the fruit, which could be either negative or positive. There is an element of unpredictability in this, just as there is sometimes an unpredictable interpretation on behalf of the hearer. Settle it in your heart that there will be times to remember this proverb: “In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise” (Proverbs 10:19). Otherwise, “whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” before speaking. (Philippians 4:8)

Father, may the meditations of my heart and the words of my mouth be acceptable in your sight, that you might be glorified by others. Amen.

Steve Wiseman

Psalm 141:3

Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips!

Ken Johnston, Katharine Jennings, Thorna Jackson, Suzanna Fuller

August 29 , 2015

Faith & Works

During my growing up years we had different scripture texts on the walls of our home. We also had one motto that stood out which I will never forget and it is as follows:

“Only one life, it will soon be past,
only what’s done for Christ will last.”

Now we know that the most important decision in life is “what will we do with Jesus who died for us? Will we put our trust in Him and surrender our lives to Him? I’m glad to say that as a boy of 10 years of age, I received Jesus at a camp meeting at Pikes Peak. I remember the peace that came to my heart.

Is that all, do I just sit back and do nothing now, or is there something I should do? Well, the Bible speaks about good works, serving Jesus Christ and serving in His Kingdom. There are many scriptures that mention good works. Yes, I know we are not saved by good works, but good works are the outcome of our salvation as we follow Jesus Christ.

In James 2:18 we read “Show me your faith without your works and I will show you my faith by my works.” The last verse of this chapter should motivate all of us to be involved in the work of the Lord. We read in verse 26 “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Father, give us the motivation and incentive to be profitable servants working in Your Kingdom. Amen.

Ivan Preston

Matthew 5:16

**“Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works
and glorify your Father in heaven.”**

Oral Jackson, John Heo, Lenora Green, Mike Gore

August 30 , 2015

What If...

You know, for being so central to Christianity, it's funny how easily faith can be forgotten. I know that when I look back at my life, it becomes pretty obvious that I have a major faith-deficiency problem. I'm sure most of you can relate. To those who can't, congratulations! Please send me a detailed autobiography so I can take some notes. But for most of us, there are a lot of things that get in the way of faith. I've noticed in my life that one of the big ones is fear. Fear is such a subtle force in my life, that I often don't even notice it's there till after the fact. But so often, I look back on a season of my life and think, "Man, what was I so afraid of? God totally got me through that." For me, it usually starts with a "what if." Those two words have been my Achilles Heel for most of my life. I'll begin to get excited about following the next stage of God's plan, but then my wild imagination will kick into gear, and I'll start to picture just what might happen if God doesn't show up, if he doesn't provide the money I need, if he doesn't give me the words to say in that particular situation, if I accidentally preach something heretical, and the list goes on.

But here's the weird part. Those "what ifs" can turn on a dime, meaning that I can be saying "what if" about doing something, but then I'll think about doing the exact opposite, about pulling back and staying home, and suddenly there's a new "what if" rolling around in my brain. "Maybe God will punish me, maybe I'll never get another opportunity to do that, maybe he'll stop caring for me altogether." It's happened enough that I've started to realize that these "what ifs" don't represent reality. It's my sinful nature rearing its head, but inside my head. The truth is, I usually don't ever know enough about a situation to justify having a crazy "what if" moment. Yes, those things I'm afraid of could happen, but then again, the earth could open up tomorrow and swallow me whole for all I know. I think that's why Jesus told us directly not to worry. It's fear based on what we can't possibly know for certain. All I do know is that I have a saviour who loves me and has called me to live a life submitted to him, a life lived in faith, one that isn't bound by fear, one that is being made perfect in love. Fear puts us in a miry, darkened confusion, but Christ is the light of the world. He illuminates everything. Let's look at him today, rather than entertaining the "what ifs."

Thank you Jesus for coming to us so clearly that we cannot possibly bring any "what ifs" before you. We cannot question whether or not God loves us. It's a fact that you do. Help us to abide in that truth, and live like people who have been freed from fear of the unknown.

Brendan DePhillipeaux

1 John 4:18

"There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love."

Ruth Gore, Robert Goodale, Thomas Fuller, Rachel Goodale

August 31 , 2015

On the Metro

I was on the metro in Mexico City one day and I saw some very special things. In the seat on the other side of the metro car, was a lady. She was obviously very poor. She had on probably what were her best clothes. She wore plastic sandals. Her skirt was a very bright yellow. Her blouse was bright red! Her blouse obviously was considerably too small. It was bursting at the buttons. She was clean, but poor. I heard God speak to me. "Pray for her. Don't forget her."

Standing on the other side of the train, close to the door, was a young couple. It was the young woman that caught my attention. They too were very poor. She too wore plastic sandals. She too was probably dressed in her best. Her dress was an old blue satin party dress. It was wrinkled and not very clean. Since it had only pin straps, she was wearing a white lace blouse underneath the dress. The lace was ripped in parts. And I thought – even the poor like pretty things. The blue satin dress at one time was very pretty, but now it was thread bare and ugly. I heard God speak to me. "Pray for her. Don't forget her."

On the same train, almost directly in front of me stood a mother and her little child. The little girl was only about 4 years old. In looking at them, I knew that they were very poor. She wore a little red sweater with holes in it and only one button, which was done up. She had black hair and a large straw hat tied on to her head. She had enormous brown eyes. Her eyes were very expressive and showed much pain. She was holding on to her mama's hand. But it was her face and hands that caught my attention. She had very obviously been in a fire sometime. Her face was swollen and scared. As I looked at her I thought "What future does this little girl have? None! Since they were so poor, there would be no money to pay for plastic surgery her face. She would always look grotesque and ugly. Even her little hands were a mess. And I heard God speak to me. "Pray for her. Don't forget her."

And I won't – not ever!! And I haven't! Even after all these years I can still see each of these folk in my memory as clear as if it happened yesterday. Lord, be merciful to these people I saw on the metro and folks like them. Work a miracle in each of their lives. Bring them each to repentance and salvation. If they know You, they have everything.

Donna Preston

Proverbs 19:17

"He who is gracious to a poor man lends to the Lord, and He will repay him for his good deed."

Kimberly Heinl, Susan Knarr, Marilyn Giramonte

1 year Bible Reading Plan

Adapted From Biblegateway.com

Day 93 2 Samuel 16-18	Day 106 2 Kings 10-12
Day 94 2 Samuel 19-21	Day 107 2 Kings 13-15
Day 95 2 Samuel 22-24	Day 108 2 Kings 16-18
Day 96 1 Kings 1-3	Day 109 2 Kings 19-21
Day 97 1 Kings 4-6	Day 110 2 Kings 22-25
Day 98 1 Kings 7-9	Day 111 1 Chronicles 1-6
Day 99 1 Kings 10-12	Day 112 1 Chronicles 7-9
Day 100 1 Kings 13-15	Day 113 1 Chronicles 10-12
Day 101 1 Kings 16-18	Day 114 1 Chronicles 13-15
Day 102 1 Kings 19-22	Day 115 1 Chronicles 16-18
Day 103 2 Kings 1-3	Day 116 1 Chronicles 19-21
Day 104 2 Kings 4-6	Day 117 1 Chronicles 22-25
Day 105 2 Kings 7-9	Day 118 1 Chronicles 26-29

Ready for the incredible privilege and adventure of reading the Bible through cover to cover? We hope so! It takes only about fifteen minutes a day. Enjoy! As you read, ask the Lord to help you see the redemptive story of the Bible. It's the heartbeat of every book from Genesis to Revelation.

**Take the helmet of salvation
and the sword of the Spirit,
which is the Word of God and
pray in the spirit on all
occasions with all kinds of
prayers and requests. With this
in mind, be alert and always
keep on praying for all the
saints.**

Ephesians 6:17-18



CONTACT US

112 Spadina Road West
Kitchener, ON N2M 1G1
(519) 745-8151

www.evangelcommunity.com
info@evangelcommunity.com