

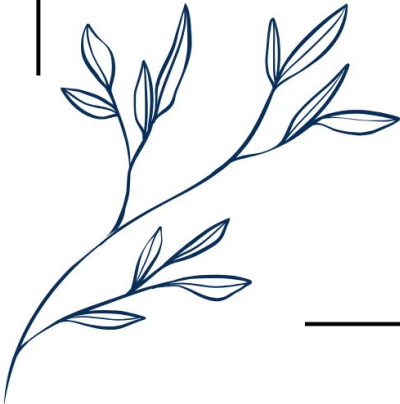
**LENTEN DEVOTIONAL
2025**



*Media Presbyterian
Church*

**30 E. BALTIMORE AVENUE
MEDIA, PA 19063**

PHONE 610.566.3944 | WWW.MEDIAPRESBYTERIAN.ORG



Wednesday, March 5, 2025

Submitted by: Steve Buxton, Elder

Scripture: Psalm 51:1-17

I encourage you to take a minute and read it before you read this! That will help you understand the context of what I'm going to say.

Firstly, this Psalm was written by King David after having been confronted by Nathan after David's series of transgressions surrounding his involvement with Bathsheba. He pleads with God to "blot out my transgressions" and "wash me thoroughly from my iniquity". He doesn't go to the Tabernacle and sacrifice an animal to cover his sin because ultimately he knows this is a transaction that belongs to himself and God alone. We see elsewhere (Isaiah 1:11: "I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls lambs and goats") that the sacrificial system was inadequate to truly satisfy the justice of God.

Secondly, David goes back to point to his having been born and even conceived in sin. He acknowledges his basic sinful nature, his "original sin". Malcom Muggeridge once said, "The depravity of man is at once the most empirically verifiable reality but at the same time the most intellectually resisted fact."

We know we don't have to teach a child to misbehave, to be petulant, to throw tantrums if they don't get what they want when they want it. We have to do the opposite, they have to be disciplined and molded into productive members of society.

Finally, he implores God to "create in me a clean heart" and "renew a steadfast spirit within me". He even points to the Holy Spirit of God as the key to that. This is an Old Testament example of sanctification by the Holy Spirit. Again, sacrificing an animal to cover sin would not accomplish what David is asking for. Only the work of the Holy Spirit can renew, revive, and reform.

What should we take from this? We are all sinful human beings. We are descendants of Adam and Eve, indeed conceived with a sinful nature. We sin because we are sinners, right from birth. We need to be forgiven by our Creator. The good news ("gospel") is that He has made a way for justice to be served – the cross of Christ.

The miracle isn't that there is only ONE WAY to be forgiven, the miracle is that there is ANY way for sinful human beings to be reconciled to a HOLY God. Jesus paid a price He didn't owe because we owed a price we couldn't pay!

I encourage you to use Psalm 51 as a model prayer to your Creator today. God bless you.

Thursday, March 6, 2025

Submitted by: Kate Meehan, Elder

Scripture: Exodus 5:10-23

Our Monday night Bible study group has been studying the book of Micah for several weeks. Micah is all about God's justice and mercy. In particular, God was displeased with the rulers and rich people of Micah's day who exploited and oppressed the people supposedly within their care. God condemns the exploiters and lifts up the oppressed. In this story from Exodus, we see Pharaoh and his system of slavery in peak form in their oppression of the Israelites. Not only were the Jews enslaved and treated cruelly, in this chapter we see Pharaoh strike back hard against them in petty retaliation for requesting time off to worship God.

For making that simple request, Pharaoh ordered them to gather their own straw – and maintain the same quota of brick production at the same time. If they failed, they were harshly beaten. I think most would agree that Pharaoh's decrees were unjust and cruel. In their anguish, the people cried out to God. God heard their prayers and responded in a spectacular way to deliver them (approximately 2 million in all) from slavery in Egypt. This dramatic episode reminds us that God hears our prayers, despises injustice, and will step in in our times of need and crisis. Are you experiencing an injustice of some kind? Cry out to God get near to Him in prayer, and He will deliver you.

Prayer: Holy God, you are almighty, just true and good. I know you want what is best for me. Cover me with your love and protection. I trust you and submit to you completely. Amen.

Friday, March 7, 2025

Submitted by: Tom Palmer, Elder

Scripture: Psalms 91:1-2, 9-16

When was the last time you felt overwhelmed? For some, it may be a constant state of how they feel at the time. It could be the loss of a loved one. For others, it might just be a bad day. All of us have encountered this feeling. Even our young ones feel this as they start and continue in school. So much comes at us at once. It is easy to become overwhelmed. It can also be a roller coaster from the peaks of wonderful events to the valleys of just the opposite.

Being overwhelmed usually means we may need some prayer. Prayer from others and prayer from ourselves. Prayer helps to lead us where this Psalm is trying to take us, to Our Lord. Reading the words of this Psalm provides great comfort. These words also enliven the spirit inside us. When we remind ourselves of the great refuge that is Our Lord, we can begin to move through that which is overwhelming us.

Prayer is one of the most direct ways of addressing Our Lord. It is a vast gift which enables us. We can pray in thanks, or we can pray in lament. Prayer covers all the bases of our concerns, joys, regrets, or praises. Psalm 91 is a verse that reminds me of the importance of prayer. Our prayer is a way of showing both our humility and our love for Our Lord, no matter what we may be praying about.

In this devotion I am committed to increasing my prayer with Our Lord. In so doing I hope to move even closer to God. I offer the same to any reader of this devotion. Make a commitment to yourself to increase how much you pray to Our Lord. You may find the result miraculous.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for Your Word and the gift of prayer. In this prayer, I ask for your strength for all who feel overwhelmed. We need your grace and strength Lord to face many of the challenges that are present in our world. Enable us to pray just a little bit more so that we can feel your ultimate refuge and salvation.

In Your Holy Name, Amen

Saturday, March 8, 2025

Submitted by: Ty Harvey, Children's and Youth Director

Scripture: Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, John 12:27-36

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 reminds us that there is a season for everything in life—a time to be born and a time to die, a time to weep and a time to laugh. This passage reassures us that God is sovereign over every moment, orchestrating the events of our lives according to His divine purpose. Yet, even when we understand that seasons change, it can be difficult to accept the painful ones. In John 12:27-36, Jesus wrestled with His approaching death, acknowledging His troubled soul but choosing to glorify the Father. Saying in verse 27-28a “Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!” His response teaches us that in every season—whether joyful or sorrowful—we are called to trust in God’s perfect plan and seek His glory above all else. Jesus urges us to walk in the light, for darkness will not last forever. In other words, have faith today. Even in times of uncertainty, God’s light continues to shine. No season is wasted when we remain close to Christ, for He guides us through every trial and triumph. When we surrender to God’s timing, we find peace, knowing that His purposes are good. May we embrace each season with faith and walk in the light of Christ, trusting that He leads us toward eternal hope.

Prayer: God, thank you for the seasons of life, each one held in your perfect hands. When we face uncertainty and sorrow, help us to trust in your divine plan, just as Jesus did. Let us walk in Your light, embracing every moment with faith and surrender. May we glorify you in all things, knowing that your timing is always right. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Monday, March 10, 2025

Submitted by: Doug Crosby, Deacon

Scripture: Psalm 17, 1 Chronicles 21:1-17, 1 John 2-6

The Old Testament can be encouraging in our search for God's presence in our lives. Take the sheep herder, David, who through his strong faith in God, becomes the leader of Israel. There are many examples like David's accomplishments that are against all odds. Though David, like us, is not perfect, he acknowledges his sins and accepts God's punishment over being put into the hands of his enemies. David knows that he will be treated fairly by God for only He shows Mercy and Grace.

David's family legacy does not show a lineage of kings except for the one that counts, Jesus. This should bring hope to all of us that our lives will be worth living to its fullest in Christ. During this season of Lent, as in 1 John 2:1-2 (Bible Panorama), a mark of new birth is not to settle for sin. Please Christ with a habitual lifestyle. If there is sin, Christ is there to receive our confession and forgive us of our sins. This is the message that should be shared with the world!

Prayer: Let us pray.

Heavenly Father,

when I speak, You hear me,
when I ask for your presence, You show me,
when I need you close, You keep me,
when I am fearful, You hide me,
when I need protection, You deliver me,
when I honor you, You bless me.

Tuesday, March 11, 2025

Submitted by: Renee Erickson, Deacon

Scripture: Zechariah 3:1-10

“Jeshua’s clothing was filthy as he stood there before the angel. So the angel said to the others standing there, “Take off his filthy clothes.” And turning to Jeshua, he said, “See, I have taken away your sins, and now I am giving you these fine new clothes.” (Zechariah 3:3, 4) “Jeshua, the high priest, and all other priests, you are symbols of things to come. Soon I am going to bring my servant, the Branch. . . and I will remove the sins of this land in a single day.” (Zechariah 3:8 , 9)

During the season of Lent, we are called to meditate more closely on our own sinfulness and the unfathomable gift of righteousness that God has given us through Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection. Notice that God is the agent of all the action in our passage. One of my favorite Christian authors, Catherine Marshall, once had a vision similar to Zechariah’s – She had died and entered a huge room filled with people she had known and loved waiting to welcome her. Then she noticed her filthy clothing and she wept. But immediately she received beautiful new clothing, the righteous of Christ Himself.

Sometimes it is helpful to have a visual to help us focus and marvel. Reading and singing the words of hymns can also vividly remind us of what happened on that cross for us.

“And Can It Be That I Should Gain?” Charles Wesley

“At the Cross” and “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” Isaac Watts

“Amazing Grace” John Newton

Prayer: Thank you, Jesus. Please forgive me for every time I have forgotten what You have done for me, and for everyone else in this whole, wide world. To God be the glory.

Wednesday, March 12, 2025

Submitted by: Joe Hare, Clerk of Session

Scripture: Luke 21:34-22:6

Jesus repeatedly warned his disciples during the latter part of his ministry to stay alert and be ready for his return. But what does being ready mean? Does it mean knowing the exact time of his return—the day or the hour? No, we can't know that. It is only known to the Father in Heaven. So what does it mean? It means to live with faithful vigilance, expectation, and hope for Jesus' return. He stands near and can return at any time.

When we have responsibilities to meet, supervision is vital. A good supervisor helps to keep us on track. God is the ultimate supervisor who wants what is best for us. Let us stay awake to welcome Him when He comes.

Prayer can be difficult sometimes. Remember that the strength we need to pray comes from God alone. We just need to hang in there!

During this time of Lent, we wait and watch and pray.

Prayer: Holy and righteous Father, Eternal God and Creator of the universe, work in me your righteous will to make me ready for your Son's glorious return. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Thursday, March 13, 2025

Submitted by: Dana Riker Jackson, Elder

Scripture: Psalm 27; Genesis 13:1-7, 14-18; Philippians 3:2-12

Calling on the name of the Lord, Seeking His Guidance and The Goal of Life

It is interesting that these three books and scripture verses were put together. The title you see that I have given this devotion is because what I got out of reading these scriptures is a process of how to live our best life. This is how God spoke to me.

First, Genesis 13: 1-7 demonstrates that frequently calling on the name of the Lord for guidance or help is an afterthought. We do it when we find ourselves in circumstances that are not ideal or that we do not desire. One of the descriptors in my study bible from these verses says how prayer can be our greatest time saver if we would only think to “Call on the Name of the Lord” first, before making any decisions or changes. Maybe there would be less strife.

Second, Psalm 27 needs to be our rally cry for what we are experiencing in our world right now. It would not hurt to read and pray about Psalm 27 every day for at least the next 4 years. Part of Psalm 27 is about Seeking God’s Guidance and maybe not the way you might think. **Here is what my study bible says that I think is worth sharing.**

“Life is full of decisions, and if we want to make the right choices; those that glorify God and benefit us and others; we need God’s guidance. The following seven words will help us in seeking His direction.

1. **Cleansing.** We need to ask God, Is anything in my life hindering me from hearing what You are saying? If so, what is it? Cleansing comes from confession (1 John 1:9)
2. **Surrendering.** We must submit to whatever God instructs us to do. Sometimes we find it difficult to move ahead because we want to know step two before we complete step one of God’s will. However, we must surrender ourselves to His timing and guidance. Obeying the will of God is both humbling and an uplifting experience. (1 Peter: 5-6)
3. **Asking.** James 4:2 reports, “You do not have because you do not ask.” God promises that when we ask according to His will, He hears us. And when we know that He hears us, we know He will answer. (1 John 5:14,15) Here is the hard part...even though the answer may come over a long period of time.
4. **Meditating.** The more time we spend in communication with God, listening for His word to us, the clearer our path will become.
5. **Believing.** In Mark’s Gospel, we learn that when we ask, we must believe He is going to give us what we ask as long as it is in alignment with His will. (Mark 11: 22-24) Therefore, trust that He will show you what to do.

6. Waiting. This is very hard for me and why I need to work on trust. God promises that he acts on our behalf when we wait for Him. (Is. 64:4) If we run ahead of Him and try to fix things on our own or manipulate circumstances, we will most certainly be disappointed. However, if we wait on the Lord, then our sovereign, divine, omnipotent God will act on our behalf. It is our choice, and I will add, we must own that.

7. Receiving. When we obediently seek the will of God, we can be sure that He'll hear us and give us the wisdom we need to make the right choices. (Matthew 7:7, 8; James 1:5) And once we know His will, we have a responsibility to embrace His direction and obey Him completely."

This list is not easy to do, but so incredibly powerful. Which leads me to the last scripture in Philippians 3 that in my bible is entitled "The Goal of Life." The first verse says to rejoice in the Lord. Then it comes with some warnings about putting your faith and trust in the flesh. This scripture tells us that what is more important than your outward appearance is what your heart communicates. Do we portray God's wondrous mercy and grace that we receive when we are saved? I will end this devotion with Philippians 3 verse 4 "If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more." This is how my study bible explains this verse. "When Paul writes concerning the flesh, he is speaking of our human nature, our earthly desires, inclinations, and carnal strength. Our flesh does not follow God. In fact, it is often in complete opposition to Him (Romans 7) Rather it seeks after pleasure and finds importance in accomplishments, wealth, beauty and so on. The Spirit on the other hand, always directs us to becoming more like Christ through obedience. Paul underscored the fact that true religion is never a matter of carrying out traditions and rituals but is always based in a genuine an intimate relationship with God.

The other lesson here is also how adversity can bring us closer to God and how God will use adversity to grow our faith.

Prayer: Jesus, help us to remember to call on your name first with everything we think, say, or do. Help us to take the time to seek Your guidance and wisdom. To truly listen and then trust and obey what we hear you telling us. Lord, we desire a growing and intimate relationship with you so that we can be your beacon of light and hope that this world so desperately needs. Amen

Friday, March 14, 2025

Submitted by: Dana Riker Jackson, Elder

Scripture: Psalm 27; Genesis 14:17-24; Philippians 3:17-20

Psalm 27 – Our rally cry as Christians. I really am going to start to read this everyday to start my morning devotions. Especially during times like these.

Genesis 14:17-24 – The message I get from this scripture is that we must remember the source of all our blessings is God. And, when we are victorious or successful, to acknowledge those that God put into our lives to help us to be victorious and recognize them. Do not become prideful, saying “Look what I accomplished.” God knows. I know I must work on this as recognition is more important to me than it should be.

Philippians 3: 17-20 – What jumps out at me the most with this scripture is verse 20 – “Our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.” I love what my study bible lesson says because it is how I have been feeling and the encouragement I need....”As believers, sometimes the way the world functions may seem strange, even unconscionable. And often, we may be persecuted for our relationship with Jesus and the stand we take for what is right. (Mark 13:13, John 15: 18-20, 1 Peter 4:12, 13 and John 3: 13) But do not be discouraged – we are not home yet. (John 14:2, 2 Cor. 5:8, Hebrews 11:13)

Prayer:

Lord, thank you for being in control. Help us to trust and to have faith that you will be victorious over the enemy who has way too much power and influence right now. We need you Lord more than ever. Use us to be your feet, your hands, and your heart to shine the light, the hope, and the love that exists in your care. You will be victorious! Amen!