

TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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BIBLE READING FELLOWSHIP
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By Jane Shinn

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September 24th to September 30th

Sunday, September 24

Acts 9:10-31 “Who are you, Lord?” Saul asked. “I am Jesus who you are persecuting,” he replied. Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized. At once he began to preach in the synagogue that Jesus is the Son of God. (vv.5, 18, 20 NIV)

Saul’s conversion from murderer of innocent Christians to preaching Jesus is the Son of God transpired over just several days! Clearly, no one is beyond the scope of God’s radical grace-receiving what we don’t deserve. Let me begin the declaration of praise and thanksgiving: terminal diagnosis to 2 years of abundance, bitter divorce to reconciliations, shame/unworthiness from abuse to new life with humility, bitterness to surrender, loneliness/sadness to blessings of God with me, fear to peace...Ask me.

Who will join me? “Sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth. Sing to the LORD, praise his name; praise his salvation day after day” (Psalm 96:1-2).

2 Kings 4:8-37; Psalms 93, 96; Luke 3:7-18

Monday, September 25

Matthew 5:21-26 “You’re familiar with the command to the ancients, ‘Do not murder.’ I’m telling you that anyone who is so much as angry with a brother or sister is guilty of murder. Thoughtlessly yell ‘stupid’ at a sister and you are on the brink of hellfire.” (vv.21-22 The Message)

Jesus is showing us how his fulfillment of the law goes deeper than outward conformation. Murdering can be done in thinking, speaking, or

acting by others or self. Each is subject to judgment. Remember the big lie we used to sing as children? “Sticks and stones can break our bones but names can never hurt us?” Thoughts, words, and deeds can kill by distorting our true identity and/or leave us hopeless, powerless, unloved, ashamed, fearful, sad, or angry. All produce consequences that need restoration.

Psalm 80 gives us the clue for the source of restoration: “Let your hand rest on the man at your right hand, the son of man you have raised up for yourself” (v.17). Jesus Christ is our Redeemer.

2 Kings 5:1-19; Psalm 80; 1 Corinthians 4:8-21

Tuesday, September 26

Matthew 5:27-37 “Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord.’ Simply let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes’ and your ‘No’, ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.” (vv.33, 36 NIV)

James admonishes us not to exaggerate either, as our word can be questioned if we omit the whole truth, and to avoid lies (James 5:12). In raising our children, I recall a dear friend sharing this parenting pearl: “Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding” (Proverbs 9:10). Translated, the meaning was the failure to disclose the whole truth is a lie.

As parents, we rested in God’s truth in love for each of our children as we prayed God’s protection upon each he entrusted to us. Paul’s warning in 1 Corinthians 5:1-8 about God’s discipline to lies exposed was always flashing in our headlights and led us to overprotect. Like Pharisees, we followed the word as law without God’s grace through the power of the Holy Spirit—until later....

2 Kings 5:19-27; Psalm 78:1-39; 1 Corinthians 5:1-8

Wednesday, September 27

Matthew 5:38-48 “But, I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.” (v.44)

How difficult this word can be to follow, especially when our enemy harms us and leaves scars. I still remember my anxiety as I stood up in front of my first-grade class to speak. Over prepared, my hands shook like “leaves in a tornado.” At least, that is what I remember when the teacher asked for comments. My takeaway was shame; I promised to control my speech which caused fear whenever “speaking aloud” was required.

Pondering God’s word on love and fear for wisdom and deeper understanding, I prayed. God’s agape love is available to everyone, not just me; it can empower me to make a different choice. I saw this young boy as a brother. I could choose to break these chains of shame, fear, and inner vows with renouncing, repenting, returning, and receiving God’s grace at the foot of the Cross through the power of the Holy Spirit. I chose new life.

This knowledge of God’s holiness gave me a deeper understanding. “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path” (Psalm 119:105).

2 Kings 6:1-23; Psalm 119:97-120; 1 Corinthians 5:9-6:8

Thursday, September 28

Psalm 146 Praise the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul. Do not put your trust in princes, in mortal men, who cannot save. Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God. (vv.1, 3, 5)

Leaning not on my own understanding or the encouragement of others without praying is toxic to my health. I know; I have experienced the consequences. But I praise the Lord with the psalmist because I know God’s mercy when the door of my heart is opened to receive help.

Receiving a dropped call, a text: “emergency,” with unsuccessful contact, my husband and I were overwhelmed with fear and despair. After all, it was carpool time in a raging thunderstorm! Psalm 147 tells us: “He heals the

brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. Great is our Lord and mighty in power, his understanding has no limit" (vv.3, 5). We clung to God's word.

We prayed to the "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort who comforts us in all our troubles" (2 Corinthians 1:3-5) and "is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1). The ER physician was surprised that this hand injury was so minor. Two knives went from drying on the counter to the hands of a toddler, as mom walked 4 steps to welcome family to supper and returned. There was no damage to tendons, bone, or ligaments! This circumstance has become "Family ER Adventure," complete with cool crayons/coloring books, supper that became a picnic, and thanksgiving for the peace of God which passes all understanding.

2 Kings 9:1-16; Psalms 83, 147; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20;
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

Friday, September 29

Matthew 6:7-15 "Forgive us our debts, as we have also forgiven our debtors. For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." (vv.12, 14-15)

In praying, there is a clear connection between God's vertical forgiveness and my willingness to extend horizontal forgiveness to another, especially one who has left me with a seemingly unforgivable burden. Having both faced this dilemma to act and been the receiver of someone who extended God's grace first, I know the compassion and comfort of God's presence through the power of the Holy Spirit. Such freedom—like I can fly or float with praise and thanksgiving, crying, "More!"

The God who gives and requires forgiveness? That is Jesus Christ our Healer. I ponder that whenever I approach the altar to leave my burdens, to receive the grace of God in Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. And when I am not able, I pray. I need God's help. I need God's love

that never ends. I need God's mercy that is renewed every morning.

2 Kings 9:17-37; Psalm 88; 1 Corinthians 7:1-9

Saturday, September 30

Matthew 6:19-24 "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. No one can serve two masters." (vv.22-23a, 24a)

Jesus says, "I am the light of the world. Whoever believes in me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life" (John 8:12 NRSV). Paths of light or great darkness...paths of love or selfishness? Choosing the right path requires spiritual vision to see myself and others from God's perspective. The gospel is the path to life, but what about my blindness?

Being assured that God knows me, is with me, and welcomes me to know Him (Psalm 139), I asked Lord God to show me my anxious thoughts and offensive ways. He did. I learned a "secret" from years past, hidden from me, that caused anger, judgment, impatience, poor self-esteem, lack of trust, and it led me to control my behavior. Distortion, lies, judgments, fear, and unworthiness were revealed through the Light of the World, my Jesus!

"Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" is Peter's suggestion to have a brighter light on the path (2 Peter 3:18). So, I pray regularly for God's perspective with the gospel directing my path. My transformation in Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit depends on it. "May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us; establish the work of our hands for us—yes, establish the work of our hands" (Psalm 90:17).

2 Kings 11:1-20a; Psalms 87, 90; 1 Corinthians 7:10-24

In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer we pray for
The Church of Ireland

In the Diocesan Cycle of Prayer we pray for
The Rt. Rev. E. Mark Stevenson, The Rt. Rev. Gayle E. Harris and all Bishops participating in the House of Bishops meeting

CURRENT PRAYER LIST

Christine, Debbie, Dianne, Dick, Ellen, Gary, Harry, James, Johnny, Kathy, Latavia, Marlene, Penny, Ronnie, Steve, Walter, Susan Anderson, Janet Bailey, Joanne Beck, Mo Cowie, Jenny Grant, Liam Jackson, Ken Luehrs, Nancy Russler, Janice Lee Sealy, Debbie Sharp, Marianne Simpson, Shirley Sumner, May Jane Tillman, Annette Trafacante, Anne Warlick, Pat Weber

BIRTHDAYS

October 1st - Alda White, Sean Meiers, Dan Gray
October 3rd - David Grinnan, Jr., Walt Harrison, Sally Bennett, Parker Betham,
October 6th - Patsy Thompson, Sug Clingenpeel, Karen Harrison,
October 7th - Becky Daag
October 8th - Nancy Russler
October 10th - Bob Savage
October 11th - Rich Humphreys
October 12th - Suzanne Sumner
October 13th - Martha Crigler, Violet Allison
October 14th - Donovan Wilson

ANNIVERSARIES

October 4th - Blake & Aby Betham
October 6th - John & Diana Utz
October 9th - Chris & Michele Brantley
October 10th - Rusty & LorrieAnn Hummer
October 12th - BJ & Prudence Jarvis
October 13th - Butch & Sam Burton
October 14th - Eugene Smith & Natasha Jasso-Smith