

FAITH BIBLE READING

Mar 11 - 17, 2019

At Faith Baptist Fellowship, we *Love God's Word and Prayer* (Ephesians 6:17-18)! Take the 'sword of the Spirit' (God's Word) and persevere in prayer! In this year, ask God each day to speak directly to you from the Scripture portions you read. Select a quiet place and consistent time to read and pray.

Our plan for 2019 will be similar to previous years **with one exception**. Monday-Saturday we will focus on one main devotional passage; the additional readings will keep you on track to finish the entire Bible in one year. On Sunday, we will have a passage from the upcoming Sunday sermon along with questions for Faith Group discussion. **In addition**, we will include a **"One Another"** passage also for Faith Group discussion and personal application in caring for one another in the body of Faith.

We suggest having a notebook and pen for answering questions and recording your thoughts/insights. Bring this notebook with you to Faith Group for discussions and prayer times.

Abbreviations: **TAI** – Think About It | **PP** – Prayer Points

MONDAY, MARCH 11

Read Matthew 24:15-35

TAI: Some Christians hold that the sacrilege and persecution referred to in these verses took place at the destruction of Jerusalem (AD 70). Others hold that these events are yet future, as they lead to the second coming of Christ. Still others hold that it is a combination of the two. Christians should not be surprised by tumultuous events and tribulation that bring hardship and persecution. God will protect and deliver his elect, his chosen ones. True believers need not fear but trust him and endure. Jesus Christ will return in great glory and majesty. God's word is sure.

PP: Express thanks to God that his promises are sure and will not fail. Thank him for the promise that he will deliver his elect from every tribulation and hardship. Ask him to enable you by his Spirit to endure and live by faith no matter what the circumstances. Ask God to help you grow in the hope of the gospel and in the knowledge of his word, so that in trials and difficulties your faith will endure and even thrive. Pray this for our entire church family.

Additional readings: Romans 7:1-12; Psalm 57; Numbers 23-25

TUESDAY, MARCH 12

Read Matthew 24:36-51

TAI: What is surprising about the timing of Christ's appearing? What will be the circumstances on earth when Jesus comes? Therefore, believers are to stay alert and prepared for that day and not be caught off guard. *Do you find it difficult to stay spiritually alert and ready for the return of Christ? What makes this readiness challenging? What helps us stay ready?* Ponder the difference between the faithful and wise servant and the wicked one.

PP: Tell God that it is your desire to be a faithful and wise servant of Jesus Christ. Ask God to help you persevere in faith and remain ready in all the challenges and circumstances of life. Faith Groups, discuss how we can help each other remain "on the alert" for Christ to come and how to avoid spiritual stupor. Then pray toward these ends.

Pray for our Faith pastors and Elder Council.

Additional readings: Romans 7:13-25; Psalm 59; Numbers 26-27

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13

Read Matthew 25:1-13

TAI: This parable builds on the need for readiness in yesterday's reading. What made the foolish virgins foolish and the wise virgins wise? How does this parable relate to the second coming of Jesus Christ? Why do you think Jesus includes the detail of a wedding and wedding feast? Reflect on what God wants you to learn from this parable and how you should apply it to your life today.

PP: As we prayed yesterday, ask God to enable you by his Spirit to be a faithful and wise servant, ready for Christ's appearing. Tell God that you do not want to be foolish and neglect the great reality of Christ's return. Ask God to help you be vigilant. Rejoice in the promise of the great marriage feast to come in God's kingdom. Thank God that as believers we are the bride of Christ!

Thank God for our Faith Care Team and pray for Coordinator Greg Friesner and each member of the team.

Additional Readings: Romans 8:1-17; Psalm 59; Numbers 28-30

THURSDAY, MARCH 14

Read Matthew 25:14-30

TAI: Warren W. Wiersbe writes that Christ's "coming also means *evaluation*. As we wait for the Lord to return, we must invest our lives and earn dividends for his glory. Christ gives us opportunities that match our abilities, and the one-talent servant is just as important as the five-talent servant. The key is *faithfulness*, for God measures us against ourselves and not against other servants. Are you afraid to step out by faith and take some risks for God?" (*With the Word*, p. 651) How was the worthless servant punished by God?

PP: What spiritual gifts has God given you, believer? How do you invest your gifts for the health and vitality of the church and for the benefit of others? Pray about this. Thank God for your gifts and abilities. Ask him to use you for his glory. Ask him what challenges and opportunities he has for you—think Ephesians 2:10! Express to God that you do not want to bury your grace-given treasures but invest them; if you have regrets in this area, confess any sin to God and thank him for the opportunity now to be fruitful. Thank God and pray for our custodial staff: Heidi Bakke and Sabrina Bakke.

Additional Readings: Romans 8:18-39; Psalm 60; Numbers 31-32

FRIDAY, MARCH 15

Read Matthew 25:31-46

TAI: Our society lives in denial of the reality of future judgment. This passage certainly dispels that denial. Who will judge? When will he judge? How will he judge? *Worth pondering: does this passage teach salvation by works? If not, what does it teach?* What is the destiny of those deemed "on the left?" Those "on the right?"

Our faith is transformative: genuine saving faith results in a new life; self-centeredness is replaced by love and compassion. Do you have in your heart love and compassion for those in need?

PP: Thank God that in Christ we do not need to fear condemnation. Rather we look forward to his welcome into the new heavens and new earth. Ask God to increase your heart for those in need.

Pray for our Kingdom Opps team & our response to hurting people.

Additional Readings: Romans 9:1-18; Psalm 61; Numbers 33-36

SATURDAY, MARCH 16

Read Matthew 26:1-16

TAI: The scene dramatically shifts now in Matthew's gospel to the final week—Holy Week. Once again Jesus prophesies his upcoming crucifixion, and we get a glimpse of the plotting by religious leaders. OT prophecy is fulfilled with Jesus as the ultimate Passover Lamb (I Cor. 5:7). While some disciples view the woman's anointing of Jesus' body as a waste of good money, Jesus himself knows that she is preparing his body for burial. And now we remember this occasion, as Jesus said we would! Judas joins the plotting, leading to the cross.

PP: As part of your prayer response to this Holy Week passage, sing your favorite hymn about the cross. Like the woman with the flask of ointment, express your loving worship of Jesus in a wholehearted way. Pray that these weeks of anticipation of Good Friday and Easter would be a time of spiritual devotion and growth for you.

Pray for Deb Bartels and Linda Schilling in our Faith office.

Additional Readings: Romans 9:19-33; Psalm 62; Deuteronomy 1-3

SUNDAY, MARCH 17

Read Mark 9:33-50

TAI & PP: Why would the disciples be arguing over who is the greatest? How does Jesus turn this argument on its head? Why does he use a child as a focal point of his teaching? Ponder Jesus' proverb, "For the one who is not against us is for us." What follows is a series of word pictures designed to warn us of the severity of judgment and the deceitfulness of sin. Jesus uses overstatement, for otherwise we would all have no hands and no eyes, but he warns us not to take sin and its consequences lightly. Are you a salty Christian? Pray about these things. Confess your sin to God. Cling to Jesus!

Care Point: Galatians 5:13 "...through love SERVE one another."

The context is our freedom in Christ. How does gospel freedom allow us to lovingly serve one another? How does legalism hinder our love and service? How does LOVE fulfill the whole law? The opposite of serving one another in love is "you bit and devour one another" (v. 15). How can we at Faith put such loving service into practice? How have you experienced it?