

LOVE GOD'S WORD & PRAYER

New Testament Challenge 2020

At Faith Baptist Fellowship, we *Love God's Word and Prayer*. Hearing a sermon at church on Sunday mornings alone isn't enough to be considered a healthy diet of God's word and prayer. We strongly believe that every growing disciple of Jesus needs to be regularly hearing from God through his word and personally speaking back to God through prayer.

We are challenging everyone to read through the entire New Testament in 2020 – one chapter per day, five days per week. If regular Bible reading is not yet a habit of yours, this is a great way to get started! As always, we will provide devotional thoughts and helpful prayer points on the passages. The weekend material will prepare you for the upcoming Sunday sermon as well as provide some discussion help for Faith Groups.

We recommend you set aside at least 15-20 minutes a day for this plan and prayer. If you fall behind, just start on the current day. Try to develop the habit of reading at the same time and place. We suggest having a journal and pen for answering questions and recording your thoughts and insights. Happy Bible Reading!

Monday, November 2

Read Revelation 7:1-17

THINK: In contrast to the throngs hiding in caves and calling upon the mountains to fall on them at the end of the last chapter, here the picture is of special protection for those who are God's chosen people. Understandings of the 144,000 vary, but this much is very clear: God is able to seal and protect his own during the calamity and wrath to come. Believers need not live in fear. Notice also that the huge multitude (v. 9) come from every tribe and people and language. What does this throng cry out?

PRAY: Rejoice in God's gracious protection and promise of eternity. Take heart and pray for the fulfillment of the Great Commission, pictured here, of some from every people group and language group on earth among the worshipping congregation in heaven. Picture yourself standing among this huge multi-ethnic throng, crying out with all, "Salvation belongs to our God!" Won't that be amazing?

Thank God for his divine sealing and protection of believers in these days of pandemic and upheaval. Ask him for enduring faith.

Tuesday, November 3 – Election Day. PRAY!

Read Revelation 8:1-13

THINK: Note the drama of “silence in heaven for about half an hour” when the Lamb opens the seventh seal. Note, too, the importance of the prayers of the saints – our prayers! Four angels blow their trumpets, and a variety of judgments fall upon the earth. The righteous Judge waits for the fullness of time when he will pour out these judgments; his current patience should not be mistaken for an unwillingness to bring his plans to fulfillment. Our response? Be ready. Trust in God’s character and God’s promises. Stand fast.

PRAY: Pray for the outpouring of God’s Spirit on our land and across the world, bringing the lost to Jesus Christ through repentance and faith and calling the church to renewal and revival. Pray that the lukewarm (Rev. 3:15-16) would be transformed with fresh zeal and hope and joy in Christ. Pray for Christians bringing the gospel to communities on every continent, and for the reaching of unreached peoples. Pray for our country on this Election Day.

Wednesday, November 4

Read Revelation 9:1-21

THINK: Fifth trumpet blast: Who is the star fallen from heaven (see Luke 10:18)? Notice that he cannot open the pit apart from the key being given to him—God is in control, and places limits on our enemy. Have you noticed how the trumpet blasts have some parallel with the plagues of Egypt in Exodus? Sixth blast: the intensity increases in that now death is included. One would think that perhaps such destruction would cause the wicked to repent of their sin. In answer, ponder vv. 20-21, and consider the powerful hold of sin and wickedness on the unrepentant.

PRAY: How do we respond to such awful imagery? With worship! Thank God for his kindness and grace toward you and your loved ones. Thank him for the gospel truth that “there is now therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” Pray for family members and friends who do not yet trust in Jesus Christ for salvation. “Rejoice in the Lord always!” Ask God for vibrant faith in the midst of trouble: “In this world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)

Thursday, November 5

Read Revelation 10:1-11

THINK: This chapter gives us marvelous assurance: if we are tempted to think that things are out of control, take heart! They are not out of control. God is still in charge, fulfilling his plan and purpose. It is written on the scroll. There is *mystery* here, isn't there? And there is *anticipation*: some day we will know what the message means for us personally. *Delays are simply the perfection of his timing.* That's a helpful truth to remember in these days of COVID-19. Trust God!

PRAY: "Heavenly Father, the consummation of all things is a mystery to me, but not to you. I bow the knee to your Lordship; you are the King, and you are in control. I exalt you, my King. I praise your name. I delight to know that when the world seems chaotic and evil appears out of control, you are merely waiting for your perfect timing to be fulfilled and every promise met. Hear my prayer of praise and my words of worship. Our God reigns! Hallelujah! Amen."

Friday, November 6

Read Revelation 11:1-19

THINK: Take a moment and begin to memorize the statement in v. 15, "The kingdom of the world..." Whenever you are filled with dread and think that evil is triumphing in our world, this verse with its promise will come in handy! How these details all fit together, and the timing of it, is a mystery (though some think they have it all figured out!). Rest in the assurance that God has it all timed out, planned, and the end is his. Enter into the worship of vv. 16-18.

PRAY: Pray line by line through the worship-filled prayer of vv. 16-18. Pray with great expectancy that in his time, God will fulfill all his plans for his people, including you. After this prayer, turn to the needs of your life: your family, your relationships, your ministry, or whatever else comes to mind. Pray a prayer of supplication, inviting God's good work in your life.

Continue to pray for our nation in these days of tumult. Ask God to move in our land by the power of his Spirit. Pray for revival in the church and spiritual awakening in the nation.

Weekend, November 7-8

Genesis 44:1-34

If you've fallen behind this week, consider using these extra days to catch up. You can also prepare your heart and mind for this Sunday's worship service. Read the planned sermon text above and the thoughts below in advance of Sunday morning's message. If you are in a Faith Group, consider discussing the questions below together.

THINK: Dr. Kent Hughes: "Now, as we take up chapter 44, we will witness a life-altering transformation of the brothers that will variously involve conscience, repentance, enlarged sympathies, intercession, sacrifice, and substitution--all wrapped in a growing brotherly love that speaks of Christ." Why do you think Joseph engages in this elaborate scheme to frame Benjamin for the theft of Joseph's cup? What is he trying to learn, or assess, or gain? How is the profound gospel truth of *substitution* pictured in this chapter? How has Judah changed?

PRAY: Pray for our pastors preaching on this chapter in our services at West and South. Pray a prayer of praise for the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ on the cross for you. Praise God also that like Judah, you have been changed by the mercy and grace of God. Pray for gospel change in the lives of lost people in your sphere of influence.

This has been a crucial and pivotal week in the life of our nation. Continue to earnestly pray for our land.

FAITH GROUP: As a group, talk about what Joseph is up to with this elaborate "cup" hoax. Why did he do it? What is he trying to perceive?

Discuss the change we have seen in Judah over these chapters. Why is that so vitally important to the biblical, gospel narrative? **How has your gospel encounter with Jesus Christ profoundly changed you? Share.**

Who is a lost person you earnestly pray for? Share about that person with the group. Then spend time praying for those lost persons you long to see come to Jesus Christ.

Continue to pray for the Spirit's work in our country and world in these difficult, trying days.