

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 16

Read Revelation 17:1-18

THINK: Sometimes we may be tempted to think that sin and immorality are just too large, too great, too pervasive in our world. "Prostitution" – represented by widespread pornography, sexual looseness, a turning from marriage, fornication, homosexuality, and the like – is depicted here as a woman on a beast. Revelation tells us that this widespread iniquity is NOT the final story, that it will be judged and will "go to destruction." **Memorize v. 14!** Be wise, and choose that which is good, and rest assured that Jesus Christ will be the final Victor in this spiritual war. In Christ you are **the called and chosen and faithful!**

PRAY: Express thanks to God that in Jesus Christ we do not need to fear the future or troubles to come. Exalt Christ as the Victor! Exalt him for coming to earth! Pray for the saints to have courage, boldness, humble confidence in God, and enduring faith and hope. Ask God to strengthen your faith. Pray for a powerful work of grace in the lives of those you love. *Ask God to please grant us relief from this coronavirus pandemic. Pray for those affected in your life.*

Tuesday, November 17

Read Revelation 18:1-24

THINK: ESV Study Bible: “As the ancient Greek chorus interpreted action in a drama, so a succession of speakers explains the significance of the prostitute’s desolation as she is deserted by the beast that once supported her and the kings who once adored her.” Notice v. 4: be warned, church, not to play with Babylon’s iniquity, but be holy. Take to heart how quickly God can change things. Let this encourage you to walk in holiness of life and remain faithful.

PRAY: What iniquity is Babylon guilty of? Do you need to confess to God any of these sins? Ponder v. 8 and remember that while sin might appeal in the moment, God can change things in a single day or a single hour! Pray a prayer asking God to help you live wisely, a godly life pleasing to him, trusting in his commands to guide you in what is wholesome and good and beneficial for a child of God – a wise prayer given the current upheaval in our nation and world.

Wednesday, November 18

Read Revelation 19:1-21

THINK: Faithful and True identifies Jesus Christ as the rider (reread Revelation 1:5 and 3:14), while the white horse indicates triumph. Why does Jesus return? Further indicators that this is Jesus: the diadems, the robe dipped in blood, and his name, The Word of God (see John 1). Is there any mistaking the fact that Christ will be victorious, evil defeated, and God’s wrath carried out against wickedness? Any doubt is removed by the name written on his robe and thigh! Hallelujah! What a Savior. He will be victorious.

PRAY: Sometimes we are tempted to think, in our low moments, maybe due to disappointments or discouragements, that the Evil One will triumph and Christ will not reign over all after all. Pray now a prayer of thanksgiving, expressing praise to God that the victory of Jesus Christ already belongs to the Lord! Thank God for the stirring reminder that Jesus will reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords! For he is, truly, The Word of God, and the final triumph has already been written for us to read in God’s book. Thanks be to God.

Pray for our Wednesday night activities for children and youth.

Thursday, November 19

Read Revelation 20:1-15

THINK: The ESV Study Bible says, “These verses are among the most controversial in Revelation. Responsible scholars disagree regarding the meaning of the “thousand years” in vv. 2-7.” Does Christ return prior to this period (premillennialism)? Or is this church age that period, and Christ will return at its conclusion (amillennialism)? Will this period come in the future as the gospel reaches all the nations, followed by Christ’s return (postmillennialism)? Neither our church staff nor our movement of churches (Converge) holds to one particular view. What truths shine forth from your reading of this chapter and are TRUE no matter what millennial view one takes?

PRAY: If you are a disciple of Jesus Christ, rejoice in God’s work of grace in your life and that your name is written in the Book of Life. Pray for a powerful work of God’s Spirit to bring many people to himself. Pray for a fruitful season of church life and ministry at FBF on both South and West campuses even with Covid 19 restrictions.

Friday, November 20

Read Revelation 21:1-27

THINK: We often think of “going up” to God in heaven. Notice that in the new heaven and new earth, the holy city prepared for us actually comes down to us! Meditate for some time on vv. 3-4. What promises here are a great encouragement to trust God and rely completely on him? Who is the Bride, the wife of the Lamb? What stands out to you about the city? Why are gemstones (what a variety!) used in such a vivid way? Why is there no temple? Also, why no sun or moon? What glory would the nations bring to it? Why nothing unclean? Is your name written in the Lamb’s book?

PRAY: Extraordinary! Astounding! Vividly glorious! The descriptions here are an attempt to say, “This place will be absolute perfection!” Pray a prayer of thanksgiving that for the believer in Jesus Christ, this place prepared by Jesus himself will be our eternal home. It will be perfect! Thank God for saving you, and that by faith in Jesus your name is written in his book of life. Pray for loved ones and friends who, to the best of your knowledge, are not believers in Christ. Ask God to help his church live in HOPE in very challenging times.

Weekend, November 21-22

Read Genesis 46:1-27

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: For why the Lord spoke to Jacob about going to Egypt, see 26:1-5. Why do you think this happened at Beersheba? What promise did God give Jacob (Israel)? What did you learn from this genealogical record of the family which traveled to Egypt? ESV SB: "Joseph uses his God-given administrative skills to ensure that his family settles safely in Egypt. Having previously decided that the land of Goshen would be the best location for them (45:10), through skillful preparation and diplomacy, Joseph ensures that Pharaoh confirms this choice of territory." Once again we see a glimpse of Joseph's great emotion.

PRAY: All that we have seen in Joseph's story is true for us today: with Thanksgiving this week we can **thank God** for his divine **protection** of us; we can **rejoice** in his **providential planning** on our behalf and his care for us; even more we can **praise him** for sending a Savior to **provide a place for us**. Tell the Lord how much it means to you to trust him completely for your future, relying on all of his promises and living in the obedience of faith in Christ.

Pray for our pastors preaching on this chapter. Next week we will begin our Advent Series of messages, ***"The Weary World Rejoices: Advent in Psalms."***

FAITH GROUP: After over 20 years in "exile" in Egypt and separation from his father who loved him so (remember the very special coat he gave Joseph?), Joseph sees his father once again in Goshen. The emotion jumps off the page as you read it. Share with your group any similar experience you have had. Was your experience more like Jacob or Joseph? How has God shown his divine providence and glory in these chapters?

Pray together for God's providential care for each one in your group, noting any special circumstances or needs.