

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 23

Read Revelation 22:1-21

THINK: Where does the river of life flow from? What does this imply about the Source of our eternal life and joy and hope? God's grand purpose in saving a people now reaches its zenith. **Worship!** That is what we are destined to do! It will not be boring or dry or lifeless: God's very presence will be our light, and we will reign with Jesus forever. Who alone must we worship? Why would it be wrong to "seal up" the prophecy of this book? What does "recompense" mean? Who should fear it? Is your robe washed? Humbly ponder v. 15 and take it to heart – "outside." Ponder this word: **"Come!"**

PRAY: Express your amazement to God that he will be the Source of all we need with no limit and no end. Rejoice too that because of the cross and the resurrection of Christ, by faith you are a child of God and no longer accursed. Pray, "Come, Lord Jesus!" That is certainly a biblical prayer. Amen! Are you ready for Christ's coming? Pray for a loved one or friend who is not ready. Ask God to keep our eyes focused on our extraordinary future in these hard times.

Tuesday, November 24

Read Matthew 1:1-25

THINK: Read the opening genealogy phrase by phrase and line by line. What stands out to you? Have “all” generations been included? Is there symbolism in this genealogy? Why would Joseph, a *just man*, be planning a divorce from Mary? Why do we say that this was a virgin birth? What does Immanuel mean? Read Isaiah 7:14. Why was the baby given the name Jesus?

PRAY: Thank God for the remarkable, miraculous virgin birth of the Son of God, Jesus. Rejoice that he is *God with us* (Immanuel) as well as *God saves* (Jesus). Praise God also that like all the generations mentioned in this genealogy, you too have a part in the kingdom family that God is creating! Ponder the faithful obedience of Joseph, the carpenter who raised God’s Messiah in his home! Ask God to give you grace to walk in that kind of obedient faith in the present circumstances. *Pray for our Faith children and youth.*

Wednesday, November 25

Read Matthew 2:1-23

THINK: Which Herod was this? Who were the wise men? What OT prophecy is cited concerning Bethlehem? Did these men arrive at the manger to see the “babe” Jesus? Why gold and frankincense and myrrh? Did the magi warn Joseph about Herod, prompting them to flee? What prophecy did this fulfill? With the prophecy concerning “Rachel weeping” we realize again that Matthew has filled his gospel with OT prophetic statements—why? Why Nazareth?

PRAY: Thank God that in Christ Jesus so many OT prophecies are fulfilled! Rejoice in this amazing confirmation of God’s word, and that Matthew included so many in his effort to convince Jewish readers that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah of God. Take a moment to reflect on the amazing OT scriptures fulfilled in this chapter. Ask God to make you keenly observant of Matthew’s use of the OT as you read through this gospel, so that you grow in understanding the NT as fulfilling the Old Testament. Hallelujah, what a Savior!

Thursday, November 26 Happy Thanksgiving!

Read Matthew 3:1-17

THINK: Read Isaiah 40:3 and Malachi 3:1 and 4:5-6. What does John mean by “bear fruit in keeping with repentance”? The religious elite thought that their Jewish heritage (Abraham is our father) meant they were right with God, while their lives showed something else. How would the baptism of Jesus and John differ? What was a winnowing fork? How did the baptism of Jesus “fulfill all righteousness”? Why was God the Father well pleased?

PRAY: “Heavenly Father, please help me live a life that pleases you, bearing fruit which reveals the genuineness of my faith in Jesus. Help me not to put on some religious show, but to walk by the Spirit and impact those in my sphere of influence with the love of Jesus. **Thank you** for Jesus’ perfect, righteous life, the Lamb of God. **Thank you** for every good and perfect gift I enjoy today!”

Friday, November 27

Read Matthew 4:1-25

THINK: In what ways did the devil tempt Jesus? How would you have handled these same temptations that were presented to Jesus? How did Jesus respond to the tempter? What kind of temptation(s) are you facing presently? In the end, what was the devil’s response (v. 4:11)? What did Jesus begin to preach from that time... vs. 17? What invitation did Jesus extend to his future disciples? What was he offering to teach them? Notice the amazing ministry of Jesus which followed. What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus Christ?

PRAY: Thank God for the example that Jesus gave us in his Word of effective means to fight against temptation. Ask the Lord to assist you and others with any and all temptation that is being presented. Pray that the command of Jesus to teach repentance rings true and is carried out by His followers. Ask for God’s help walking as a true disciple of Jesus Christ. Pray for today’s church to equip disciples to share the true Gospel of Jesus Christ including the invitation to “Follow Jesus.” *Thank God for the truth of his word!*

Weekend, November 28-29

Read Psalms 42 & 43

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: How would you characterize the overall tone of the Psalmist in these two passages together? Can you personally relate to some of the things he's saying? What does it mean to "thirst" and "long for" God? Is this something you have done or are doing in your life right now? How does the Psalmist find comfort in the midst of this lament? How might this relate to the expression, "Preach the gospel to yourself daily," and be applied in your own life? In this time of trouble that we're in right now, what hope do you have? Why do you think a Psalm like this is appropriate for an Advent series?

PRAY: Note the candor with which the Psalmist prays and pour out your soul to God about anything that might be burdening or distressing you. Ask God to satisfy you with himself. Pray for others who are suffering and distressed during these troubled days, that they would turn to God and find rest. Thank God for the truth of his word and ask him to grow you in your faith and to preach the gospel to yourself daily. In this season of Advent, ask God to give you a deeper longing for Christ and to lead you by his light and truth.

FAITH GROUP: These two Psalms are often treated as one by many Bible scholars and commentators. Why do you think that is? What is the main idea of these two Psalms together? How does knowing that this was a song which was sung in worship by God's people affect your understanding of it as you read the text? Why is the repetition of the refrain important (42:5,11; 43:5)? How might you use this Psalm to comfort yourself or another who is in distress?