

LOVE GOD'S WORD & PRAYER

Daily Bible Reading

At Faith Baptist Fellowship, we *Love 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. If regular Bible reading is not yet a habit of yours, this is a great way to get started!

We are encouraging everyone to begin 2021 with spending time in the Psalms. 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 encourage you to set aside at least 15-20 minutes a day for reading 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. Have a journal and pen for answering questions and recording your thoughts and insights. For additional Bible reading plans check out our website at www.faithsf.com. Enjoy your time in God's Word and Prayer!

Monday, May 3

Read Psalm 95

THINK: Once again, songs will come to mind as you read this glorious psalm. (You're humming one right now, aren't you?!) The psalmist draws on Israel's history to contrast grumbling disobedience with joyful worship and adoration. Check your Study Bible on Meribah and Massah, as well as the 40 years of loathing a faithless generation. Just as Joshua and Caleb gained entrance to the land of promise ("my rest"), so also, we who trust in the Lord Jesus and walk by faith have a future promised rest (Hebrews 4:9-11). Are you a reluctant grumbler today, tending toward disbelief in God's promises? Or are you a joyful worshipper, making joyful noises and delighting in our grand Maker? Today, hear his voice!

PRAY: Pray through the first section of joy-filled worship, singing your song of praise and delighting in the wonders of all that God has made and the wonder of his grace and love in Christ. As you pray through the final verses, acknowledge to God any grumbling or unbelief that you are struggling with, asking for confident trust in all God's promises and looking forward to your future heavenly rest.

Tuesday, May 4

Read Psalm 96

THINK: *From Pastor Dana, a note: when Christa and I met 38 years ago at Easter time, she presented me with a cross-stitch rendering of Psalm 96:3 with my name highlighted, like this:*

“**Declare his glory Among the Nations,**
His marvelous works among **All the peoples.**”

Why do you think “new songs” are so important to believers? Why is singing itself so vital to worship? Notice the call to missions: the nations (people groups all over the world) must hear of God’s glory and grace, and that “He Reigns!” Many things are called God, but most are only gods, or idols; there is only one True, Living God. God will in time Judge justly. See I Chronicles 16:23-33 for context.

PRAY: Why don’t you take some time right now to compose your own words and melody and sing a new song to the Lord? Can’t sing? That isn’t as important as you declaring to God what he means to you and worshipping him in that way. Pray for our global workers and for the people groups they are trying to reach with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Tell the Lord that you are glad he reigns and that there is a True, Living God! “Great is your faithfulness!”

Wednesday, May 5

Read Psalm 97

THINK: Some worship creation rather than the Creator. We have seen in this section of psalms that all creation is God’s. God reigns, and all the cataclysmic events of “nature” are actually under his providence as the Lord of all the earth. His righteousness and glory are evident in the grandeur of the universe, and even the “worthless idols” would do well to worship God. To truly love God means to also hate the evil that belittles God and defies him. Rejoice. Give thanks. Hate evil. Trust in the Lord, for he is holy.

PRAY: Reflect on the most beautiful sites you have ever seen. The Rockies? Yosemite? The stars over a golden field of corn in South Dakota? Crashing waves on a stunning beach? The earth rejoices and the coastlands are glad! Praise God with them! Express your worship and adoration with a prayer of praise. Ask God to free you from idolatry (anything that usurps God in your life) and teach you to hate evil while loving him and all that is good. Give thanks to God.

Thursday, May 6

Read Psalm 98

THINK: Sing a new song, again! Why? His marvelous deeds and amazing grace “have worked salvation” for you! He is faithful to his people and that includes you, if you are a Christian. Do you break out in joyful noises and songs throughout the week and during the day? Do you awaken at night with a song on your heart? That is good and pleases God. All creation declares his glory: rivers clap and hills sing and the sea roars, all to the glory of God. He will come to Judge, so perpetrators of evil will not get away with anything. “Have you heard the joyful sound? Jesus saves! Jesus saves!”

PRAY: Another psalm you can simply pray through, line by line, and make your very own. Praise God for his character and kindness; thank him for such a grand salvation through his Son, Jesus Christ. Sing a new song! Cry out to God regarding burdens that are heavy on your heart today. Ask him to lift your burdens! Many are our burdens for our nation and our world: pray for God to work mightily in our country and to spread his Name to all the nations. Tell him that you completely trust him to judge righteously in his perfect time.

Friday, May 7

Read Psalm 99-100

THINK: Ps 99: This psalm both delights in and trembles before the holiness of God. What would it be like to live under a mighty King who is unjust and wicked in his reign? (There are many such examples in history and even in our world today.) How much better to live under the Divine King who is holy! That is the True God. He is holy and worthy of our humble worship. Many were the great saints of the Bible who called upon the Lord and he answered them.

Ps 100: So familiar, yet so rich in its instruction for God’s people. (Do you recall the hymn, “Old Hundredth”? Google it!) Meditate on each and every line and thought. Do you serve with gladness?

PRAY: Praise God for his holiness. (Perhaps sing “Holy, Holy, Holy” and let your song early in the morning rise in praise to God.) Pray through both of these marvelous psalms, taking them to heart and expressing your desire to “serve the Lord with gladness.” Soberly take joy that God is both forgiving (toward those who humbly repent) and an avenger (toward the wicked and proud). Worship his holy name. His steadfast love endures forever! Amen and amen.

Weekend, May 8-9

Read John 21:15-19

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: Ponder this: why did Jesus ask Peter three times, "Do you love me?" Further, why did Jesus respond to Peter's affirmation with "feed my lambs" or "feed my sheep" also three times? How does John interpret the prophecy given by Jesus about Peter's future? Why do you suppose this exchange ends with the command, "Follow me"? Reflect also on this entire exchange in light of the book of Acts and Peter's role in the early church. The one who denied the Lord Jesus is now restored to a crucial role in the founding and growth of Christ's church! What a God of gracious forgiveness and HOPE we serve and love!

PRAY: Pray for our pastors as they prepare for preaching on this incredible scene on the beach from the life of Peter. Have you ever, in some way, denied the Lord Jesus? How did our Heavenly Father restore you? Pray a prayer of response to God's great grace and forgiveness in your life through Jesus Christ.

FAITH GROUP: Discuss the amazing life of Peter. Talk about the boisterous, bold Peter, the fearful, denying Peter, and now the fully restored Peter who will be a leader of Christ's church. How are you like Peter? Tell the group about a time when you felt restored to God's grace and favor after a failure (or something similar in some way).