

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 continue our Daily Bible Readings. 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, January 17

Read Matthew 8:18-34

THINK: As you reflect on the two responses of Jesus (v.20 & 22), what do you think our Lord was trying to communicate? How might that apply to your life right now? Have you been putting off becoming a fully devoted disciple of Jesus for some reason? When the worried disciples raised Jesus from sleep, what did he identify as the problem? What is the answer to the disciples' question, "What sort of man is this?" Jesus displays his power over nature and over the demonic dimension. Why would the inhabitants beg him to leave? The greatest demonstration of his power? Saving us!

PRAY: Express to God the Father your joy in being a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, for "even the winds and sea obey him!" as well as demons. Praise God for his divine power, displayed in Christ, the power that has saved us from sin and guarantees our resurrection. Pray for a troubled soul you know who needs to trust in Christ for salvation. ***Pray through your Sacred 7 list of lost people!***

Tuesday, January 18

Read Matthew 9:1-17

THINK: Matthew continues to illustrate Christ's credentials as King and Messiah by highlighting His *authoritative* actions: yesterday it was the deeps and demonic, today it is disease and the power to forgive sins. Why were the crowds afraid when Jesus healed the man? Jesus says to us, "Follow me!" What did Jesus imply when he quoted Hosea 6:6, "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice"? How did that apply to the Pharisees? Ponder the teaching of Jesus on fasting and the wineskins. How would that teaching apply to believers today?

PRAY: Jesus has the power and authority to forgive sins! Since we are all sinners (Romans 3), that is precious news indeed! Good news! Pray a prayer of thanksgiving to God that by faith in Jesus Christ your sins are forgiven and your future with God secure. Rejoice and give glory to God! Tell the Father that you desire to follow Christ for all your days as a disciple. Ask God to show you opportunities to be merciful and loving toward people around you.

Again, today pray through your Sacred 7 list of lost people.

Wednesday, January 19

Read Matthew 9:18-38

THINK: More miraculous confirmation that Jesus is the Christ: Jesus overcomes disease, death, darkness (blindness) and demons. Notice the emphasis on faith and belief: "lay your hand on her and she will live" and "your faith has made you well" and "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" "Yes, Lord!" The fame of Jesus spreads and the crowd marvels! But the Pharisees remain hardened in their hearts and make an absurd/nonsensical claim. What is it? In what 3 activities did Jesus engage? What does he call us to do?

PRAY: Like the crowds in the account and the original readers of Matthew's gospel, we marvel with amazement at the power and authority of Jesus! Praise be to our Heavenly Father, and to his Son, our Savior! All glory to God! Pray for our pastors and teachers to continue proclaiming the Gospel of Christ's power to save. Pray for more laborers to be sent out into the harvest of a world in need of Jesus Christ. Pray for our global missionary force. *As we have been doing each day this week, pray for your Sacred 7 list of lost people.*

Thursday, January 20

Read Matthew 10:1-23

THINK: Chapter 10 begins with Jesus calling his 12 disciples together and passing on to them *authority* (vs1) - the kind of authority he has been displaying in the previous chapters.

What were they to proclaim?

To whom were they to proclaim it?

What activities were they to engage in?

What were they forbidden to do?

Where were they to stay?

What great challenge lies before them?

“But the one who endures to the end will be saved.” A word for us!

PRAY: The disciples were to say and do exactly as Jesus said and did. And they were to endure the same persecutions that Jesus Himself would endure. Are we ready to do and endure the same? There are Christians around the world who are enduring tremendous persecutions for being disciples of Jesus. Pray for them and their families! Pray for boldness and endurance to remain faithful to Jesus when we face persecution. ***Sacred 7 - pray!***

Friday, January 21

Read Matthew 10:24-11:6

THINK: Jesus gives some difficult instructions to His disciples as to what they can expect. Make a list of all these difficult things. Jesus also gives some fantastic assurances of God’s watchful care over them. Make note of these. What does Jesus mean when He said, “I have not come to bring peace, but a sword”? Why did John the Baptist, in prison, need reassurance about who Jesus was?

PRAY: The message of the gospel brings us into an eternal relationship with our heavenly Father, but it may bring division to our earthly relationships. It may also bring persecution and difficult times. Survey your own life and sphere. ***Pray for your Sacred 7.*** Pray for courage to stand firm in the faith in these days of upheaval and rejection. Thank God for his many precious promises!

Weekend, January 22-23

Read Colossians 4:7-18

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: Paul, who often used an amanuensis (that is, a secretary) for writing (perhaps because of poor eyesight? We don't know with any certainty), closes the letter to the Colossians by taking the pen in his own hand and writing a final greeting. "Remember my chains. Grace be with you." That is a good word for us! Remember those who are persecuted for the gospel of Christ. Remember too that God's grace is sufficient for us! Reflect on the positive qualities noted by Paul as he winds up this remarkable letter. What did he admire in his co-workers? Are any of these qualities true of you? Do you aspire to them?

PRAY: Pray for our pastors closing out this series, "Mysterion." Pray that the positive qualities of Paul's co-laborers would be our own qualities by the grace of God, things like encouragement, comfort, faithfulness, servanthood, etc. Ask God to show you believers around you that need your support and for whom you can be a "fellow-worker." ***Pray for your Sacred 7.***

FAITH GROUP: Tell about someone who has faithfully been a "fellow-worker" to you and supported you with comfort and encouragement at a time you really needed it. What was it they did that truly made a difference and lifted you up?

Reflect together on the entire book of Colossians. What stands out to you from this wonderful letter? What have you taken to heart, wanting to remember?

Each one share about one person on your Sacred 7 list for whom you want to pray for salvation. Then pray together for these precious people, made in the image of God, who need spiritual heart transplant surgery.