

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 faithsf.com. Enjoy your time in God's Word and Prayer!

Monday, May 9

Read Judges 20-21

THINK: This is the final degradation of the nation of Israel during the sad period of the Judges: civil war. Whereas Israel had together defeated the Canaanites, now they war internally and tens of thousands die. The lesson is clear: defiance of God and the love of sin results in disasters of every kind. Moral bankruptcy and apostasy carry a heavy cost. *Is it not heartbreaking to see this unfolding in our own nation at this time? Where is our hope found? Only in the gospel of Jesus Christ! Reflect on Judges as you ponder 21:25.*

PRAY: Continue to pray for revival in the churches and spiritual awakening in our land. How are we any different than Israel in the Judges? Everyone does what is right in his own eyes, it seems, and our only hope is the Risen Christ. Ask God to do a massive work of grace in our nation. Also pray *Maranatha—Come, Lord Jesus!* Pray for our missionaries, as well as our own personal witness.

Ask our Heavenly Father to bless our West Campus ministry, and to provide just the right person to serve as Associate Pastor there.

Tuesday, May 10

Read Ruth 1

THINK: The story of Ruth is certainly a grand breath of fresh air after reading Judges! This account makes clear that God was still very much at work even as the sad period of the Judges unfolded, for through this remarkable woman Ruth the Messiah will eventually come! Praise God. What brings Naomi and her husband to Moab? What tragic things unfold there? Why does Naomi want to send the young ladies home to their families? Why does Ruth refuse to leave her mother-in-law? Reflect on Ruth's amazing statements in 16-17.

PRAY: Thank God that even in the worst of times he is still working out his will and bringing his plan to fruition! Rejoice that through Ruth he will send his Messiah. Ask God to give you the will to trust him and obey him as Ruth did in her difficult circumstances. Pray for Angela Myers and her team as they are preparing now for VBS coming in early summer. Is God calling you to help? *Ask God to bring fruit and growth to our South Campus ministry.*

Wednesday, May 11

Read Ruth 2

THINK: What kind of man was Boaz? Ruth is clearly willing to work for what she and Naomi need. *What was gleaning?* It becomes clear that for a young woman to glean among the harvest workers carried some danger. What special protections and provisions does Boaz make for Ruth in her gleaning? What is *levirate marriage*? (You may need to consult a Study Bible to learn this.) Keep in mind that this remarkable story is actually part of the unfolding of God's plan to redeem all of us through sending Jesus as Messiah! Hallelujah!

PRAY: Praise God for his provision and protection of Ruth, and even more so, of all of us who are his children! What truths did you glean from this chapter? Pray about each one. Thank God for his loving grace in your life, for Jesus Christ your Savior, for God's word the Bible, for a loving fellowship of believers to belong to. What special circumstances or needs do you need to pray about today? *Call upon the Lord to provide all our financial needs as a church.*

Thursday, May 12

Read Ruth 3

THINK: What a beautiful gospel story unfolds in this chapter. There are details here that we cannot relate to, from another time and culture. Nevertheless, the symbolism is quite obvious: there is a need; Ruth is guided by her mother-in-law to request the “covering” of the kinsman-redeemer, Boaz; he responds with grace and wisdom and a kind provision for Ruth and Naomi. We have a need; Jesus came to meet our need and provide our redemption; by faith we call upon him to save us; he is willing and able to deliver us. Hallelujah! What a Savior! Thanks be to God.

PRAY: What a blessing to reflect on this account from Ruth. Pray a prayer of thanks to God: first, for his word, the Bible, and this book of Ruth; second for our own Redeemer, Jesus Christ, the Son of God; finally for the grace and kindness of God in mercifully sending his Son and planning such a marvelous salvation for all who call upon him to save them. Pray also for our witness to others who need to hear the good news of the great Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

Ask God to provide clear guidance and direction for Faith!

Friday, May 13

Read Ruth 4

THINK: What a wise man Boaz proves to be! He negotiates the terms of agreement for his redemption of Ruth (making her his bride, in accordance with their cultural custom and God’s law) in a brilliant and insightful way. This is the grace and wisdom of God: for in this way, not only does Ruth find a husband and provider, but also Ruth and Boaz become an important link in the family chain leading to King David and then to Jesus Christ himself! (see Matthew 1:5) Can you feel the delight of Naomi at God’s goodness toward her?

PRAY: This book is a delightful example of God’s gracious *special arrangements*. Ruth got a husband and provider; **you got a Savior!** Pray a prayer of praise to our Sovereign and All-Wise God. What attributes of God have you seen displayed in the book of Ruth? Praise God for them all. Praise him especially for your Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Pray for the youth and adults going to Alaska as they communicate God’s love and *special arrangements* to people.

May God help us keep the main thing the main thing: Jesus!

Weekend, May 14-15

Read Isaiah 57:14-21

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: Last Sunday's "horrific corruption" ended with the grace offer of a precious promise to all who take refuge in God (v.13). The passage continues with *how* to take refuge in God: by having a contrite and lowly spirit. The One who is high and lifted up, whose name is Holy, will revive the contrite! And oh how we need to be revived today. There is no peace for the wicked, but for the backslider who repents and turns to God for refuge there is the promise of peace with God. Read Romans 5:1-5 and reflect on God's grace and mercy to you!

PRAY: Pray for our pastors preaching on this powerful text of Scripture this Sunday. Ask God to move powerfully by his Spirit in our worship at both West and South; that hearts would be tender to the truth of the gospel by the drawing power of the Holy Spirit. Ask God to speak to your own heart! Pray a prayer of praise to God for sending his Son to bring us peace through the cross. Pray for your Sacred 7 to find peace with God through Jesus.

FAITH GROUP: What does "contrite" mean? How do we cultivate a contrite and lowly heart? What does that look like? How is pride in conflict with lowliness? How is the spirit of the age in conflict with lowliness?

Pray for one another in light of the truth that "God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to humble people."