

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, September 12

Read Romans 2

THINK: The chapter opens with a crucial question: is your heart hard with judgment toward others, or is it repentant toward God? God's wrath is set for the self-seeking, unrighteous persons who do evil, while eternal life is God's plan for his children who persist in doing good *by faith*. This is true for Jews and Gentiles alike. What is the conscience? What is the danger of presuming on God's favor? Who is in danger of doing that? Do you struggle with a harsh, judgmental attitude at times? Is your heart soft toward God, trusting him? Ponder circumcision of the heart. Is that true of you?

PRAY: Humble yourself before our Father in heaven. Thank him for his saving grace through the Lord Jesus. Express your desire to persist in doing good by faith in Jesus. Ask him to keep you free from pride and self-centeredness and judgmental attitudes, but rather humble, kind, caring, and full of grace to others who need Jesus just as you do. Pray that our church is this kind of gospel-centered community: merciful, gracious, and caring.

Tuesday, September 13

Read Romans 3

THINK: Having combatted Jewish pride in chapter 2, Paul now answers the question about whether there is any advantage to being Jewish. There is! The Jewish people received the law, and they have the blessing of God's promised faithfulness. Yet, the main point here is clear: *all have sinned! Both Jews and Gentiles!* The law was not given to *earn* right standing with God. Rather the law reveals to us our sin. How is a sinful person (and we all are) justified, that is, declared righteous by God? What is *propitiation*? Ponder awhile the wonder of salvation by grace through faith in Christ!

PRAY: Thank God for giving the law, so that we clearly know that we have sinned. Rejoice in God's faithfulness to his people. Thank God for sending his Son to be our Savior, saving believers from the penalty of sin by his grace. Express your faith in God; tell him that you trust in Jesus Christ alone for forgiveness and eternal life. Pray for those in your circle of relationships who do not trust in Jesus Christ for salvation. *Pray for Pastors Jayson & Jimmy at West.*

Wednesday, September 14

Read Romans 4

THINK: Paul is now drawing an important distinction, first raised in the last chapter, between the mentality of *earning* your standing before God by your works (which is not possible) and *receiving* your righteous standing before God by *faith in Christ*. We are not Christians through *wage-earning*, but through *faith alone*. Abraham is Paul's example, for he was declared righteous *before his circumcision*, thus he didn't earn his standing by being circumcised. ***Ponder vv. 23-25 as the very heart of the gospel.*** Is this what you believe? How can we communicate this truth to those who need it?

PRAY: Thank God that you are not saved by earning but by believing and following the Lord Jesus. Rejoice in justification by faith! Sing "Amazing Grace." Ask God to keep you from the mentality of the wage-earner. Rather, rejoice as a worshipper! Jesus saves! Hallelujah! Pray for your Sacred 7. *Pray for our new Youth Discipleship Lead, intern Josh Stibral. He's a neat guy!*

Thursday, September 15

Read Romans 5:1-11

THINK: Faith, hope, and love! That's how this chapter opens. What is the role of each? According to Paul, how can we rejoice in our sufferings? Who pours God's love into our hearts? How did God show his great love for us? What is reconciliation? How did God bring it about for us? Notice how we are to *rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ*. It is the mentality of the worshipper, not of the wage-earner! Rejoice in reconciliation, in peace with God!

PRAY: These 11 verses are power-packed with glorious gospel! So, take considerable time to ponder line-by-line, verse-by-verse through the section, praying to God in response to each truth. Be very personal in your praying—as appropriate praise, adore, thank, confess, express need, and pray for others. *Ask God to bless each one of our team of international gospel workers.*

Friday, September 16

Read Romans 5:12-21

THINK: Now Paul uses the parallels of Adam and Jesus to draw a further distinction: sin came through Adam to the human race, and death through sin. This is the doctrine of *original sin*. Now by God's grace, justification comes to many through the Lord Jesus Christ. Notice the wonderful, rich language used to describe this incredible transaction: the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness. Do you understand the parallel Paul is using here? Does it make sense to you?

PRAY: What an amazing gift: to unrighteous sinners, God gives his righteous Son, so that his righteousness is applied to believers for justification. Praise God for this great gift. Thank him for giving his Son as your Savior. Celebrate in a prayer of worship God's amazing grace: as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all who believe be made alive. Thanks be to God. *Pray for our children and youth to come to saving faith in Christ. Ask God to be powerfully at work in their lives by his Holy Spirit. Pray for our team who shepherd the youth.*

Weekend, September 17-18

Read I Corinthians 1

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: Our new study *Saints Together* unpacks the glorious truths of the cross, the gospel, and the church—both its glories and its failings—through the crucially important New Testament book of I Corinthians.

Ponder these two questions as you prepare your heart for hearing the word preached this Sunday:

- 1) Did Paul have something against baptism? What is the point he was making in vv.14-17?
- 2) What could empty the cross of Christ of its power? (See also v. 17.)

PRAY: Ask God to give insight and grace to our preachers in bringing the message this Sunday at both West and South campuses. May they preach with the fulness of the Holy Spirit and the grace of God! Ask God to protect our church family from troubling factions. Ask God to keep us united in the central truths of the 5 Loves and the practical Christianity of the 5 Commitments.

FAITH GROUP: Discuss the tendency in our day for churches to become “personality driven” and overly focused on one leader. What biblical protections in Scripture are available to help us avoid such a troubling tendency in the church?

Pray for this important year in our Faith church life as we “Anticipate Change” and look forward to all that God has planned for our community and our world as we pursue biblically faithful ministry.