

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, March 20

Read John 5

THINK: Why did Jesus ask the invalid whether he wanted to be healed? In vs 14 Jesus tells the man to sin no more so that nothing worse would happen to him. What did Jesus mean by this? One of the key themes of the Gospel of John is that Jesus is God. What did Jesus do and say in this chapter that would point to His authority and divinity? Where do we find eternal life? Is it possible to know a lot about the Bible but still not have eternal life?

PRAY: Jesus makes a point about hearing the Word and believing in God (vs 24). The invalid Jesus healed was still in danger of 'something worse' (condemnation and eternal death) if he continued in his sin and did not believe in Jesus. The Jews who were persecuting Jesus were in danger of condemnation, even if they knew a lot of the Hebrew scripture, because they didn't believe. Do you believe that Jesus is the infinite God-man? Have you repented of your sin and turned to Jesus in believing faith? Express your thanks to God! *Pray for Faith West becoming Risen Hope at Easter.*

Tuesday, March 21

Read John 6

THINK: A long chapter which includes the feeding of the five thousand, a walk on the water and a confusing conversation about the Bread of Life. What do we learn about Jesus in each section? What do we learn about the people? Why were they interested in following Jesus? What were their expectations of Him? Jesus often used physical elements such as bread and blood to illustrate spiritual truths. How did people misinterpret Jesus? Ponder the marvelous truths about God's gift of eternal life in Christ.

PRAY: There are some deep theological truths as well as some confusing statements in this chapter. Pray humbly for God to reveal truth to you as you read and ponder. The Jews in Jesus time were looking for a Messiah that would rule politically and provide for all their physical needs. (Sounds similar to our current political situation). Are you trusting Jesus only for the physical and temporal benefits we hope He provides? Or are we more concerned for His glory than our own relief? Praise God for the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Pray for the South Search Team.*

Wednesday, March 22

Read John 7

THINK: Again the main question in this chapter is, 'Who is Jesus?' What did Jesus' own brothers think of Him? What did the people in general think about Jesus? What did the authorities (chief priests and Pharisees) think about Him? How did the crowd react to Jesus' message? What was some of the disagreement about? What do we receive when we believe in Jesus?

PRAY: There was much confusion about Jesus; who He was, where He came from, what He was preaching about. Much became clear after Jesus' resurrection and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Pray that God, through the Holy Spirit, would give you understanding and discernment as you read and study this gospel of John. Pray for opportunities to share the Gospel with someone, and for clarity in sharing it. People will not believe what they do not understand. Pray for your Sacred 7 who need to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for eternal life. *Pray for our church finances. As we prepare for Risen Hope to become autonomous, pray for sufficient giving.*

Thursday, March 23

Read John 8

THINK: What word picture does Jesus use to describe Himself? Where is Jesus from and where is He going? Where are we? What happens if we don't repent? What does it mean to 'abide in the Word'? From what will the truth set you free? What assurances did Jesus give to those who keep His Word? Who did Jesus seek to honor? Why did the religious leaders want to stone Jesus?

PRAY: Jesus is the light, and the implication is that we, humankind, are in the dark; enslaved to sin and needing the truth of the Gospel to set us free. Are there sins and temptations that still trouble you and trip you up? Ask God to give you promises from His word that you can memorize and hold on to in your fight against temptation. 1 Corinthians 10:13 is a good one to start with, but there are many more. *Pray for the global workers who serve as our missionaries around the world. The Austins just returned to Senegal last week.*

Friday, March 24

Read John 9

THINK: In this chapter Jesus encounters a blind beggar. What does Jesus do? What does the blind man do? How do the Pharisees react and why? What do the Pharisees do to the blind man who Jesus heals? Compare how Jesus treats the blind man to how the Pharisees treat him. Compare how the Pharisees treat Jesus with how the blind man responds. "Son of Man" is a reference to the Messiah. Jesus is asking, "Do you believe I am the Messiah?"

PRAY: Notice the symbolism the author uses in the last two chapters: Jesus is the light in the darkness; Jesus gives sight to the blind. They are physical examples of deep spiritual truths. How should we treat those who are in the dark and spiritually blind? Do you know people who come to mind? Pray for them, specifically for opportunities to be a light and to help them 'see' the spiritual truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. *Pray for growth in our church family, both West and South. Ask God to give kingdom fruit, with people coming to saving faith in Christ Jesus, the Light of the World!*

Weekend, March 25-26

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

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: The Gospel! Ponder each and every phrase of this clear and concise statement of the heart of our faith. What would it mean to "stand" in this gospel? Are you standing? Note how the NT speaks of Christians in three tenses: we are saved, we are being saved, and we will be saved. Why do you think that is? What would it mean to believe in vain? How are you doing with regard to holding fast? Ponder v. 10. What do we learn about grace from meditating on this important verse? Amazing grace!

PRAY: Pray for our pastors preaching on this amazing gospel passage. Ask God for a strong, resilient, persevering faith in Christ. Ask God to fill you today with his Holy Spirit and ask for his help to stand firm. Rejoice and praise God for his amazing grace in your life. "Father, you have an ocean-reservoir of grace, inexhaustible and unending. Pour out your grace upon our church and fill us with your Spirit. We long to bear fruit for the kingdom and for your glory! Give me grace to stand firm in my faith and bear clear testimony of your goodness to me in Christ Jesus!"

FAITH GROUP: What do you think the NT tenses – are saved, being saved, will be saved – imply about our salvation? When you think of salvation, do you think only of the new birth and justification, or do you also think of sanctification and glorification? How do you see growth in your sanctification? How are you encouraged in your daily walk with Christ? Share and then pray for one another.