

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 15

Read Psalm 19

THINK: The Psalms are marvelous to feast on, filled with glorious imagery, word pictures that capture the imagination and help us to think deeply. Here, the heavens, the sky, even day and night, are declaring and proclaiming. What are they saying? They are preaching to us of the glory of God! Not only creation, but also the law of God speaks to us. What impact does the word of God have on us as we study it? What is promised to those who keep God's word? Was David *blameless* in his life? What do you think he means by "then I shall be blameless"? What a marvelous, heartfelt cry is the closing prayer of verse 14! Memorize it. Take it to heart.

PRAY: Praise God for the magnificence of his creation. Thank him for the "sermons" that the heavens and sky preach to us of the glory and majesty of God. Thank God also for his word. Pray line by line through vv. 7-11, asking God to move in your life as these verses express. Confess to God any hidden sins in your life. Ask God for his cleansing by the precious blood of Jesus. Ask him to fill you with the Holy Spirit. Pray sincerely the prayer of verse 14.

Tuesday, May 16

Read Psalm 20

THINK: What is the setting? A day of trouble. Where do God's people turn for protection? To the name of the Lord! King David is heading out to battle and the people are asking God for victory so they can shout for joy and celebrate with their banners. The anointed (v. 6) may be David in the present tense, but it is also Jesus Christ the Messiah/King in the future tense! (Think of Easter, and the resurrection of the Anointed One!) Memorize v. 7.

PRAY: What battles are you facing? At home, at school, at work, illness, the upheaval in the nation and world--tell it to the Father! We are in a great battle for souls around the world, for we have an enemy who is both a liar and a deceiver. Pray! Call upon our victorious God to give us (the church of Jesus Christ) a grand gospel victory over the evil one and his forces. The battle belongs to the Lord! Pray for our missionaries and church planters.

Pray for our nation. In light of 1 Timothy 2, pray for our governmental authorities. Ask God to do a powerful work of his Spirit in our land: a work of revival, harvest, and spiritual awakening.

Wednesday, May 17

Read Psalm 21

THINK: In Psalm 20 the king *asked*, now in this companion royal Psalm, God has clearly *answered*. The king rejoices because God answered with strength, deliverance, blessings, and even life itself. David gives all the credit for his success to God. Importantly, the king *trusts in the Lord* (v. 7). Many are the enemies who oppose God's plan and God's ways. They plot and seek to overthrow, but God is not mocked, and he will be victorious; his enemies will face his judgment. The Psalm closes with a word of exuberant praise. Have you rejoiced and thanked God for answers to your prayers?

PRAY: Do that right now: pray a prayer of rejoicing and thanks for all that God has done for you--strength for the day, deliverance, blessings of many kinds, and even life itself. Express your hope in God's ultimate victory over the enemy and the final triumph of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Are you tempted to worry or fret? Is unbelief a threat to your confidence in God? Tell your Heavenly Father. Ask for the Spirit's help to trust him with all your heart.

Thursday, May 18

Read Psalm 22

THINK: *ESV Study Bible:* “This psalm has the appearance of an especially anguished individual lament, where the suffering comes from the attacks of unscrupulous people and is intensified by the mockery of those who should feel sympathy; this person, nevertheless, looks forward to vindication and joyful worship with the rest of God’s people. However, in view of its prominent place in the crucifixion story, Christian readers have found in it a description of the sufferings of Jesus.” Read Matthew 27 as a fitting companion to our Psalm. How does this Psalm conclude?

PRAY: Reading Psalm 22 puts us in a unique time triangle: the days of King David, the Good Friday execution of Jesus, and our own day. Thank God for this scripture. Thank him for delivering David, for the cross of Jesus Christ who died in our place, and for his gracious provision for you. Express deep thanks to God that Jesus was willing to be forsaken so that we do not need to be. Further, praise God that Jesus did not stay in the tomb but defeated sin and death and Satan on Easter morning. Pray with HOPE for “all the families of the nations shall worship before you” (v. 27).

Friday, May 19

Read Psalm 23

THINK: As a young man David spent much time shepherding animals, so this song is written from experience. (David’s music soothed Saul’s troubled soul in I Samuel.) *Warren Wiersbe writes, “One day, you will look back on your life and see that it was only ‘goodness and mercy,’ and that includes the valley experiences. If life is difficult today, just keep following the Shepherd; He will never lead you where He cannot care for you.”* What hope we have of fellowship with Jesus at his table as we dwell in the house of the Lord forever!

PRAY: Have you ever memorized this most famous of Psalms? Learn it now, before it’s read at your funeral! Pray through the song, line by line, making each thought your very own--“You are my Shepherd!” Going through a dark valley? Tell it to God. Wondering about the future? Don’t be afraid! Express to God your hope of dwelling with him forever. Thanks be to God! Hallelujah.

Weekend, May 20-21

Read Luke 9:21-27 and I Peter 4:12-19

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: Suffering is a common occurrence in this life. It comes in various ways: illness and death, mistreatment and persecution, disappointment, rejection, and the accompanying hurt. As a church we have recently experienced this, a season of pain and sorrow. Jesus did not promise a life without suffering; neither did his apostles in their writings. Jesus said we would take up the cross and follow him. We must follow where the cross takes us.

Yet, the Scriptures are filled with promises and hold out hope in our trials. Jesus promised never to leave us or forsake us. There is a grand glory to come that will cause our present sufferings to fade away. *What promises will you hold on to in the face of suffering in this world? Where will you find hope?*

PRAY: Thank God for a Bible filled with promises, but also a Bible frank with reality about the impact of sin in our world. Ask God to build up your bank account of HOPE through his promises, so that you are fully prepared to walk by faith when hard things come your way. Pray also for those in our church family who have recently suffered great grief, sorrow, and loss, and for someone you know who is living with pain. How might you encourage these friends today?

FAITH GROUP: As a group, share the biblical promises that you turn to during hard times. Encourage one another with these promises...perhaps make a list and email it out to everyone in the group. Then identify someone in need of help and encouragement; how can your group reach out and minister in that situation? How can you help?