

FRIDAY

“PRESSED DRY TO TAKE IN”

SCRIPTURE:

II Corinthians 12:7-10; I Corinthians 10:13; Psalm 6

The more completely pressed out a sponge, the more moisture it is capable of absorbing or taking in.

And sometimes the more depleted and beaten down we are by the world and material pressures, the more God can rush in with His superior strength and power.

How often have you stood by a loved one while he seemed to be pounded mercilessly by some circumstance and in your helplessness, you turned angrily against God? In James* we read God Himself never tempts a man, but in His wisdom, He does measure a man's capacity and sometimes permits the pressures of the world and Satan to press us down to emptiness before He will come into our lives. *(James 1:12-18).

For the more we are emptied of self and other motivations, the more we are capable of taking in the spirit of God.

The man who is filled with half self and half Christ, will give out a life which is half pure . . . just as a sponge which is not squeezed of its impurities will give out impure water.

The man who keeps his hand in God's, who continually offers his life to Him, need not fear: God will not permit him to be pressed beyond his endurance. He has promised this to His people.

If you are under pressure just now, claim this promise. Stop resisting and trust God's wisdom and timing. Let go and ask God to rush into the dried-out, desiccated areas of your spirit. He will.

Prayer: O God, when I feel that You have deserted me, bring to my remembrance the promises I read today. Thou art God so Thou art Love. Deliver me from the weight which burdens me and fill me with Thyself, I pray. AMEN

SATURDAY

“WHAT GOD HAS CLEANSED”

SCRIPTURE:

Acts 10:9-16, 35-45

A high caste Indian told how much this particular scripture had meant to him shortly after he had become a Christian. Before his conversion, there were certain people, low-caste, which to him were “untouchable;” i.e. he could have no contact with them without defiling himself.

Once a Christian, however, this entire concept had to be shattered, the teachings of a lifetime set aside. Jesus Christ came to all men, no matter what their birth or “caste” and this was a fact he had to face. “But,” he said, “My entire being cried out. You in the western world have nothing to compare with the fear I experienced in breaking this ancient taboo.”

But the day he read this passage, his outlook changed. “I realized that to Peter, one of Jesus' own faith, the Hebrew law of food was just as sacred as my law of caste, and as I read God's powerful words to Peter, they spoke to me with the same authority. I have never from that moment found difficulty in accepting all men as potential children of God.”

Is there someone, something which repels you? If God continues to lay it on your heart, remember His words to Peter and to Raoul. Our Lord came that all men might be acceptable; through Him we all have access to spiritual cleansing.

Prayer: God, when I think of Your indiscriminate love and grace toward me in my imperfection, give me the humility to accept others. May I see in each man the potential, not the flaw — the divine possibilities, not the depravity. God, grant me above all, a love like Your Son's which lifts and gives light. AMEN

Daily Family Devotions

The thought begins in the Bible verse;
please take the time to read it first.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2021

“THE NURTURE OF FAITH”

SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 13:18-23; Ezekiel 34:25-31

In a remote monastery in China many years ago, one of the assigned duties of the young priests was the tending of gardens. The monastery had great fields of young plants which demanded back-breaking hours of time.

One day a visitor asked the Father in charge why so much time was spent in the seemingly unimportant task of gardening. The old man replied, “These men are gardeners of God; they will plant many seeds of faith among their people. Each soul must be nourished to produce godly fruit, the tender faiths must be guarded against doubt and adversity and Satan. God's goal is the harvest of souls and these young priests will never forget that once a seed of the Gospel is planted, their work has just begun.”

How true. So often today we “drop a seed of faith” and go our way, feeling we have accomplished so much. But what of that seed? Have we taken time to prepare the soil so the new faith will take root? Is the climate conducive to growth? And when it grows, who will see that it is protected and continues to be nurtured?

Never “drop the seed” thoughtlessly. If you plant it, you must also see that it is tended. There is nothing more disheartening than a plant that dies before it can bear fruit — or a Christian faith which dies for lack of nurture. The death of the soul is a tragedy not held lightly by our Lord.

Prayer: Lord, how careless we are, how thoughtless in the care and concern we give to those we have brought into Thy “fields”. Lord, give us a sense of responsibility that we may see a full harvest of spiritually mature men for Thee. AMEN

For information regarding these devotions, contact:

Daily Family Devotions

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TUESDAY

“THAT THEY MIGHT BELIEVE YOU”

SCRIPTURE:

John 21:24, 25; Luke 1:1-4, 12:8-12

A young woman, subpoenaed as a witness for the prosecution, was extremely shy and not very articulate. She requested that her lawyer, after hearing her testimony, write it out in his words so that she could memorize it.

Once on the stand, she repeated it verbatim. When she had finished, the judge leaned down and — sensing that what she said was true but that it did not ring true to the jury — he said, “Now would you mind repeating that to us in your *own* words, exactly as it happened? We want to hear it first-hand so that we can believe it, too.”

And isn’t this often what happens to us in our Christian “witnessing”? How inarticulate we feel, how stumbling and ineffective. And so we borrow someone else’s words, a phrase from a book, and because they are not ours, our witness sounds glib, a little counterfeit, another cliché.

People do not want to hear quotes. They want to know what God did for *you*, in your words, stumbling or faltering as those words may be. There is more reality to that which is not too polished. Too often the emotion, the deep conviction is polished off until what we have left is slick — words rather than experience.

Never be afraid of the word “witness.” It simply means *first-hand*, authentic, one to whom it has happened.

Prayer: Lord, in my eagerness to be perfect, I forget that people want to know what You have done for me, in my own life. Forgive me for putting pride before my desire for them to know You, for thinking more of my image than their need to know You. AMEN

WEDNESDAY

“WOULD YOU HAVE ENTERED CANAAN?”

SCRIPTURE:

Numbers 14:6-12, 20-35

Had you been one of the Israelites, how would you have responded to the report the spies brought back? Would you have joined the timid with murmurs of “Impossible — why did God bring us to this?” Or would you have stood with Caleb and Joshua and said, “God can do it! Let us go claim His promise!”

Many of us today are wandering in a self-imposed exile — a wilderness of our own making. It is not God’s intention that any man spend such tedious years in this way, but — as with His people — we must all come to a place of total trust in Him and His ability to carry out His promises under any conditions. Until we do, sometimes these wilderness experiences are needed for our own sense of assurance. This implicit trust in God is a “must” if a man is to commit his life at all. You will never fully commit your life to someone or something you do not trust.

If you are wandering just now, dragging your feet in doubt, murmuring in a petulant way, stop and consider the past years and your attitude toward God during them. Have you really trusted Him with every portion of your being? Do you really believe His will for your life is sufficient and complete? If so, turn to Him and commit it once more — and watch Him bring you into your promised land.

Prayer: Dear God, I blame You for so much of my disappointment. Help me to remember that this life is for the development of my spirit, in trust, obedience and certainty in Thee — that through eternity I will be placing myself in Thy hands. So help me prepare myself. Lord. Be my guide and my friend. AMEN

THURSDAY

“WATCHMEN OF THE FIELDS”

SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 13:24-30, 37, 38; Ezekiel 33:1-9

Farming was the major livelihood in Jesus’ country; a man’s entire future depended upon the produce of his fields.

One of the most common ways, therefore, for an enemy to take revenge was to come in the night and sow weeds — or as they were called, tares — in a newly planted field. Or the enemy could come and trample the young plants at a time when they could not recover. Or sometimes the enemy came with the sword or scythe and cut down the grain before it had come to head. In any event, a man could lose everything in a single night.

Christ says Satan is the Enemy who stealthily plants seeds of doubt and distortion with the truth, who comes when our faith is tender and tramples it with ridicule, or who thunders in with a sword of academic ruthlessness or the scythe of intellectual scorn and cuts off our spiritual efforts to bear fruit for God — all this sometimes in a single “night” if we are not on guard for each other and those we love.

Christ said it *is* our duty to be alert and watchful. And yet how easy it is to look away when we see danger, to shrug and say, “It is hopeless to try to warn the people.” So much today is designed by a cunning Enemy to destroy Christ’s work of great lives, pure men, true doctrine and chaste women. How desperately God needs watchmen for His fields! How faithful are we?

Prayer: Lord, when I see ruin around me it is so easy to give in to defeat. God, help me to remember that Thou art God — that Satan is defeated wherever Christ is present and that all we need to do is to bring our Lord into Satanic circumstances and the victory is ours, the “fields” of God are saved once more. AMEN