

DEVOTIONAL READINGS AND PRAYERS

February 1-28, 2009

Sunday, February 1 THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD

Read Malachi 3:1-4, considering that the day of the fiery Presence of Jesus among His people is very near. Ask the Holy Spirit to prepare the hearts of Believers everywhere for the release of His power.

Read Psalm 24:1-10, engaging your heart with the reality of the Lord's call to holy preparation for His presence to come. Fix the eyes of your spirit on His beauty and love, and give yourself fully to Him this day.

Read Hebrews 2:14-18, meditating on the wonder that God Himself, through Jesus Christ, is a merciful and faithful High Priest who understands our situations, and stands before the Father on our behalf.

Read Luke 2:22-40, seeing how the Lord had raised up prophetic intercessors who would recognize the time of Jesus' coming. Pray that people like this would take their place in our day to declare His return.

Monday, February 2

Read Hebrews 11:32-40, considering what the saints of old must have known that would give them such joyful courage in the face of death. Ask the Lord to raise up people like this for these last days.

Read Psalm 31:19-24, receiving the admonition to love the Lord with all your heart, that you may know the greatness of His goodness and the certainty of His protection of your soul in perilous times.

Read Mark 5:1-20, understanding that the powerful deliverance of the Gadarene came on the heels of the storm of chapter 4. Pray for those in difficulties, that the deliverance of the Lord may come soon.

Tuesday, February 3

Read Hebrews 12:1-4, meditating on the fact that you were the joy set before the Lord that gave Him the strength to endure the cross. Set your gaze upon His beauty, that you might find strength for the day.

Read Psalm 22:25-31, allowing your heart to be settled in the certain goodness and kindness of the Lord. Worship Him, eating and drinking your fill of His power and beauty.

Read Mark 5:21-43, putting yourself in the place of the sick woman, and of the child's parents. Let your heart feel what they must have felt as Jesus ministered to them, and give Him thanks for His mercy.

Wednesday, February 4

Read Hebrews 12:4-15, allowing the Holy Spirit to interpret all of God's dealings with you as from a loving Father whose focus is to prepare you as the perfect Bride for His precious Son. Give thanks for that!

Read Psalm 103:1-18, considering the gracious dealings of God in your life. Give Him thanks that He is a kind Father whose heart is always toward you, and whose mercy is new every morning.

Read Mark 6:1-6, asking the Holy Spirit to remove from your heart any strongholds of unbelief that would inhibit the power of Jesus from working in your life.

Thursday, February 5

Read Hebrews 12:18-24, considering the sober reality that our kind and lovely Lord is also a consuming fire. Set your heart to approach Him with reverence and awe, even as He reveals His kindness and love.

Read Psalm 48:1-11, considering the beauty and power of the Lord, and understanding that His judgments are a source of joy for His people because they arise out of His passion to fulfill love in our hearts.

Read Mark 6:7-13, seeing in these instructions the promise of Jesus to fully provide for those who are about His business. Set your heart to follow His will in your circle of influence today.

Friday, February 6

Read Hebrews 13:1-8, giving thanks for these wonderfully practical instructions about the way we live our common lives in the awareness of supernatural things. Pray for your leaders today, that God's wisdom may be their portion.

Read Psalm 27:1-10, seeing that in difficult times, the one place of sure refuge is in the House of the Lord, gazing upon His beauty. Set your heart to meditate on His lovingkindness today, that you may be at peace.

Read Mark 6:14-29, seeing the perversion of beauty that captures the heart of an unholy king. Instead, come before the Lord like Esther in the beauty of holiness, that your requests might be met by His power.

Saturday, February 7

Read Hebrews 13:15-21, setting your heart to approach this day with thankfulness and kindness. Give thanks to God for spiritual leaders, entrusting your heart to Jesus, who is the one Good Shepherd.

Read Psalm 23:1-6, rejoicing in the kindness and faithfulness of the Lord Jesus as your Shepherd. Eat at the table of His love today, and rejoice in His victory over your enemies.

Read Mark 6:30-34, considering the compassion of Jesus to minister to hungry people. Meditate on the fact that this is His heart for you, and wait upon Him as He feeds you with His Word.

Sunday, February 8

Read Job 7:1-7, seeing that there are times in a believer's life when all things seem confusing. Let your heart be ruthlessly honest with God today about places of discouragement and pain, and trust His love.

Read Psalm 147:1-20, giving thanks for the greatness of God, remembering that you are more important to Him than the universe itself. He knows the stars by name; how could He forget you, His Beloved?

Read 1 Corinthians 9:16-23, seeing how the experience of Christ's love compelled Paul to declare the message of Jesus to all who would listen. Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you with love in this way!

Read Mark 1:29-39, seeing how the ministry of Jesus was completely determined by His relationship with the Father. Understand that this intimacy is the answer to weariness and burnout in the Christian life.

Monday, February 9

Read Genesis 1:1-19, focusing on the wonder and power of God, who created this whole universe as a testimony to human beings of His great power and love.

Read Psalm 104:1-13, and let your heart be overwhelmed with the kindness of God toward His creation. Consider that His purpose in this is to assure us of His love and care for us as the Son's Beloved.

Read Mark 6:53-56, letting your heart rejoice that this beautiful, powerful, and kind Man Christ Jesus is the lover of your soul.

Tuesday, February 10

Read Genesis 1:20-2:4, seeing that God's plan in creation was to provide a perfect environment for human beings. Give thanks that this purpose will be fulfilled, and that we will live in His presence forever.

Read Psalm 8:1-9, giving thanks for the great care and dignity that God has given to human beings. Let worship and thanksgiving be your response today, as you walk toward your destiny in God's design for you.

Read Mark 7:1-13, considering the importance of a heart that is in right relationship with God. Ask the Holy Spirit to let your external practice arise out of an internal fire of love for the person of Jesus.

Wednesday, February 11

Read Genesis 2:5-17, understanding the kindness of the Lord to allow humans to choose to love and serve Him. Make that choice again in your life today, and live in response to His love for you.

Read Psalm 104:1-2,14-35, again giving thanks for the majesty of God in His rulership over creation. Remember that His focus is you, and praise Him for His great love and care.

Read Mark 7:14-23, fixing your gaze on the beauty of Jesus, that His grace and loveliness may be the reality of your internal life.

Thursday, February 12

Read Genesis 2:18-25, seeing that in God's creation of man and woman, He made provision for their fulfillment and blessing through each other. The sexual relationship in marriage is blessed and without shame. Give thanks that this liberty is restored to us through Jesus Christ.

Read Psalm 128:1-5, and consider that the result of living in the fear of the Lord and in obedience to Him is blessing upon your marriage and family. Give thanks for the blessings He gives to those who fear Him.

Read Mark 7:24-30, considering how Jesus took time to become refreshed in the Father's Presence. Meditate on His answers to the woman, and how He offered her nothing until He saw that the Father had sent her.

Friday, February 13

Read Genesis 3:1-8, seeing how the Devil misquoted God to play with Eve's mind. Also understand that true pleasure and wisdom are only available in a context of obedience to God.

Read Psalm 32:1-7, giving thanks that when we confess our sin, God is quick to forgive and wash away our guilt.

Read Mark 7:31-37, giving thanks for the mercy and compassion of the Father, Who heals those who come to Him through Jesus.

Saturday, February 14

Read Genesis 3:9-24, considering how God, even in the midst of Adam and Eve's sin, denial and blame, made the provisions necessary for their salvation. Notice that they still had to reap the consequences of their disobedience.

Read Psalm 90:1-12, allowing the fear of the Lord and of His awesome power and holiness to move you toward wisdom and obedience today.

Read Mark 8:1-10, meditating upon the compassion of the Lord to minister to the people. Give thanks for Jesus, Who is the true Bread of Life, broken and given for us that we might live.

Sunday, February 15

Read Leviticus 13:1-2, 44-46, seeing that the demand of God is that His priests be absolutely clean. Give thanks that through the blood of Jesus, this demand is met (Hebrews 9:14), and we come before Him perfect in every way.

Read Psalm 32:1-11, giving thanks for the gift of repentance. Let the Holy Spirit lead you through a personal inventory of your life, and once again agree with God about your need for cleansing. Then, receive the washing of Jesus' blood, which sets you free.

Read 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1, and allow the power of the Holy Spirit to fill you, that you might live every moment in such a way that the Lord Jesus would be made more beautiful. This is what it means to live for His glory.

Read Mark 1:40-45, giving thanks for the willingness of Jesus to cleanse those who love and trust Him from the most evil things.

Monday, February 16

Read Genesis 4:1-15,25, seeing how this event occurred in order to expose what was in Cain's heart. Consider how the Lord never abandoned Cain, even in the midst of his evil choices and consequences. See also how God made a way to continue His plan through Seth.

Read Psalm 50:1,8,16-21, and consider how the Lord is less concerned with sacrifice than with right relationships. The heart of God is for purity in relationships rather than religious zeal.

Read Mark 8:11-13, seeing that Jesus Himself was the sign from God. Set your heart and mind to understand that your life is the testimony of God's power and goodness. Praise Him today, and shine like the light you are.

Tuesday, February 17

Read Genesis 6:5-8, and 7:1-10, seeing how God always makes a way for salvation, even in the context of great wickedness. Live close to Him today; you may be the vehicle of rescue for someone!

Read Psalm 29:1-10, praising God for His holiness, His power and majesty, and give thanks that this God is your Father Who loves and cares for you.

Read Mark 8:14-21, considering the silliness of the disciples and their lack of understanding. Set your heart to accept the fact that Jesus is our Provision, and that a relationship of loving obedience is what He desires.

Wednesday, February 18

Read Genesis 8:6-22, considering that in response to Noah's righteousness, God made a promise never to destroy the earth because of man. Decide again for today to live in loving obedience to the Father.

Read Psalm 116:12-19, seeing that the sacrifice the Lord desires is the offering up of your life to love and serve Him in the context of His people. Give thanks for His lovingkindness!

Read Mark 8:22-26, seeing that sometimes obedience to the Holy Spirit involves seemingly strange things. Dare to be obedient to the strange promptings of the Spirit in your life today.

Thursday, February 19

Read Genesis 9:1-13, seeing how God in effect started over with Noah, and how He pledged to bless the earth because of Noah's obedience. Consider the legacy of obedience you will leave behind, that those who follow might be blessed.

Read Psalm 102:12-22, praising God for His plan to reveal His love and mercy through Zion, which is His people, His dwelling place. Pray for the release of the captives through the revelation of God's glory in the church.

Read Mark 8:27-33, considering how quickly Peter moved from being led by the Holy Spirit to being influenced by demonic power. Ask the Lord to give you His perspective on reality today, that you might agree with His purposes.

Friday, February 20

Read Genesis 11:1-9, considering how unity is a powerful thing, even when it is used in a fleshly way. Pray for the true spiritual unity of the church, that the power of God might be released through us.

Read Psalm 33:10-15, and praise the Lord that the nations themselves are under His control. Give thanks that you are part of His people, those He leads and guides as a shepherd.

Read Mark 8:34-9:1, seeing again that the only life that is available comes through following and loving Jesus. Praise Him and obey Him today.

Saturday, February 21

Read Hebrews 11:1-7, seeing how the obedience that comes from faith established the lives of the heroes of the Old Testament. Give thanks for their example, and set your heart and mind to obey and serve Him today.

Read Psalm 145:1-13, celebrating and praising God for His goodness and eternal mercy!

Read Mark 9:2-13, considering that God allowed Jesus this taste of glory to prepare Him for the costly obedience that would be required of Him. Give thanks that God provides the strength we need to do what He asks of us.

Sunday, February 22

Read Isaiah 43:18-25, and meditate on the wonderful fact that God, for His own sake and His own purposes, cleanses us from all sin, and makes a new thing to happen in the lives of His people.

Read Psalm 41:1-13, understanding that one of the main ways to please God is to take care of the poor. This kind of ministry wins the Lord's heart, and causes Him to take note of your needs.

Read 2 Corinthians 1:18-22, rejoicing that in the person of Jesus, every promise ever made to God's people is fulfilled, ensuring that we will see the fullness of it in our lives.

Read Mark 2:1-12, seeing that the power to forgive sins is consistent with the power to heal sickness. Rejoice in that, and bring areas of need before the Father for His touch.

Monday, February 23

Read the following from the Book of Sirach (an inter-Testamental book that is also called the Book of Wisdom) giving thanks for the wisdom of God:

Sirach 1:1-10

**All wisdom comes from the Lord and with Him it remains forever.
The sands of the seashore, the drops of rain, the days of eternity: who can number these?
Heaven's height, earth's breadth, the depths of the abyss: who can explore these?
Before all things else wisdom was created; and prudent understanding, from eternity.**

**To whom has wisdom's root been revealed? Who knows her subtleties?
There is but one, wise and truly awe-inspiring, seated upon His throne:
It is the Lord; He created her, has seen her and taken note of her.
He has poured her forth upon all His works, upon every living thing according to His bounty;
He has lavished her upon His friends.**

**Fear of the Lord is glory and splendor, gladness and a festive crown.
Fear of the Lord warms the heart, giving gladness and joy and length of days.**

Read Psalm 93:1-5, meditating upon the strength and stability of God our Father. Give thanks that He is our certainty in times of uncertainty.

Read Mark 9:14-29, seeing that the power to overcome unbelief in our lives comes by prayer. As we desire to see God at work, it is through prayer that we will learn to hear Him and trust His voice.

Tuesday, February 24

Read the following from the Book of Sirach, and meditate upon the wisdom the Lord gives to endure difficult times:

Sirach 2:1-11

**My son, when you come to serve the Lord, prepare yourself for trials.
Be sincere of heart and steadfast, undisturbed in time of adversity.
Cling to Him, forsake Him not; thus will your future be great.
Accept whatever befalls you, in crushing misfortune be patient;
For in fire is gold tested, and worthy men in the crucible of humiliation.
Trust God and He will help you; make straight your ways and hope in Him.**

**You who fear the Lord, wait for His mercy, turn not away lest you fall.
You who fear the Lord, trust Him, and your reward will not be lost.
You who fear the Lord, hope for good things, for lasting joy and mercy.
Study the generations long past and understand; has anyone hoped in the Lord and been
disappointed?
Has anyone persevered in his fear and been forsaken?
Has anyone called upon Him and been rebuffed?
Compassionate and merciful is the Lord; He forgives sins, He saves in time of trouble.**

Read the following from Psalm 37, being settled in the blessings that come to those who walk in the ways of God:

**Psalms 37:3-4 3 Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land and cultivate
faithfulness. 4 Delight yourself in the LORD; and He will give you the desires of
your heart. (NAS)**

**Psalms 37:18-19 18 The LORD knows the days of the blameless; and their
inheritance will be forever. 19 They will not be ashamed in the time of evil; and in
the days of famine they will have abundance. (NAS)**

**Psalms 37:27-28 27 Depart from evil, and do good, so you will abide forever. 28
For the LORD loves justice, and does not forsake His godly ones; they are
preserved forever; but the descendants of the wicked will be cut off. (NAS)**

**Psalms 37:39-40 39 But the salvation of the righteous is from the LORD; He is their
strength in time of trouble. 40 And the LORD helps them, and delivers them; He
delivers them from the wicked, and saves them, because they take refuge in Him.
(NAS)**

Read Mark 9:30-37, noticing the connection between being concerned for our own place and importance and the inability to understand the ways of God. Come to Him as a child today, accepting His love and understanding His ways.

What Is "Lent"?

The Lenten season originated as one of spiritual preparation for Easter in remembrance of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It also symbolized the mourning of the Church, the Bride, for the departure of Christ, the Bridegroom, and her longing for His return.

The 40 days of Lent also serve to remind us of the 40 days that Jesus spent fasting in the wilderness to demonstrate His power over Satan and temptation.

As you read and meditate each day, let the Holy Spirit prepare your heart for the power of resurrection, the joyous Easter season.

Wednesday, February 25 ASH WEDNESDAY (Beginning of Lent)

Read Joel 2:12-18, considering what it is to turn back to the Lord with a whole heart. Ask the Lord to turn again in pity toward our land.

Read Psalm 51:1-4,10-12,15, giving the Holy Spirit time to search your heart for things that He would wash out of your heart and your spirit.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2, asking the Father to reconcile you to Himself in every area of your life. Today is the day to fully return to Him as your Father.

Read Matthew 6:1-6,16-18, considering the dynamics of true humility in Christian service. Confess any desire to be recognized by people, and ask for the grace to serve the Father for His attention alone.

Thursday, February 26

Read Deuteronomy 30:15-20, giving thanks for the choices the Lord has given us to live and not die. Choose to follow the Lord today, that you might live in His fullness.

Read Psalm 1:1-6, considering the happiness of the one who lives by the Word of God and not by the opinions of men.

Read Luke 9:22-25, considering the sufferings of the Lord Jesus in His life of obedience to the Father. Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you what it means for you to lose your life for the sake of Jesus.

Friday, February 27

Read Isaiah 58:1-9, considering what is involved in true repentance and fasting before the Lord. Determine that in obedience to Him you will serve the needs of the poor as He leads you to do so.

Read Psalm 51:1-4,16-17, confessing your need for the washing of the blood of Jesus, and considering that a heart broken over sin is precious to the Lord.

Read Matthew 9:14-15, considering that this is the time to fast in mourning for the absence of the Lord, and to call upon His Name for His soon return.

Saturday, February 28

Read Isaiah 58:9-14, considering what the Lord says concerning how to bring about the outpouring of His Spirit in our day.

Read Psalm 86:1-6, giving thanks for the faithfulness of the Lord to forgive and cleanse those who call upon Him for mercy.

Read Luke 5:27-32, considering that the people Jesus came to be with were those who recognized they needed a change of heart. How does your heart need to be changed to welcome the Lordship of Jesus today?