



NEW YEAR SERIES

gracepoint NEW YEAR SERIES 2011

DEVOTIONS

Monday 24 January 2011

Prayer draws us into God's presence

Scripture readings:

Psalm 17 vs 1-6

Matthew 4 vs 4

1 Thessalonians 5 vs 16-28

Martin Luther once said, "To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing." Our spiritual life depends on prayer as much as our physical life depends on air. Prayer is not an added extra for those who wish to be in relationship with God. Without it, relationship with Him ceases to exist, just as any human relationship fades away when communication between the parties closes down.

May we take a moment today to reflect on and rejoice in the fact that the Almighty Creator of the universe longs to be in relationship with us. He longs to speak to and communicate with us, not in a stiff, formal way, but by simply sharing our lives with Him. He wants us to come to Him with our cares, our anxieties, our joys, our frustrations, our thanks and our questions. He wants to talk to us about everything from our future plans and big decisions to the amusing moments of our days. He longs for us to ask Him for that which He delights in giving us and He is always ready, waiting and willing, to draw near and whisper His Words of Life to our hearts.

Tuesday 25 January 2011

Prayer has power to transform us

Scripture readings:

Isaiah 6 vs 1-8

Jeremiah 29 vs 11-13

Hebrews 12 vs 1-6

When we pray, we acknowledge that God is in control and that we are not. We remember that our lives are about bringing glory to God and not about our own comfort or success. We reaffirm that the ways and things of God are those that ultimately matter and that we can't get trapped in hurry, worry and trivialities. When we pray and fix our eyes on Jesus, it transforms us because we cannot look upon the Saviour and remain the same. When we seek God in prayer and find Him, as He promises we will, we will be transformed.

It is those times we spend on our knees, with humble, open hearts before God that He can transform our thinking, align our will with His and strengthen us for what lies ahead. In these times He can change our hearts, mould our characters and inspire and equip us to carry out His plans.

“The reasons why many fail in battle is because they wait until the hour of battle. The reason why others succeed is because they have gained their victory on their knees long before the battle came... Anticipate your battles; fight them on your knees before temptation comes, and you will always have victory.” – Reuben Archer Torrey

Wednesday 26 January 2011

Prayer has power to change the world

Scripture readings:

James 5 vs 16-18

Psalms 3

There is much that is wrong with the world – desperately wrong and corrupted and it often leaves us feeling overwhelmed and desperate. We tend to become overwhelmed by the problems we face and the problems of humanity in general and feel helpless to do anything about them, but the Christian who prays is never helpless or powerless. There is *always* something you can do to change the world and to see God's purposes prevail in even the darkest situations. *You can pray.*

Prayer changes us and shifts our focus from our weakness and struggles to God's sovereignty and power. We cannot be passive and we must allow God to move us into action so that we can become the answers to the prayers we pray. As D.L. Moody once said, "Work as if everything depended on you and pray as if everything depended on God." As we work, however, with all our hearts to bring about change and to bring light into the darkness, let us remember that the most powerful thing we can do, the most effective action we can take and the most important use of our time is to pray.

"Our prayers lay the track down on which God's power can come. Like a mighty locomotive, his power is irresistible but it cannot reach us without rails." – Watchman Nee

Thursday 27 January 2011

Prayer has power to impact the future

Scripture readings:

Psalm 16 vs 7-11

Proverbs 4 vs 1-6

Proverbs 16 vs 7-9

Walter Wink once wrote: “History belongs to the intercessors – those who believe and pray the future into being.” God has great plans and promises for those who believe and it is by prayer that we see these accomplished.

When we pray, God can stir our hearts and lay His plans for us upon them. He can direct our steps so that we walk in His way and show us the good things He has in store for us – things we could never have imagined on our own. It is also in times of prayer that we are strengthened with power that comes from the Spirit to perform His plans.

Pray today and take hold of the future God has for you by faith. Let Him direct and guide you. Let His Spirit lead and correct you and shape you into the person He destined you to be.

Friday 28 January 2011

Prayer ... just as we are

Scripture readings:

Matthew 27 vs 46-53

Psalms 9

Romans 8 vs 26-27

Whether you find yourself in a place, like Jesus did, of forsakenness and fear, or whether your heart is overflowing with God's goodness, you can bring all your emotion, all your thoughts and fears and your whole heart, no matter what state it may be in, before the throne of Grace. God longs for us to simply come before Him, with honesty and truth and to share our lives with Him. He wants to celebrate with us when we are rejoicing and to hold us close and comfort us when we are broken-hearted.

Sometimes we tend to think that we need the right words to speak to God and that our prayers have to be formal and guarded, but nothing could be further from the truth. True prayer is simply coming before God, with or without words, and bringing our hearts before Him. Prayer is running towards Him when we may be tempted to run away from Him. It is reaching out to Him with faith for whatever we may need, wherever we are. When we do, we can be assured that He is always waiting, with open expectant arms.

Hebrews 4 vs 16

"Therefore let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

Saturday 29 January 2011

Prayer delights God

Scripture readings:

Matthew 7 vs 7-12

Psalms 37 vs 4-5

1 Peter 5 vs 6-7

God wants to shower His abundance on those who love Him. Our Heavenly Father delights in giving good things to His children. He is longing to pour out His blessing on you... but He wants you to ask!

When we come to God with our petitions and ask for things we need or desire, it is an act of faith that He rewards. By asking Him to bless us, we are acknowledging that we need Him in our lives; that we are not self-sufficient, but rather, that we are entirely dependent on Him. When we are willing to bring our burdens to Him, we reveal our faith in His love that sustains us and sets us free.

Will you trust God with your burdens and your joys today? Will you believe in His goodness and cast your cares on Him because He cares for you? Will you ask for the things you desire, knowing that He delights in giving them to you?