

Lent Devotionals

March 19 - 25



Day 14 – Read Luke 8:26-56

“Return home and tell the story of what God has done for you.” Luke 8:39

If someone were to ask you to tell your story, where would you begin? Many of us would start with biographical information including names, dates, and locations. Only after clarification and discerning questions would the deeper layers of the story unfold.

Today’s reading begins with a story of Jesus’ path intersecting with the life of a demon possessed man. Like so many other narratives in the Bible, in that brief encounter with Christ, the man’s life is changed forever. Although we do not know the biographical details of the man’s story, we quickly discover the isolation and desperation involved. By the end of this encounter with Jesus, the man is healed and instructed to return home and tell everything that God did. What a story this man could now tell!

People with stories of all kinds (including joy, love, grace, pain, disease, heartache, and regret) surround us every day. Are we taking time to listen carefully to these stories? How we choose to live in the world – going beyond our comfort zones to bless others with radical hospitality, as well as humbly showing and sharing God’s love with authentic faith sharing – just might be the difference in one person’s story resulting in the knowledge of hope in Christ.

20th century author Flannery O'Connor, best known for her short stories, once said that "a story is a way to say something that can't be said any other way." How has God worked in your life? How are you telling that story?

Lord, thank you for the life changing power of Jesus. Shine your light through my life and into the darkness of this world. Use my story of mercy and grace to draw others to hope in you.

-Amanda Rue

Day 15 – Read Luke 9:1-27

Many of us believe that God has a plan for us, but as I read today’s verses, it seems to me that we should think “God made us for a purpose” before we think “God has a plan for us.” When we think about God’s plan for us, we think of some future plan that He’ll reveal to us some time. In the meantime, we make our own plans, maybe thinking and hoping that God will combine our plans into his overall plan for us. If we change our thinking and realize that God made us for a purpose, every day when we wake up, our question will be, “What is my purpose today?” We won’t look so far into the future that we revert back to figuring out our plans instead, while we wait for God to reveal His plan. Instead, we would constantly look for His signs to know what we should be doing now, today.

“All who want to come after me must say no to themselves, take up their cross daily, and follow me.” (Luke 9:23). I truly believe God does have plans for each of us, but those plans are not just one thing. I know one of my purposes is to be a father. Another is to be a husband. Those are lifelong purposes and were in God’s plan for me. But another purpose was to be there to help that individual get their vehicle out of the snow or provide the finances for that fundraiser or to help teach Legacy Kids. If I start thinking about this grand plan God has for my life that He’ll reveal later, I may miss all the things he wanted me to do today.

-Jeremy Skoglund

Day 16 – Read Luke 9:28-62

“Everyone was overwhelmed by God’s greatness.” Luke 9:43

1) When was the last time you were “overwhelmed by God’s greatness?”

2) What caused that experience? Were you stunned by the magnificence of his creation? Did you experience His power and love through answered prayer? Was it God's presence in a time of worship or study of the Word? List how you have experienced God's greatness in the last few weeks?

3) How will you respond to this encounter with Jesus?

4) Consider these verses for deeper study: Psalm 95:1-7, Jeremiah 10:6, Psalm 77:11-14

-Amanda Rue

Day 17 – Read Luke 10

Sometimes after entertaining family and/or friends, I find myself sad and regretful that I didn't spend more time enjoying their presence rather than trying to be the "ultimate hostess". It isn't even my goal to be the owner of that title, but it's so easy to become distracted with the business of "doing." As I've gotten older and have experienced the loss of loved ones and the addition of grandchildren, I find that being the present hostess is much more rewarding than the missing hostess.

When Jesus visits the home of Mary and Martha, Mary takes her place at Jesus' feet and listened to his word. Martha strives to be the perfect hostess and becomes annoyed that Mary will not help. After Martha approaches Jesus, I love his response, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things. One thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the better part. It won't be taken from her."

I love this quote by Jill Briscoe, "It isn't that doing doesn't need doing, it's that the being must come first and then we will find the necessary part of doing will get done."

We can choose to be:

- one who serves and puts Our Father first (Mary)
- one who with best intentions serves, but becomes distracted and loses focus on Our Father (Martha)
- one who is too busy with the business of life and has no focus

PRAY: Heavenly Father this day and every day I pray that as I go about the business of my daily life, that you help me to pause, reflect, and remember to always put you first. Help me to not lose focus or become distracted during the process of "doing" and to be better at "being" and to always keep you in the lead as I pray, work, serve, and live.

-Lori Campbell

Day 18 - Read Luke 11: 1-28

Prayer is a gift we have been given to honor as well as have a one on one relationship with our heavenly Father. What an awesome gift we have been given!

From wordsforlifesays.com: **4 Keys to Powerful Prayer**

#1 Have Acknowledging Prayer (Luke 11: 2-4) "When we pray say, Our Father which art in heaven," we are acknowledging to whom our prayers are directed. Praying "Our Father" describes our intimate relationship with which God wants us to be committed.

#2 Be Persistent in Our Prayer Life (Luke 11:5-8) A powerful component of prayer is to not give up easily.

#3 Be Expectant in Prayer (Luke 11:9-10) It's simple really **ASK, SEEK, KNOCK...**The result of prayer **receiving, finding, and opening.**

#4 Have A Believing Prayer (Luke 11:13) Believe in the goodness of God. Believe in your relationship with him. Believe that our Good Father gives good gifts to his children. Believe that God knows our prayers. Believe that he gives us the most precious gift of all, the gift of the Holy Spirit. **ASK WITH A BELIEVING HEART.**

Today pray acknowledging, persistently, expectantly, and believing, using the prayer Our Lord taught us to pray.

-Lori Campbell