

1March 18, 2020

Fellow Church Folks:            These are strange times!

What do we do when disasters strike? Yes, we have to deal with them, but we should not do so as ones who have no hope. We are reminded that we trust in a Sovereign Lord Who is in control of all things. In Luke 13, Jesus addressed a couple of disasters and through them gives us great guidance. First of all, there were a group of Galileans who Herod killed, mixing their blood with the blood of their sacrifices. This was not their fate because they were “greater” sinners than other people. Our Lord compares that situation with the collapse of the tower of Siloam Eighteen were killed. Jesus is asked if this is because they were greater sinners? In His answer, He reminds us that we are all sinners and do not deserve any better fate. Couple this with Jesus’ answer to His disciples concerning the man born blind, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” (John 9) Remember Jesus’ answer, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.” In both of the situations, the bottom line is “that God be glorified.” Is that not what the Apostle Paul tells us, “So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God?” (I Corinthians 10:31) Thus I ask again, “what do we do when disasters strike?”

These are strange times - never before have we not been unable to meet together as a Church. But such is the day I which we find ourselves! At least for the next couple of weeks, this is our situation. But it is not necessarily a bad time. It is a time for us to remind ourselves and to remind one another of our Lord. He is the Sovereign One Who has a purpose for all situations. Again, the Apostle Paul reminds us that all things work together for His glory and thus for our good (Romans 8:28).

What will you do with the time? I want to challenge each of us and each family to make it a time of spiritual growth. Therefore, I encourage that everyone make a commitment to spend some time each day in prayer, reading the Scriptures, and meditating upon the Word of God. In order to help us focus during this time, and in light that Easter is less than a month away, I am preparing a simple guide which will enable us as a Church family to grow spiritually as we move towards the celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. You will be receiving (in a couple of installments) a short study/discussion guide to the passages leading up to the Resurrection. Below is the first portion of the Guide to Our Daily Meditation using the Gospel of Matthew

This is not our only resource! You have your Bible, read it. If you have questions, you can give me a call (864) 420-8112. You have a copy of the Table Talk devotional, use it. We have sermons on our Web page. And there are many other resources that modern technology makes available to us, just be discerning. Yes, Satan is still at work seeking to deceive and mislead us. He would love to turn this situation into a disaster - spiritually. But God is the Victor! And those who trust in Him will have the victory.

In Christ,  
Billy

## **Devotion Guide for March 19, 2020**

**Read: Matthew 17:1-13                      The Transfiguration**  
**Pray for God's illumination**

**Key Point of the Passage:**

The Disciples are finally coming to recognize who Jesus is (Matthew 16:13-20). At this point, Jesus begins His movement to the climax of His earthly ministry. It begins with this encounter.

**Discussion or Medication Questions:**

- 1) Why does Jesus meet with Moses and Elijah according to Luke's account (Luke 9:31)?
- 2) What is significant about these two men: Moses and Elijah?
- 3) What did this teach Peter, James, and John and what does it teach us?

**Pray about the lesson, for our country and church.**

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## **Devotion Guide for March 20, 2020**

**Read: Matthew 17:14-23                      Healing of a Boy with a Demon**  
**Pray for God's illumination**

**Key Point of the Passage:**

The issue is not how much faith we have but in what or Whom we place our faith.

**Discussion or Medication Questions:**

- 1) What does the boy's physical situation tell us about our spiritual situation?
- 2) Was the problem for the Disciples a lack of confidence or was there something else that they were missing that kept them from healing the boy?
- 3) What are some of the practices should we use to enable our growing in faith?

**Pray about the lesson, for our country and church.**

## Devotion Guide for March 21, 2020

**Read: Matthew 17:24-27**                      **The Temple Tax**  
**Pray for God's illumination**

**Key Point of the Passage:**

Jesus is talking about the temple tax (tithe). He does not consider it as mandatory, yet, we are to give as directed.

**Discussion or Medication Questions:**

- 1) Is it lawful for government to tax us? Is it appropriate for the Church to receive the tithe?
- 2) Is there a difference in our responsibility between paying taxes and giving tithes?
- 3) Why does Jesus say that He and Peter do not owe the tax?

**HINT:** Think of the obligations and restrictions on the priests and their families.

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## Devotion Guide for March 22, 2020

**Read: Matthew 18:1-6**                      **Who is the Greastest?**  
**Pray for God's illumination**

**Key Point of the Passage:**

Jesus is demonstrating the nature of the Kingdom of God and thus the character of those who are in the Kingdom.

**Discussion or Medication Questions:**

- 1) What does it mean to receive the Kingdom like a child?
- 2) How can we cause others to sin?
- 3) Why would Jesus use the millstone and being drowned in the sea as punishment rather than being sent to hell?

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## **Devotion Guide for March 23, 2020**

**Read: Matthew 18:7-11**                      **Temptations to Sin**  
**Pray for God's illumination**

**Key Point of the Passage:**

Our responsibility for ourselves and one another is a vital part of the Christian life.

**Discussion or Medication Questions:**

- 1) Why is it necessary that temptations come?
  
- 2) We know the cutting off of your hands or feet is hyperbole, so what does that mean in real life?
  
- 3) Is the Bible teaching in verse 10 that we all have a guardian angel

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## **Devotion Guide for March 24, 2020**

**Read: Matthew 18:12-14**                      **The Lost Sheep**  
**Pray for God's illumination**

**Key Point of the Passage:**

God's commitment to each disciple, and His special concern for one straying or in danger.

**Discussion or Medication Questions:**

- 1) Do you agree with this statement, "God elects, seeks out, and preserves not only His church as a whole, but each individual within the church?"
- 2) Verse 13 seems to imply that the 1 sheep more valuable than the 99. Do you agree?
- 3) Why is there rejoicing and not discipline?

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## **Devotion Guide for March 25, 2020**

**Read: Matthew 18:15-20**

**Discipline and Prayer / If Your Brother Sins Against You**

**Pray for God's illumination**

### **Key Point of the Passage:**

This passage is viewed as the basic guideline for Church discipline with its 4 steps.

### **Discussion or Medication Questions:**

- 1) These verses deal with someone sinning against you. Do you find it difficult to confront someone who is sinning with compassion and care?
- 2) Discuss the 4 steps of Church discipline.
- 3) What is the unspoken condition of the request mentioned in verse 19?

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## **Devotion Guide for March 26, 2020**

**Read: Matthew 18:21-35**

**The Unforgiving Servant**

**Pray for God's illumination**

### **Key Point of the Passage:**

As Christians, we must be people of mercy.

### **Discussion or Medication Questions:**

- 1) Are there conditions or limits to mercy?
- 2) Can a Christian receive mercy from God and not show mercy to others?
- 3) Can a Christian change his mind after he has made a declaration?

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