



## Week Ten Devotions

Provided by the Ministry and Program Staff of  
The Presbyterian Church of Stanley

### Day 64

#### Scripture: Daniel 9:1-Hosea 13:6

Daniel is one of the great men of the Bible. There is very little in the person of Daniel which anyone could objectionable or even sinful!

But in Chapter 10 we see his humanity on display. He has fasted and mourned for three weeks. He experiences a vision of the incarnate Jesus Christ, in all His Kingly glory, which absolutely terrifies Him. Daniel was abandoned by his friends and all his strength left him.

But there is one friend who did not leave Daniel and who will not leave us. "Again one having the appearance of a man touched me and strengthened me. And he said, "O man greatly loved, fear not, peace with you; be strong and of good courage." (Daniel 10:18)

This is God's promise to us as well. He will never leave us. He will never forsake. Whenever God calls us He makes a promise and a command. "I will never leave you. Do not be afraid." What's true for Daniel is true for us.

~Eric Laverentz, Senior Pastor

### Day 65

#### Scripture: Hosea 13:7-Amos 9:10

The wrath of God is actually Justice being poured down on an unfaithful people. We perceive ourselves to be good and deserving of God's love, but, in reality, we are not. We consider ourselves to be worthy because we worship, we treat people well, we do nice things, and we take care of our families.

The question we have to ask ourselves, though, is *who* are we worshipping? Is it the Triune God of the universe revealed to us in Scripture or an idea (or idol) of God we have created on our own? Why are we doing nice things and treating people well? Is it to gain favor or glorify ourselves or because we know that serving others in the name of Jesus Christ is a way to glorify God?

In Hosea, we see a people who have been unfaithful to God, worshiped their own ideas of God, and attempted to glorify themselves. God declares that his wrath will be poured out upon them. In great tension with God's justice, though, is God's grace and as we read through Hosea, we find that it is God's great desire to not pour out His wrath, but to bestow His grace upon a repentant people who have turned from their self-seeking and idolatrous ways. God wants to turn us from our sinful ways and cause us to know Him.

~Bo Burgener, Associate Pastor for Mission & Evangelism

### Day 66

#### Scripture: Amos 9:11-Nahum 3:19

**Micah 6:8** *He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?*

In this section of Micah the prophet was asking what sacrifice is acceptable to earn God's favor. Yet, neither the quality of a sacrifice nor its quantity was the important issue. No, these sacrifices were not what the Lord wanted.

God wanted each of His people to change his or her behavior. Specifically, He wanted them to practice justice rather than continuing to plot and practice unfairness and injustice toward one another (cf. v. 11; 2:1-2; 3:1-3). He also wanted them to love kindness, to practice loyal love by carrying through their commitments to help one another, as He had with them (cf. v. 12; 2:8-9; 3:10-11). And He wanted them to walk humbly with Him, to live their lives modestly trusting and depending on Him rather than arrogantly relying on themselves (cf. 2:3).

There is a progression in these requirements from what is external to what is internal and from human relations to divine relations. Doing justice toward other people demands loving kindness, which necessitates walking humbly in fellowship with God.

My father gave me a new bible when I went off to college and like a lot of people who give bibles he left a note on the inside from cover. It was part of this verse and it has been a profound influence to me and the way I view my life. He wrote, "and what does the Lord require of you?" I think that this is the question of the day for all of us.

~Molly Jones, Associate Pastor for Discipleship

## Day 67

### Scripture: Habakkuk 1:1-Zechariah 10:12

The small book of Habakkuk is one that most of us are not familiar with. Most of the prophetic books concern themselves with prophets delivering messages from God to his people. But in Habakkuk we find a dialogue between the prophet and God himself. Habakkuk asks some questions that we have all struggled with from time to time. Since God is pure and holy, why does he allow evil to exist in our world? His second question is of a similar nature. Since God is just, how could he allow evil people to succeed over his own people? God's answer to the first question is that he is taking action. Just because Habakkuk can't see it happening, doesn't mean that God is not at work. Our timing is not God's timing. We wait impatiently for God to act because we see no sign of change in the situation. Sometimes our faith is strengthened and rewarded even as we continue to believe despite what we are currently seeing and experiencing. God's answer to the second question relates to the first. God said that he sometimes uses evil people and situations to bring his people back to him. Throughout the prophetic books, we hear again and again that there will be consequences when God's people wander from their relationship with God but there will always be hope and redemption. God's plan for his people and for each one of us is ultimately for good. His greatest desire is a loving relationship between himself and his people. If you are experiencing a difficult time in your life, hang on to the promise that God will not ever abandon you. His plan for your life is better than anything you can imagine.

~Jan Zimmerman, Children's Ministries Director

## Day 68

### Scripture: Zechariah 11:1-Matthew 4:25

These verses provide us with great hope and encouragement that provides a bridge between the Old Testament and the New Testament. In Zechariah we are told "I will refine them like silver and purify them like gold. They will call on my name, and I will answer them.", and in Malachi "I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put me to the test!", and finally in Matthew Jesus says, "Come follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people." Perhaps by calling on God and allowing God to bless our lives, we can have the confidence in the name of Jesus to reach out to our family, friends, and strangers. Maybe we the people of P.C.O.S can be fishers of men/women in our everyday lives.

~Harlan Harper, Youth Ministries Director

## Day 69

### Scripture: Matthew 5:1-Matthew 15:39

Matthew, in the first of four Gospels, tells about Jesus' life, death and resurrection. His primary purpose is to show how Jesus fulfilled God's promises from the Old Testament. As you read this book, thank God for keeping his promises to us. In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) Jesus gives us this message in chapter 6 – *Do Not Worry*. The conclusion is verse 33—*but seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well*. Jesus does not respond to our worry-filled way of living by saying we should not be so busy with worldly affairs. He does not try to pull us away from the many events, activities, and people that make up our lives. He does not tell us that what we do is unimportant, valueless or useless...Jesus' response to our worry-filled lives is quite different. He asks us to shift the point of gravity, to relocate the center of our attention, to change our priorities. Jesus wants us to move from the "many things" to the "*one necessary thing*." Jesus in no way wants us to leave our many-faceted world, but live in it, firmly rooted in the center of all things.

*What is this center?* Jesus calls it the kingdom of his Father. Kings and kingdoms do not play an important role in our daily life. So what is Jesus saying to us today? **Only when we understand Jesus' words as an urgent call to make the life of God's Spirit our priority...will we see better what is at stake!** A heart set on the Father's kingdom is also a heart set on the spiritual life. To set our hearts on the kingdom therefore means to make the life of the Spirit within and among us the center of all we think, say or do! *What is your heart set on?*

~Rev. Dr. Larry Thornton, Parish Associate

## Day 70

### Scripture: Matthew 16:1-Matthew 26:56

This section of scripture is full of wonderful and familiar parables that we've heard throughout our lives, whether or not we grew up attending church. Even those who aren't believers seem to know many of the stories.

Jesus has now begun his ministry on earth, taking the complicated teachings and laws of the early religious leaders and making them simple and easy to follow. One of my favorite books, *Simple Church*, calls Jesus the simple revolutionary. All He wants is to teach the Word and make disciples. He took the hundreds of commands and laws and summed them all up by teaching that the Greatest Commandment is to "love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind..." and the second is like it, "love your neighbor as yourself." (Mt. 22:37-39) If we could just stop the frenzy of life and learn to follow those two commands, the world would not be in the mess that it is today.

In chapter 23 we learn that what's on the outside isn't always the truth. We must search deep into our hearts and be careful that we are listening to the true message of God, becoming like children who are ready and eager to learn what He is teaching us. God wants us to have servant hearts, ready to humble ourselves and serve others freely. This is such a different message than the world wants us to hear. So often we fall into the idea of "what's in it for me?" Jesus says that to save our lives we must lose them for His sake. Are you ready to be a servant for Jesus?

~Debbie Miller, Director of Finance and Stewardship

~Debbie Miller, Finance/Stewardship Director