

Prayer and Study Guide

Daily Scripture Readings – 9/9/18

Monday – Read Luke 4:16-22, 42-44. **Called to Preach.** In his first sermon, Jesus said, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me to preach.” He said his purpose was *to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free...* He was passionate about his purpose. He said, “*I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also; for I was sent for this purpose.*” Jesus invited his followers to join him in preaching Good News to people who need Good News. Fred Rogers was ordained by the Presbyterian Church to be an evangelist for television. Rev. George Wirth said, “There was a whole spiritual dimension to Mr. Rogers’ work in the television business to be inclusive. He did this without ever identifying himself as a minister. He didn’t wear a collar. He wore a sweater. And he preached in that context in a way more effective than anyone I’ve ever seen, because it wasn’t a sermon like an oratorical thing. It was a communication right into their hearts.” How is God calling you to preach? Who is your congregation? Ask God to speak through you.

Tuesday – Read Isaiah 61:1-3 and Micah 6:6-8. **More than Words.** When Jesus preached his first sermon he quoted Isaiah 61:1-3 which says: *The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; ² to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³ to provide for those who mourn in Zion – to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.* Preaching is more than words. It leads to action. Ask God to help you put your words into action as you minister to people.

Wednesday – Read Mark 10:13-16. **Jesus Spoke Up for Children.** Jesus’ disciples did not value children the way that Jesus valued children. They tried to speak for Jesus and send the children away, but this made Jesus angry. So, Jesus spoke up for the children. He said, “*Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.*” ¹⁵ *Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.*” Jesus always had time for children, ¹⁶ *And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.* Children and youth are important persons in our church. You can make a tremendous difference in the life of young person by sharing your wisdom and your time. Who are you mentoring? Pray for our youth and our children.

Thursday – Read Matthew 21:12-17. **Righteous Anger.** Mr. Rogers said, “I am tired of hearing people who long ago set aside the concerns of childhood telling everybody what children really need. I’ll tell you what children need. They need adults who will protect them from the ever-ready molders of their world.” Jesus is a King who hates bad religion. Corruption and injustice makes Jesus angry. Religious systems that put obstacles in the way of people coming closer to God really makes Jesus angry. The priests and the money changers were stealing from the people by charging extremely high prices for animals that could be used for offering sacrifices and by charging very high rates of exchange for Temple shekels. The Temple system kept people from connecting to God in an authentic way. What makes you angry? Where do you see injustice in the world? What is God calling you to do about it? As you pray, ask God to help you speak for those who can’t speak.

Friday – Read Matthew 25:31-46. **Caring for the Least of These.** Jesus has great compassion for the poor and the needy, and he calls us to put our faith into action by ministering to people in need. Jesus says, “*Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.*” Our church joins in this kind of ministry through our hospitality to new people, in our ministry with children and youth, in our ministry with the students at John Marshall High School and North Highland Elementary School, and through our ministry with Skyline Urban Ministry. God blesses us so that we can be a blessing to others. Spend some time in prayer asking God to give you opportunities to use your gifts for ministry to minister to someone who is in need.

Saturday – Read Acts 1:6-8 and Romans 10:7-17. **You Are Witnesses.** Christians are called to be witnesses through their words and actions. We are often good at showing people our faith through our actions and in the ways that we serve in ministry. Our actions are a powerful witness about what we believe. Our words are also important. Paul stressed to the Roman church that it was vitally important for them to be able to tell others the Good News about Jesus. *How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.* Many of us are afraid to tell others the Good News because we fear that we may not say the right things, or we feel like we do not know enough. As you pray, ask the Holy Spirit to help you share the Good News with someone you know.

Lectionary Readings: Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23; Psalm 124; James 2:1-17; Mark 7:24-37.

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