

Prayer and Study Guide

Daily Scripture Readings – 11/18/18

Monday – Read Matthew 10:1-15. **Doing What Jesus Did.** Jesus showed his disciples how to minister to people by teaching them, by proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom, and by offering healing in Jesus' name. Then, Jesus sent his disciples out to do these ministries. Jesus knew that his ministry would only grow when his disciples and followers joined him in this work of ministry. Our church works the same way. We connect to ministry by serving and doing the same kind of ministry that Jesus did. The ministry of Jesus Christ grows as more and more people in our church begin to connect to ministry by serving. Our ministry also grows when we find a hurt and heal it or find a need and meet it. Spend some time in prayer asking God to help you see a need and meet that need.

Tuesday – Read Mark 4:26-29 and I Corinthians 3:6-9. **Sowing the Seeds of God's Kingdom.** Many of Jesus' parables help us understand the kingdom of God. This parable is similar to the Parable of the Sower in Matthew 13, however, in this parable we are the ones who sow the seeds of God's Kingdom. We sow the seeds of God's kingdom when we *Connect to Ministry by Serving* and *Connect to the World by Inviting People to Come to Church with Us*. We never know when those seeds will take root and grow. Sometimes, they seem to spring up over night. Sometimes, the crop comes in on time. But sometimes the seeds just lie there on the ground doing nothing until years later when they begin to grow. God asks us to scatter the seed, and we can rely on God to give the growth. Pray for the people that God is calling you to invite to church during the Advent and Christmas season.

Wednesday – Read Matthew 13:31-32 and Mark 4:30-32. **Growing Like a Mustard Seed.** Pliny the Elder, who lived in Jesus' day, wrote, "Mustard grows entirely wild, though it is improved by being transplanted. But on the other hand, when it has been sown it is scarcely possible to get the place free of it. As soon as the seed hits the ground, it germinates and grows at once." Mustard can take over a place quickly and get out of control. That's what the kingdom of God is like. God's love just spreads into places you would never expect whether it has an invitation or not. God's love changes the entire landscape and brings new life, new opportunities, and new hope. Ask God to use you to spread God's love like mustard seed.

Thursday – Read Psalm 147:1-20. **Thanksgiving.** Today is Thanksgiving, and this psalm helps us remember that every good blessing in the world and in our lives comes from God. What does *thanksgiving* mean to you? We can give thanks to God through singing and through our prayers. We can also express our thanks to God by sharing our blessings with people who are in need. We share our blessings with others because we remember that God has shared these blessings with us. As you gather with family and loved ones for your Thanksgiving meal, consider asking each person around your table to share something for which he or she is thankful. You might even talk about some of the ways your family and loved ones could work together to be a blessing to someone else in the coming weeks.

Friday – Read Psalm 100:1-5. **Who will you invite to our new sermon series: *Sing We Now of Christmas?* Enter his gates with *thanksgiving*, and his courts with *praise*. Give thanks to him, bless his name.** In the coming weeks of Advent and Christmas, unchurched and nominally religious people are more open to receiving an invitation to come to church. The Holy Spirit can work through you to help bring someone you know who does not have a church home to church with you. Think about your friends, family members, neighbors, co-workers, and classmates who do not have the love and support of a church family. Spend some time praying for them, and then invite them to come with you.

Saturday – Read John 4:34-38 and Luke 10:1-2. **Bringing in the Harvest.** When Jesus looks at Oklahoma City he sees a field of ministry that is ripe for harvesting. Jesus helped his disciples understand that we work together in ministry. You may have the opportunity to sow a seed of faith in a person's life by inviting him or her to come to church with you. Even if that person says, "No," at first, he or she may say, "Yes," at a later time. Many times we continue the ministry that another person has begun. Former pastors and lay persons in our church have put down a foundation of ministry that we continue to build upon today. Prayerfully consider this question: How will you be involved in the harvest?

Lectionary Readings: I Samuel 1:4-20; Psalm 113; Hebrews 10:11-18; Mark 13:1-8.

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