

Prayer and Study Guide

Daily Scripture Readings – 1/20/19

Monday – Read Mark 1:29-34. **Healing empowers us to serve.** Simon’s mother-in-law suffered from a fever, so they told Jesus about it, and he healed her. Simon’s mother-in-law responded by serving Jesus. Jesus offers us healing because he loves us, and his healing empowers us to serve him and join in his ministry. Jesus worked all night to heal all of the sick people they brought to him. People need physical, spiritual, and emotional healing. Spend some time praying for anyone you know who needs healing. Make a plan to visit this person or persons to pray with them.

Tuesday – Read Mark 5:1-20. **Jesus and the Possessed Foreigner.** Jesus told his disciples, “Let’s go over to the other side of the Sea of Galilee.” The disciples were not happy about this, but they went. Their reception committee was a single, deranged, tormented, tomb-dwelling, self-mutilating demoniac who was so disruptive he was thrown out of his community. Jesus cast out the legion of demons who possessed this man into some pigs who rushed to their death. When the people saw the man in his right mind, they begged Jesus to leave their town, and the man Jesus healed begged Jesus to go with him. Jesus told the man, “Go and tell your story of how much God has done for you.” As you pray, consider how much God has done for you, and ask God to help you tell your story.

Wednesday – Read Mark 5:21-34. **Interruptions?** A loving father comes to Jesus in desperate need of healing for his daughter. Jesus agrees to go to this man’s home to minister to the little girl. Along the way, Jesus crossed paths with a woman who had been bleeding for twelve years. She has spent all of her money on physicians who were unable to help her, but now, she believed that Jesus could heal her so she reached out her hand to touch his clothes and experienced healing immediately. Jesus felt his healing power go out from his body and he stopped the brisk journey to Jairus’ home. We can imagine the desperate impatience of this father as Jesus stopped to ask a question that seemed absurd. Jesus could have pressed on, content with the knowledge that the woman was healed, but he took time for the personal touch. A Notre Dame professor told Henri Nouwen, “I have always been complaining that my work was constantly interrupted, until I slowly discovered that my interruptions were my work.” Jesus always had time for people even when he was in a hurry. Consider the interruptions you experience each day. Are they really interruptions or are they opportunities to minister to people who need to experience God’s love and healing? As you pray, ask God to help you see the opportunities which are disguised as interruptions and to share God’s love.

Thursday – Read Mark 5:35-43. **Never Too Late for Jesus.** Before they could get there, some people came from the leader’s house to say, “Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?” But Jesus told the father, “Do not fear, only believe.” Even in the face of death, it is never too late for Jesus because he has power to heal, to save, and to give life. Even when they laughed at him, Jesus was not deterred. He took the girl’s father and mother with him into the room where the girl was, took her by the hand, and said, “Talitha cum,” which means, “Little girl, get up!” And immediately the girl got up and began to walk around. We hear this story in the light of Jesus’ own resurrection. When we experience the death of a loved one we may hear Jesus’ strong voice speak the words, “Talitha, cumi!” and be reminded of our faith and hope in Jesus’ power over life and death as we anticipate resurrection. Spend some time praying for parents who have experienced the death of a child, and thank Jesus for his promise of resurrection.

Friday – Read Mark 6:1-6. **The Un-miracle.** Rejection by friends and family can cause us to experience anger, outrage, self-pity, and hurt. Jesus was rejected by his own people including his friends and relatives in his home town. In Nazareth, those who thought they knew Jesus the best could not come to terms with who he really was. To them, he was only a carpenter, and they refused to believe in him. Mark tells us, ⁵ *And because of their unbelief, he couldn’t do any miracles among them except to place his hands on a few sick people and heal them.* ⁶ *And he was amazed at their unbelief.* Because of their unbelief, this is an un-miracle story. If they had believed, Jesus would have done a great deal more. As you pray, believe in Jesus and welcome him to come into your life to give you eyes of faith.

Saturday – Read Mark 9:14-29. **The Power of Faith.** On yet another occasion, a father brought his son to Jesus’ disciples because he suffered from a spirit that caused him to have seizures, but they were unable to heal him. This man wanted Jesus to help his son, but he was unsure if Jesus would be able to help. Jesus said to him, “If you are able! – All things can be done for the one who believes.” Often in our moments of weakness, we cry out just as this man did, “I believe; help my unbelief.” As you pray, ask Jesus to help your faith grow stronger each day and to help you take time to pray each day.

Lectionary Readings: Isaiah 62:1-5; Psalm 36:5-10; I Corinthians 12:1-11; John 2:1-11.

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