

FRIDAY

“UNDERNEATH THE EVERLASTING ARMS”

SCRIPTURE:

Romans 8:31-39

In all the chaos and confusion of today, the Christian often wonders just where he stands in it all. Can we expect special favors from God?

Why do our sons have to die for something they did not do . . . why should we suffer society’s sickness and immorality? Why can’t the Christian be lifted above these things as people who love God and serve Him?

Possibly one of the hardest things to face is this fact: that God’s “rain falls on the just and the unjust alike.” And we could become lost in a morass of unanswered questions if we forgot one enormous fact: God himself through His Son once suffered here on our earth, in our sick society, a victim of others’ hatred — totally undeserving of the treatment He received.

If it had not been for this example we would have reason to shake our fist at God and cry, “Why!”

But we remember. Only as we suffer can we have true compassion; only as we experience loss, humiliation, loneliness and weariness can we understand how complete and miraculously *real* is the power of God when we reach out to Him, can we recognize this in others; can we reach out and touch them.

This life is no longer the Garden of Eden; it is the battlefield of our Lord against the forces of Satan, the training ground for our souls. We live to serve God, to lift His broken people, to show them their Lord.

(Ephesians 6:12)

Prayer: Lord, only as I take my eyes from myself can I see others’ need. Let me put my petulant whims aside to minister to the world as You saw it — hungry, frightened and groping for God. AMEN

SATURDAY

“SPIRIT VERSUS EGO — THE BATTLE OF THE TWO KINGDOMS”

SCRIPTURE:

Galatians 5:16-25

The basic difference between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan and This World is fairly simple:

In the Kingdom of God, the soul takes precedence over the physical, and God rules supreme; man eagerly gives his life to God’s will and knows security.

In Satan’s kingdom, the ego rules supreme: whatever man wants, desires or craves for his own needs regardless of its effect on others is uppermost.

God asks man to allow Him to mold and inspire him, to give man power he would not ordinarily have, to be better than he could be by himself, to be near God, to actually be saved from a life ruled by the ego which leads man to eventual spiritual death . . .

Satan encourages man to let no one “rule” him — to face this life as all there is, to take from it all he can squeeze and ignore the future conditions after death.

A man following the ego and living for self, eventually starves to death spiritually, and Satan knows this. Such a man is forever separated from God’s love and vitalizing power . . .

But a man who gives over his life to God knows complete release and a profound peace and lack of apprehension. With God in control of his life, he has the deepest assurance, and life.

Prayer: Lord, how I thank Thee for an escape from this tedious and monotonous serving of my own ego. Nothing I do for myself can compare with the assurance of serving Thee. AMEN

MONDAY, MAY 24, 2021

“LOVE IS NOT A ‘THING’ ”

SCRIPTURE: I Corinthians 13:1-13

A young woman was interviewed by an organization which ministered to the migratory workers in her city. During the course of the interview, she mentioned the fact that she had “rejected her family” and left home.

Her application was returned some weeks later, refused. Angry and upset, she confronted the woman once more. “Why was I turned down? I am willing to give up everything. What more do you want?”

The woman looked at her quietly for a moment; then said, “We have more than enough people who are willing to give. We’re looking for people who are willing to forgive.”

We forget that love is not a commodity to be handed out like food and medicine; love is an attitude, a way of living, a position toward other people, and it includes many qualities — the first of which is forgiveness . . .

Forgiveness is that ability to overlook and forget another’s weakness *as it affects us*. It is not hard for us to “love” a man who refuses to work, a mother who neglects her home, a youth who is on drugs. Why? Because they are not our father, mother or son — we have not been involved, we have not been hurt so we can “hand out love” easily. This is social charity.

True love is loving that man when he *is* your father, loving that woman when she is your mother and bearing the hurt when it is your son or daughter . . . *that is love.*

Prayer: Lord, if I withhold love from my family, who is there to love them? Teach me to serve where I am, no matter how hard it is or how humiliating — whether it is rewarded or not. AMEN

TUESDAY

“THE SLIM LINE BETWEEN JUDGMENT AND DISCERNMENT”

SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 7:1-5; II Corinthians 6:14-7:1

When you see someone doing something with which you cannot agree or something which you know is morally wrong, how do you react?

This is a critical thing for the Christian to know — this difference between discernment and judgment — and the world is swift to try to confuse the two.

Judgment belongs to God, discernment is our responsibility. Jesus tells us, “Do not judge”

But we are also told to “Come out from among them and be separate and touch nothing unclean.”

Judgment, having access to all the facts and having determined the extent of the guilt, pronounces sentence. Only God is capable of this with the human heart. Our civil society grants this authority to the court, not to mobs or individual citizens, and in spiritual matters, God has ordained that judgment in sin belongs to Him, not to any of us.

Yet how are we to save if we do not “go out among” them? Christ moved among men yet remained apart; i.e. His attitude was so different, His outlook so defined and God-centered that men knew at once He was not a part of them, and it was to this hope, this difference that they were drawn. (John 17:14-19)

The only way we *can* move among men is with discernment, living lives so transparent and directed that men are drawn to God. Without this men will never see a clear picture of Christ.

Prayer: Lord, give me wisdom to discern, love to lift up, and humility to leave judgment to Thee. Teach me that judgment on my part leads to pride, but that discerning obedience keeps me fit to serve others for Thee. AMEN

WEDNESDAY

“PRAY WITHOUT CEASING”

SCRIPTURE:

I Thessalonians 5:16-18

“Accustom yourself gradually to carry prayer into all your daily occupations. Speak, move, work in peace, as if you were in prayer . . .”

Fénelon

“Oh, how the soul is refreshed with freedom of speech with its beloved Lord! He that is much in prayer, shall grow rich in grace.”

R. Leighton

(Supplementary reading: Jesus’ Prayer, John 17)

Prayer: “I resolve to pray more and to pray always . . . to pray in all the places where quietness inviteth . . . in the house, on the highway, and on the street . . .

“And to know no street or passage in this city that may not witness that I have not forgotten thee, God.”

(From a prayer by Sir Thomas Browne)

(Supplementary reading: Luke 18:1-8)

THURSDAY

“WHY CAN’T I PRAY?”

SCRIPTURE:

Romans 8:22-28; Psalm 145:14-19

So often, people shy away from the act of prayer because they think they must go through some kind of ritual. They kneel, embarrassed at the silence and the sound of their own monologue. Or they recite prayers someone else has written. They get nothing from these prayers other than an increased awareness of their own solitude. Of course they never go back. There is no feeling of communion or response.

But what is prayer? It is really an attitude even more than an act. It is wanting to be with God, to contact Him and to commune with Him. It can be a momentary word, or savored for a long period of time. In fact, it can be a way of life. Scripture says that “Enoch walked with God.” This is a supreme example of the ultimate in prayer.

But prayer, like love, is that which fills a need, and unless a man has a hunger that nothing can fill, yearning too deep to describe, emptiness that seems to grow vaster by the day, that man will not reach out for prayer . . .

The first prerequisite for prayer is need. The second is belief — that God will hear. The third is honesty. Approach God through need, not through your reason. Come as a child, pour out your heart, and claim Christ’s promise. (Matthew 7:7, 8; Revelations 3:20)

Prayer: O God, as I come to You, please give me the warm assurance of Your compassion and love. You have promised to draw near to those who need Thee, and I claim that promise now, Lord. AMEN