

WEEKLY DEVOTIONS AT GLENKIRK



The DEVO



SEPTEMBER 24 – 28, 2018

MONDAY

Jeremiah 17:5-8

This week's focus is on the importance of having roots or being grounded in our faith. When we are "rooted," we can withstand things that come our way because our foundation is solid. This passage in Jeremiah is a great place to start talking about being rooted. Here the prophet paints a picture of what it looks like if we truly rely on God instead of on mankind, which will inevitably let us down.

In verse 5 of this passage, we read about a tree in the desert that is dry and unsustainable. This tree is the picture of one who trusts in man instead of God who alone sustains us. This tree may look as if it has sustained hard times, like it is surviving even in the midst of the desert, when in fact it is drying up and dying by the minute.

Verses 7 and 8 of our passage describe the tree we are called to be: planted by the stream without fear of the heat or worry in the drought; it always bears fruit. This tree has roots planted by the stream that keep it strong. Those of you who are familiar with the Psalms may hear the echo of Psalm 1: 1-3, which tells us that those who delight in the Law of the Lord are blessed and are like this tree—firmly planted by a stream that will sustain them. This person meditates on the Law of the Lord day and night.

As we talk about being rooted and trusting in the Lord, we will see a close connection between standing firm and delighting in the Word of the Lord. David Guzik comments, “In some sense, Jeremiah thought trusting in the Lord to be the same as delighting in His Word.” So, let’s read God’s Word together this week and together delight in His every promise to us. Let’s remember that our confidence should be in Him since He alone can sustain us. Let’s meditate on His Word as we hide it in our hearts, preparing to face whatever comes our way, knowing that His strength will carry us.

QUESTION

Is there a particular verse in this passage that you might like to commit to memory? How can it help you when you feel discouraged or face trials?

PRAYER

Lord, You have given us Your Word to lead our way. You sustain us like a spring of living water. Thank You. Help us to delight in Your Word this week. Help us to remember to put our confidence in You. Amen.

TUESDAY

Ephesians 3:14-21

This passage in Ephesians continues with the theme of being rooted as well as being strengthened to face whatever comes our way. In verse 17a of this passage, Paul notes that after being strengthened by the Spirit, Christ will *dwell* in their hearts through faith. David Guzik points out that there are two Greek words that can convey this idea of “to live in.” One is used to convey the idea of living in a place as a stranger, and the other involves settling down and making this place your permanent home. The second is the “dwell” used here in this passage. Jesus wants to make your heart His permanent home. He is not visiting as a stranger; He is settling down, making Himself comfortable in your heart. What a beautiful picture this paints!

We as believers are called to be “*rooted and established in love*” (v. 17b). We are to have deep, far reaching roots like a tree that is so grounded it will not move in the biggest storm. We are to be established, like a building built on a firm solid foundation that will not shake or crumble. What is the result of this firm foundation in this passage? We are able to grasp the amazing love of Christ (v. 18). Because of this deep love, He gave up His life for us. This is the love spoken of in Jeremiah 31:3, which reminds us that God loves us “with an everlasting love.” How can we possibly grasp this kind of love?

So today, let’s once again fall at the foot of the cross. On this side of heaven, we may never be able to understand this amazing love that

causes Him to pour out His life as an offering for us, but perhaps we can just grasp it. Perhaps as we kneel at the cross that marks our salvation, we can just grasp His amazing love that looks beyond our failure, our sin, our mistakes and forgives us all the same. Perhaps as we fall at the pierced feet of our Savior, we can remember that His love knows no bounds; and we'll come to Him with all that we are, remembering that He alone carries us through whatever trials we face.

QUESTION

Where do you need to be reminded of God's love for you today?

PRAYER

Lord, thank You so much for Your great, great love. It goes beyond all understanding, and today we thank You for reminding us of that. Help us today to once again experience Your forgiveness and the grace that You so willingly give. We are so grateful. Amen.

WEDNESDAY

John 15:1-17

Throughout Scripture there are many pictures of the relationship of God and His people. However, this picture of the vine and the branch really shows just how dependent we are on Him. We need constant connection to Him, our Vine, in order to be sustained—in order to do anything. “*Remain in me, as I also remain in you*” (v. 4). In other versions of the Bible, this passage says, “*Abide in Me and I in you.*” This shows the mutual relationship that we have with the Father. Not only do we remain in Him, but He remains in us. As David Guzik says, “It isn’t only that the disciple abides in the Master; the Master also abides in the disciple.” This is reminiscent, he says, of Song of Solomon 6:3: “*I am my beloved’s, and my beloved is mine.*”

Consistently throughout my life, I have been reminded how much my salvation was not dependent upon me. God got ahold of me in a way that is so astounding I can only sit back and be grateful. This passage once again reminds me of this truth. Here I feel a gentle assurance whispered from the lips of Christ, “*Remain in me as I also remain in you.*”

This week as we talk about being rooted and the importance of having a firm foundation, this reminder is so helpful: We do not carry the whole responsibility. Jesus commits to us; He will remain with us. As we delight

in His Word and meditate on it until it permeates our very being, and as we grasp at His amazing love for us, we can also rest assured that He remains with us, making His permanent home with us. He has got us.

This passage speaks of our mutual relationship and of our need and dependence on Him. He is our vine; as we remain in Him, He will also remain in us. Apart from Him we can do nothing, but with Him we will bear much fruit. This passage also reflects the idea presented in Galatians 2:20: *“I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live but Christ lives in me.”*

QUESTION

How does this truth that Christ abides in us as we abide in Him bring you comfort today?

PRAYER

Lord, thank You for the assurance of Your presence and Your constant sustenance. Lord, help us to remember that being connected to You is essential to bearing fruit. Remind us today of the dependence we have upon You. Thank You for taking care of us always. Amen.

THURSDAY

James 1:19-27

This passage reminds us of the important association between both *hearing* and *doing* God's Word. As we read on Monday, delighting in God's Word is connected to trusting in Him when the storms of life come. At the same time, there is an important connection between living out God's Word and being prepared to withstand the inevitable storms of life. This truth can also be seen in Matthew 7:24-27. In that parable, we are told the importance of hearing and doing the Word of God. It is like a man who builds his house upon a rock; he has a solid foundation.

Charles Spurgeon says, "I fear we have many such in all congregations; admiring hearers, affectionate hearers, attached hearers, but all the while unblest hearers, because they are not doers of the Word." Here in James we read about a man who looks at himself in the mirror and immediately forgets what he looks like. David Guzik points out that this looking at oneself involves careful scrutiny. James is emphasizing the importance of looking at God's Word carefully and with a lot of thought. However, it should not stop there.

When we look in a mirror, there is supposed to be some purpose to it. We are not just looking to admire ourselves, but to make sure there is nothing we need to change as we carefully scrutinize our face, our clothes, and our appearance. If we look in the mirror and notice our hair is sticking

straight up but then walk away and forget it, what purpose was there in looking at all? This is the same with our time in God's Word. It should convict us while at the same time revealing who we truly are. We should step away changed.

How can we stand firm and be rooted and established? We can carefully come to the Word of God, delight in it and study it, and then do something about it. It is only then that it truly becomes our shield of faith, our belt of truth, our breastplate of righteousness, our helmet of salvation, our sword of the Spirit, and our gospel of peace that prepares us for whatever comes our way (Ephesians 6:13-17).

QUESTION

What have you felt God's Word calling you to work on in your own life? Is there someone who can hold you accountable to that?

PRAYER

Lord, Your Word can be our armor to protect us from whatever we face in this life. Thank You that You help us to stand firm. Convict us today of how we can grow and be molded into who You want us to be. Amen.

FRIDAY

Matthew 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-25; Luke 8:4-18

This week we have emphasized the importance of having a sure foundation. Our focus in this passage today is on the second kind of soil. *“Some [seed] fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root”* (Matthew 13:5-6). This kind of soil is later explained as representing those who hear the Word and receive it with joy, but because of their lack of roots, they only last a short time. They cannot withstand any trouble, persecution, or trials.

This is like the tree in the desert we read about in Jeremiah 17. This tree may look like it has withstood hard times, even the heat of the desert, but in reality it is drying up and decaying. It has no roots and is not able to withstand the heat. We are called to be the tree planted by the stream, or the branches connected to the vine. There we have a connection to our true source and sustenance, safe and secure, knowing our Father will take care of us.

This passage is not meant to cause us to fear our place with God. As we read in John 15, when we abide in Christ, He also abides in us. We have a mutual relationship with Him where He holds us tightly. We do

not have to be afraid because when we allow Him to dwell in us, to make His permanent home in our hearts, He is not going anywhere. He has settled down and is remaining with us.

However, this passage should also cause us to pause and reflect. As we saw with the passage in James, reading God's Word should reveal who we truly are and convict us of where we need growth. As we do this, we are building our house on the rock, firm and planted in Him. David Guzik reminds us that the problem with the plants in this passage is not their sudden growth; it is their lack of depth. These plants have collapsed under the pressure of this world, unable to withstand the trials brought their way. So, as we close out this week, let's grasp firmly to the God who sustains us. Let's delight in His Word and see how it calls us to change and grow.

QUESTION

How have trials in the past caused you to cling to God?
How can clinging to His Word help during those times?

PRAYER

Lord, You are the one who causes growth. You promise to remain with us and Your love is beyond anything we could imagine.
Thank You. Help us to cling ever tightly to You. Amen.

Sources:

- David Guzik's quotes and information are taken from various commentaries at <https://enduringword.com/>
- Charles Spurgeon's quote is taken from https://biblehub.com/sermons/auth/spurgeon/two_sorts_of_hearers.htm

