



## ▶ DAILY DEVOTIONAL.

**Saturday/Sunday, 7/14-15/18**

**“The Story of Our Children”**

**Deuteronomy 6:4-12**

*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.*

*When the LORD your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you — a land with large, flourishing cities you did not build, houses filled with all kinds of good things you did not provide, wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant — then when you eat and are satisfied, be careful that you do not forget the LORD, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.*

**Family Activity:** This week, our children at VBS collected a “noisy offering” (change) for Puerto Rico. This weekend at worship, we’ll collect additional funds. Can the congregation match the generosity of our preschoolers? Be here this weekend at noon to find out, and to see which pastor(s) receive the coveted “pie-ing!”

**Monday, 7/16/18**

**“Written on Our Hearts”**

**Deuteronomy 6:4-7a**

*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children.*

- In this Old Testament scripture from yesterday's sermon, we find the general rule for how we are to live a life of faith. Often as Christians we stress life-changing conversion stories, usually later in life, as the true measure of authentic faith in Jesus. These types of amazing conversions can and do happen, but generally speaking, they are the exception, not the rule. As we learn from Deuteronomy, it seems that God's intention is that we become saturated with the things of God from the time we are little children, and to be brought up in the faith. We like to stress our autonomous individuality, but often we do so to the neglect of the reality that everything we are and believe is to some extent the result of others impressing themselves on us from an early age. This is what God intends, especially for the life of faith. Who has made an impression on your life of faith? In what ways have they made an impression on you? What do you think it means to have God's commands on your heart? What can you do to ensure God's commands are written on your heart? What can you do to impress God's commands on the hearts of the children of our church?

**Prayer:** Holy God, we thank you for writing your commands on our hearts, and thank you for all that have impressed your love and mercy on us from the earliest of our days. Empower and enable us to do the same for the children in our midst. In Jesus' name. Amen.

**Tuesday, 7/17/18**

**"Greatest in the Kingdom"**

**Matthew 18:2-5**

*He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. And he said: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me."*

- Children figure prominently in Jesus' vision for the Kingdom of God. For Jesus, children provide the model for the kind of faith that we are all called to as his followers. It is clear, that in Jesus' kingdom there is a complete inversion of what, culturally, we believe to be true about ourselves, children, and faith. In our culture, children often occupy the lowest rung of the societal hierarchy, but Jesus elevates them and makes the case that it is just those childlike qualities that are at the root of what it means to be a follower of Jesus. What do you think are some of those childlike qualities? In what ways do children provide for us a model of faith? What does it mean to have childlike faith? In what ways have you experienced a child as a teacher? What role do you see children playing in the life of Platte Woods UMC?

**Prayer:** Holy God, you have made us for yourself, and we are incomplete until we find ourselves in your embrace. Help us by your Spirit to take on a simple, childlike faith so that we may enter in and experience the blessings of your kingdom. In Jesus' name. Amen.

**Wednesday, 7/18/18**  
**“Children of God”**

**Romans 8:14-17**

*For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

- Though families, churches, societies, etc., are made up of young and old, children and adults, the truth remains that in God’s kingdom, these distinctions seem to go away. The ground is level at the foot of the Cross. In reality, we all have at least one thing in common as those led by the Spirit: we are all children of God. Our stories — all of our stories — are ones of adoption. That, in Christ and through the Spirit, we are adopted as God’s sons and daughters. As Paul makes clear to the Roman church, our adoption means that we are not only heirs of God, but co-heirs with Jesus. This is a truly incredible and wonderful reality! There is one qualifier, though: we share in these things *if* we share in Christ’s sufferings in order to share in his glory. What do you think it means to be an adopted child of God? What do you think it means to be an heir of God and a co-heir with Jesus? What do you think it means to share in Christ’s sufferings? What does it mean to share in his glory?

**Prayer:** Holy God, thank you for adopting us as your children. Thank you for loving us so much. Thank you for the witness of your Spirit that gives us assurance of your work in our lives. Help us to live into our identity as your children, and to take our place as co-heirs with Jesus. In his holy name. Amen.

**Thursday, 7/19/18**  
**“Wise for Salvation”**

**2 Timothy 3:14-15**

*But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.*

- It occurs to me that many of us get to a place in our faith journeys where we think we have “arrived,” or we think we were supposed to have “arrived” by a certain time in our lives. In both cases, we cease moving; we stop journeying. This passage from 2 Timothy points us in the right direction by calling us to continue on in our faith journeys; to keep moving and growing in our knowledge and love of God. I hear 2 Timothy calling us to take on the posture of a child. It is the childlike wonder, awe, inquisitiveness, questioning, etc., that keeps us in right relationship with God and helps us to continually grow in our faith in Jesus, making us wise for salvation. What do you do in your daily life that helps you to keep journeying; to keep growing in faith? What do you think it means to be made wise for salvation? What new practice can you take up to help you stay in right relationship with God and continue to grow?

**Prayer:** Holy God, we thank you for how you guide, lead and teach us. We ask that you continue to walk alongside us and to give us boldness and energy to keep journeying along in faith. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

**Friday, 7/20/18**

**“Pure Praise”**

**Psalm 8**

*LORD, our Lord,  
how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

*You have set your glory  
in the heavens.  
Through the praise of children and infants  
you have established a stronghold against your enemies,  
to silence the foe and the avenger.  
When I consider your heavens,  
the work of your fingers,  
the moon and the stars,  
which you have set in place,  
what is mankind that you are mindful of them,  
human beings that you care for them?*

*You have made them a little lower than the angels  
and crowned them with glory and honor.  
You made them rulers over the works of your hands;  
you put everything under their feet:  
all flocks and herds,  
and the animals of the wild,  
the birds in the sky,  
and the fish in the sea,  
all that swim the paths of the seas.*

*LORD, our Lord,  
how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

- Spend some time today reflecting on the work of God’s fingers; what God has made and the ways God is at work through all that he created. What do you notice? What is it about Creation that brings about words of pure praise of God?

**Prayer:** Let Psalm 8 be a source of prayer for you as you go about your day.

***This week’s devotions were written by  
Pastor Jake Schneider (jschneider@plattewoodschurch.org).***