



▶ DAILY DEVOTIONAL.

Saturday/Sunday, July 21-22, 2018

“The Story of Our Youth”

Jeremiah 1:1-10

The words of Jeremiah son of Hilkiyah, one of the priests at Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin. The word of the LORD came to him in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah son of Amon king of Judah, and through the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, down to the fifth month of the eleventh year of Zedekiah son of Josiah king of Judah, when the people of Jerusalem went into exile. The word of the LORD came to me, saying,

*“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
before you were born I set you apart;
I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”*

“Alas, Sovereign LORD,” I said, “I do not know how to speak; I am too young.” But the LORD said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am too young.’ You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the LORD. Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, “I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant.”

Family Activity: The difficulty with listening to God’s call is that it requires us to try something new. We must step out of our comfort zone. As a family, gather together and try something that is completely new. It could be making a new craft, exploring a new part of Kansas City, or dressing up and taking a funny photo. Keep it simple and make sure to have some fun!

Monday, 7/23/18

“The Call of Gideon”

Judges 6:14-17

The Lord turned to him and said, “Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian’s hand. Am I not sending you?” “Pardon me, my lord,” Gideon replied, “but how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.”

The Lord answered, “I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites, leaving none alive.” Gideon replied, “If now I have found favor in your eyes, give me a sign that it is really you talking to me. Please do not go away until I come back and bring my offering and set it before you.”

- All week we will be exploring call stories of biblical characters. We will discover how they struggled to answer the call of God. We will find how our own faith journeys are connected to the biblical characters to help us answer God's call for our own lives. In the passage from Judges, Gideon questions if God is really speaking to him. Gideon asks God for a sign. Have you ever wondered if God is speaking to you? How do you know it's the voice of God?
- Sometimes we think it is inappropriate to bring our questions to God. We feel as if it invalidates our faith. This couldn't be further from the truth. In fact, it is our questions that lead us to seek out answers and grow in our faith. This passage gives us permission to bring questions to God. What questions do you have for God?

Prayer: God, we ask that Your voice will be loud and clear in our lives. Help us to tune out distractions and all other noise that lead us down the wrong path.

Tuesday, 7/24/18

“The Call of Moses”

Exodus 3:9-11

And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.” But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?” And God said, “I will be with you.”

- God calls Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. Moses responds to God by saying, “Are you sure you want me? I really don't think I'm capable.” The truth is, God calls all of us to ministry, but we often get stopped in our tracks by feelings of unworthiness. We rationalize why we shouldn't get too involved. Is there a particular ministry you have felt yourself called to, but are afraid to do it?
- Notice how God responds to Moses. God doesn't really acknowledge what Moses has to say. God simply states, “I've got this.” It doesn't matter who you are, what matters is that God is with you. It doesn't matter what others say or think, what matters is God is with you. Does God being with you empower you to overcome feelings of unworthiness to engage in ministry?

Prayer: God, help us to overcome our feelings of unworthiness. Help us to step into our ministry. Help us to rely less on ourselves and more on You.

Wednesday, 7/25/18

“The Call of Sarah”

Genesis 18:9-12

They said to [Abraham], “Where's your wife Sarah?” And he said, “Right here in the tent.” Then one of the men said, “I will definitely return to you about this time next year. Then your wife Sarah will have a son!” Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were both very old. So Sarah laughed to herself, thinking, I'm no longer able to have children and my husband's old.

- Sarah has one of the most interesting stories in the Bible. Her husband Abraham was promised by God to have many children (Genesis 15:5). Sarah's role in the story of God would be to give birth to the nation of Israel, literally! After years of waiting on the promise of God, Sarah had given up on the idea. She was old and knew that having children was no longer a possibility for her. You can imagine her surprise when strangers show up to tell her she will have a child. She laughs at the idea in disbelief. As Christians, we hear about the promises of God. We believe that we will have an abundant life. However, life hits and we start to lose hope. Like Sarah, we grow tired from years of trying to survive. Do you ever find it hard to believe in the promises of God?
- Sarah eventually gives birth to a child named Isaac. In doing so, she becomes the mother of Israel. I view Sarah as an incredible woman of faith. Even in her disbelief, she remained faithful to God. I imagine her saying, "God, this is crazy, but if you say it, I believe it." Even when she laughed, she knew God could make a miracle. How can we remain faithful to God, even in times when it may be hard to believe in God's promises?

Prayer: God, we realize that Your promises don't always manifest themselves in a way we understand. We don't understand your timing or exactly the way things might unfold. We give you praise for the way You remain faithful to us. Help us to remain faithful to You. Amen.

Thursday, 7/26/18

"The Call of Samuel"

1 Samuel 3:8-9

A third time the Lord called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

Then Eli realized that the Lord was calling the boy. So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

- Samuel is a young boy who is being mentored by Eli as a prophet of God. One night while sleeping, God calls out to Samuel. Samuel mistakenly thinks Eli has called him. Eli sends Samuel back to bed. This happens three times until Eli and Samuel figure out that Samuel is hearing the voice of God. Sometimes we don't hear God immediately. It may take hearing things over and over again until we get the point. I remember getting exposed to the same scripture three different times in the same week. Once was on the radio, another on a promotional flier and another in a group study. It took me seeing the same message three times until I knew God was trying to tell me something. Has God been speaking to you in different ways? Have you mistaken the voice for something other than God?
- The imagery of being asleep really sticks out in this passage. When we are "spiritually asleep" we miss what God is trying to tell us. Reading scripture, praying, attending worship, and having meaningful conversations with others are ways to tune into God. Do you feel spiritually asleep? What could you do differently to wake yourself up?

Prayer: God, wake us up. Wake up your church. Let us hear what you are telling us. Tell us again and again if you have to. We don't want to miss what you are doing. Amen.

Friday, 7/27/18

“The Call of Joshua”

Joshua 1:9-10

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” So Joshua ordered the officers of the people:

- You may be asking yourself, “Where is the rest of the passage? What did Joshua tell them to do?” Those questions are valid, but it may cause us to miss an important point. In fact, it really doesn’t matter what Joshua said. What matters is the sequence of actions. God told Joshua to be strong and courageous. God assured Joshua that God would always be with him. Joshua responds by immediately living into that calling. Joshua responds by doing. In the spirit of Joshua, what is one thing you can do to answer God’s call? All it takes is one small step to get started.
- Ministry requires us to put ourselves out there. We are visible and vulnerable. What if we fail and everyone sees it? I believe there is no such thing as failure as long as we are trying. The real failure occurs when we do nothing. In what ways can you take risks for God this week?

Prayer: God, grant us a spirit of action. Remove all roadblocks from our path. Help us to make plans that align with Yours. Help us to overcome our fear of failure. Let us be risk takers for You. Thank you for being with us. Amen.

***This week’s devotions were written by
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