



▶ DAILY DEVOTIONAL.

Saturday/Sunday, 11/3-4/18

“By Honoring the Saints”

Hebrews 12:1-3

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Family Activity: This weekend we celebrate “All Saint’s Day,” which is a day that we can remember and celebrate those we love who have died. Even though we are sad for our loss, we can still be happy about the impact they have made in our lives. We can take time to celebrate and remember.

My Grandpa Ted used to make us homemade ice cream, so when we make it as a family, we always tell stories about him. My Grandma Pat would always play a little music box before I went to bed when I spent the night, so whenever I see the music box and hear the song “Edelweiss” I remember her.

This week choose an activity that will remind you of someone you love that has died. Maybe it is making a certain food or looking at old pictures. Share stories together and celebrate the time that you had with them.

Monday, 11/5/18

“Inheritance”

Colossians 1:11-12

May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light.

- Inheritance in Paul’s day and inheritance today would be understood differently. In Paul’s time, the firstborn son would have received a double portion of the inheritance and the rest would have been split amongst any other sons. Therefore, sharing in someone else’s inheritance can be seen as a very countercultural understanding. God allows us to share in an inheritance that the world would say wasn’t meant for us. When is a time that you have experienced a gift or blessings that the world would say wasn’t meant for you?

- The understanding of inheritance in the Bible is that with inheritance comes great responsibility. The firstborn son receiving the largest share of the inheritance would have legal obligations, economic responsibility for extended family and during difficult times, may even have to make life and death decisions. We have received a great gift of inheritance and therefore are responsible for sharing the Good News so that others may also share in our inheritance. How are you called to share your inheritance?

Prayer: Dear God, we thank you for the generous inheritance that you have given us. We ask for you to open our eyes to those who have not yet experienced your Good News. Give us the strength and endurance to be the best stewards of your holy inheritance. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Tuesday, 11/6/18

“We Pray”

Ephesians 3:14-21

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

- This passage in my Bible is titled “Prayer for the Readers.” At the time, Paul was writing this letter to the Ephesians, perhaps not realizing that almost 2000 years later you would be reading this. Yet, we can be assured that God hears this prayer today for you just as strongly as for those reading the letter long ago. How does your reading of this change if you put yourself as the subject of this prayer?
- Who holds a place in your prayers that you have not yet met? If you had a prayer for those who do not yet know God, or perhaps have not yet been born, what would it be?

Prayer: Holy God, we thank you that you were making a place for us before we were even born. We thank you for those who have been fervently in prayer for us without even knowing us. We pray now for those who do not know your transformative power. We pray that a way is made for them to be filled with your fullness. In Jesus' name, through the power of the Holy Spirit we pray, Amen.

Wednesday, 11/7/18

“Cloud of Witnesses”

Hebrews 12:1-2

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

- In Hebrews Chapter 11 we see a long list of those who have gone before us in faith set in front of us as examples. Their life was a witness to the power of the cross and the power of God. Who would be in your “cloud of witnesses”? What did they model for your faith?
- We can also be a witness for others. What is a natural audience that you have influence with? If you only had five minutes to share what God has done in your life, what would you include?

Prayer: Good and gracious God, we thank you for the cloud of witnesses that you have placed in our lives. We thank you for the way they have strengthened our faith and drawn us closer to you. Help us to be a witness to you through our words and our actions. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

Thursday, 11/8/18

“Fruitful”

Matthew 21:18-22

In the morning, when he returned to the city, he was hungry. And seeing a fig tree by the side of the road, he went to it and found nothing at all on it but leaves. Then he said to it, “May no fruit ever come from you again!” And the fig tree withered at once. When the disciples saw it, they were amazed, saying, “How did the fig tree wither at once?” Jesus answered them, “Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only will you do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,’ it will be done. Whatever you ask for in prayer with faith, you will receive.”

- I have always found this scripture to be shocking and perhaps it was meant to be. Here Jesus encounters a tree that is not bearing fruit. It looks great on the outside, it probably looks like a nice healthy tree with leaves and yet it is not doing its job. Its job is to be producing fruit. Fruit that provides seeds for new trees, fruit that provides nourishment for others, and yet it is not. Sometimes we have to be honest about our assessments. What in your life is not producing fruit? What steps would you need to take for that to no longer be a focus for you?
- What can you identify as being fruitful? How can you nourish those things to grow and produce more fruit?

Prayer: Dear God, we confess that there are some things in our lives that are just not healthy. We ask for your strength and courage to allow those things to wither away, so that we might have room for the things that are life-giving. God, nourish and encourage us in the things that are producing fruit. May we have an abundance so that your gifts may be shared with others. In the name of Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit we pray, Amen.

Friday, 11/9/18

“No Longer Strangers”

Ephesians 2:19-20

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.

- When I was in the third grade, we moved to a new city. I remember vividly what it felt like to be a stranger and to wonder where I belonged. To be honest, it took years before I felt like my new city was “home.” When have you had the experience of being a stranger? Who do you see as feeling like they are a stranger in your community? How about the church?

- One of our basic needs is to have a community and to belong. This passage assures us that not only are we not outsiders, but our citizenship belongs to the household of God. How does this understanding affirm or challenge you?

Prayer: Dear God, we thank you that you have welcomed us into your household. We praise you for the gift of belonging. Help us to live a life that honors this gift. Grant us the wisdom to be invitational, to be sure we always make room at our table for someone new. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

***This week's devotional was written by
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