



▶ DAILY DEVOTIONAL.

Saturday/Sunday, 2/24-25/18

“Reach Encouragement”

Luke 4:14-21

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

**“The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”**

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

Family Activity: **Think of someone you know that isn’t yet connected to a church.** Take a moment this week to write a note of encouragement to them. Young children can draw a picture and share encouraging words.

Monday, 2/26/18

“Sphere of Influence”

Luke 4:22-30

All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. “Isn’t this Joseph’s son?” they asked.

Jesus said to them, “Surely you will quote this proverb to me: ‘Physician, heal yourself!’ And you will tell me, ‘Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.’”

“Truly I tell you,” he continued, “no prophet is accepted in his hometown. I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah’s time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian.”

All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him off the cliff. But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.

- **How have you experienced Jesus's revelation that a prophet is not accepted in their own hometown?** Why do you think that is the case?
- Where do you currently see that you have a sphere of influence? What word(s) of prophecy need to be spoken?

Prayer: Dear God, open my eyes to see where I have the most influence. Help me to know how my words and actions can bring others into a relationship with you. Guide me so that I can use this impact to glorify you. Amen.

Tuesday

02/27/18 "Authority"

Luke 4:31-37

Then he went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and on the Sabbath he taught the people. They were amazed at his teaching, because his words had authority.

In the synagogue there was a man possessed by a demon, an impure spirit. He cried out at the top of his voice, "Go away! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are — the Holy One of God!"

"Be quiet!" Jesus said sternly. "Come out of him!" Then the demon threw the man down before them all and came out without injuring him.

All the people were amazed and said to each other, "What words these are! With authority and power he gives orders to impure spirits and they come out!" And the news about him spread throughout the surrounding area.

- While we read on Monday that Jesus was rejected from his hometown, he was well received in Galilee and had authority there. Changing the audience resulted in an amazing difference. What audience has given you authority?
- Who is someone in your life that has been a role model for faith? Why were they influential in your faith journey?

Prayer: God of power and glory, we thank you for those who have spoken your Godly authority into our lives. Help us to continue to find role models that challenge us to grow in our faith. Let us also be able to speak your power and truth to those who need to hear your voice. **In Jesus'** name, Amen.

Wednesday

02/28/18 “Actions Speak”

Luke 4:38-43

Jesus Heals Many

Jesus left the synagogue and went to the home of Simon. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Jesus to help her. So he bent over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. She got up at once and began to wait on them.

*At sunset, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them. Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, “**You are the Son of God!**” **But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Messiah.***

*At daybreak, Jesus went out to a solitary place. The people were looking for him and when they came to where he was, they tried to keep him from leaving them. But he said, “**I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent.**”*

- In the Gospels we hear many accounts of Jesus healing. Here in Luke we see that in addition to speaking encouragement, Jesus showed it through the physical act of healing. How have you received encouragement through words? How have you received encouragement through actions?
- We know our words are powerful, but we are often reminded that “**actions speak louder than words.**” How have you acted with encouragement this week?

Prayer: Holy God, we praise you for your healing power. Grant us the wisdom to know when to speak your truth. In all things, help us to use our actions to provide the encouragement that our friends, family, neighbors and world needs. Amen.

Thursday

03/01/18 “Strengthened”

I Thessalonians 3:6-13

But Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought good news about your faith and love. He has told us that you always have pleasant memories of us and that you long to see us, just as we also long to see you. Therefore, brothers and sisters, in all our distress and persecution we were encouraged about you because of your faith. For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord. How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you? Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith.

Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you. May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.

- This inspiration comes from Paul even when it is clear that he is experiencing distress and persecution. Paul is a recipient of encouragement at a time when he is also providing encouragement to others. When have you tried to provide inspiration to others, only to find you became the recipient?
- What scripture or words of encouragement strengthen you in times of distress?

Prayer: God of strength and encouragement, build us up to be pillars of strength for you. Even in times of trial, grant us the support to be encouragers of others. Multiply this inspiration so that it overflows in our lives. Through the power and grace of Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

Friday

03/02/18 “Give Thanks”

I Thessalonians 5:12-18

Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone. Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else.

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.

- **How are you challenged by Paul’s instructions in today’s scripture reading?** What circumstance in your life would be difficult for you to give thanks to God?
- What would a lifestyle of encouragement look like for you?

Prayer: God, we rejoice in your presence with us this day and every day. We ask for the Holy Spirit to dwell in us, leading us and guiding us. Give us the peace to face our burdens and help us to see the ways that you have already been working. God, in all circumstances, help us to live a life that glorifies you. Amen.

This week’s devotionals were written by Pastor Jessica Richard (jrichard@plattewoodschurch.org).