



▶ DAILY DEVOTIONAL.

Saturday/Sunday, 3/3-4/18

“Affirmation Evangelism”

Acts 16:11-14 (New International Version)

From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day we went on to Neapolis. From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days. On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The LORD opened her heart to respond to Paul's message.

Family Activity: Give each family member one piece of paper and have them write their name at the top of their page. Take turns passing the papers and write affirming words or a phrase that describes the person whose name is at the top of the page. Once everyone has had a chance to finish, take turns reading them aloud. Hang your words of affirmation on the refrigerator or somewhere you can easily see them this week.

Monday, 3/5/18

“The Dream”

Acts 16:9-10 (The Message)

That night Paul had a dream: A Macedonian stood on the far shore and called across the sea, “Come over to Macedonia and help us!” The dream gave Paul his map. We went to work at once getting things ready to cross over to Macedonia. All the pieces had come together. We knew now for sure that God had called us to preach the good news to the Europeans.

- I watched “Wonder Woman” over the weekend, and I highly recommend it. Like Paul, young Wonder Woman, Diana, has a dream. Her dream doesn’t come to her at night, it comes to her heart. Her life is focused on her dream. She trains for it. She believes it. She doesn’t give up, even when others challenge her dream. The dream is her map for life. What dream does God have for your life?
- How do you see the pieces coming together? What affirmations have you experienced?

Prayer: Dear God, open my heart to pay attention to your intent for my life, so I live in a way that affirms your love and grace in the lives of those I encounter. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Tuesday, 3/6/18

“The Tree”

Luke 19:1-10 (NIV)

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.” So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. All the people saw this and began to mutter, “He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.”

But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.”

Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

- When I am in the grocery store, and reach for my favorite yogurt, I remember I am short. I have to find someone tall to reach the yogurt for me. Zacchaeus was short, and he wanted to see Jesus. He couldn't because the crowds were in the way (i.e., he was short). He climbs a tree to see Jesus. At the same time, Jesus sees Zacchaeus as God created him – fair and generous. (This is the same way Jesus sees Lydia.) In what ways have you short-changed your life and the life of others?
- How can you affirm yourself and others to stand tall with faith in Jesus?

Prayer: (singing)

*Jesus loves me! This I know,
For the Bible tells me so;
Little ones to Him belong,
They are weak but He is strong.
Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
The Bible tells me so.*

Wednesday, 3/7/18

“The Affirmation”

John 11:21-27 (NIV)

“Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.”

Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”

Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

“Yes, Lord,” she replied, “I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”

- Almost every Sunday, the Apostles’ Creed is part of the worship service. Creed means belief. The Apostles’ Creed is a historic statement of faith, stating the faith of the Christian Church. In the Gospel According to John, Jesus has been summoned by Martha and Mary to heal their brother Lazarus. By the time Jesus arrives, Lazarus is dead. Martha believes Jesus can bring Lazarus back to life. Jesus asks her to affirm what she believes. What do you believe about Jesus?
- How do your beliefs about Jesus influence your actions?

Prayer: Dear God, “Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in your sight, my strength and redeemer.” (Ps. 19:14) May the words I believe flow into actions that are acceptable in your sight and affirm my faith in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Thursday, 03/08/18

“The Heart”

Matthew 6:21

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

- In Acts, we read, *“The LORD opened her heart to respond to Paul's message.”* In some way, God made Lydia’s heart receptive to Paul’s message about God’s love. I wonder what was holding her back. Well, I have a wild guess. The story tells us she was a dealer in purple cloth. This gives me the impression she might have been a seamstress. I love to sew. I have lots of cloth, lots. Sewing is a good place for my imagination to go to work. But my sewing room is also a place where I get distracted because I have so much. Maybe Lydia’s heart was opened by closing the door to what distracted her, purple cloth. What do you hold on to so tightly you are afraid to let go?
- What would happen if you asked God to open your heart?

Prayer: Dear God, open my heart to your will and way. Clear the path for me to follow you without distraction. Make me ready in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Friday, 03/09/18

“The Table”

I Corinthians 11:23-26 (NIV)

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

- What are we to call this act of eating bread and drinking from the cup? Communion, Holy Communion, the Lord’s Supper? Eucharist is also used. Eucharist means gratitude. When we share the bread and juice, we are expressing our gratitude to God for God’s great love of us. We are affirming our faith that through God’s love, we receive peace, forgiveness and love. How does God affirm God’s love for you?
- Is it meaningful for you to participate in the Eucharist every week? Why or why not?

Prayer: Dear God, “Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine (cup). Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ ... By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world ... ” in the name of Jesus. Amen.