



▶ DAILY DEVOTIONAL.

Saturday/Sunday, 2/9-10/19

“American Idols: Church”

Ephesians 4:14-16 (NIV)

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

This week we learned that the church does not belong to us, but in fact belongs to Christ. The church is a gift for you and me. It's a place that makes the glory of God known to all the world. However, the church can get things wrong. It can seek to maintain itself rather than promote the teachings of Jesus. The devotions this week will focus on finding a richer meaning of the church so that we may be a church that actively pursues God's mission of redemption and restoration!

- Pastor Britton

Family Activity: Get your family together for a game that requires teamwork and communication. The object of the game is to show how everyone's role is important. Here's the setup.

Create a “maze” in a room of your home or apartment by setting up obstacles throughout. Make sure there is a clear start and end point. Blindfold one person whose task is to walk through the maze without touching the objects. Have another person talk to them, telling them where to take their steps. To make it easier, there can be someone who walks beside them or holds their hand. Take turns so everyone experiences being the guide and the person navigating the maze.

Upon completion of the game, talk about the importance of the people involved in the game. It requires both players to complete the task. This is what it's like to be part of a church. It takes us all working together and communicating with one another to reach the community around us and build the kingdom of God.

Monday, 2/11/19

“Common Purpose”

Romans 12:4-6 (CEB)

We have many parts in one body, but the parts don't all have the same function. In the same way, though there are many of us, we are one body in Christ, and individually we belong to each other. We have different gifts that are consistent with God's grace that has been given to us.

- Each of us has our own personality, our own wiring. We have a certain set of strengths and weaknesses. When we bring that into relationship with other people in the church, it can become an incredibly complex organization. Let's keep it simple for now. What gifts do you have that might be used to build God's kingdom alongside the church? Think of others in your family or in the church. What gifts do they have to offer God as part of the church?
- The passage speaks of one body with many parts. These parts don't have the same function, but they work together for the same purpose. What would it look like if a church came together and worked as one body, united in Christ? How would the community around that church change?

Prayer: God, You have called us to an incredible task, which is to be Your church. Each of us has our own unique gifts given by You. For that, we thank you. May You grant us the ability to use our own gifts while nurturing the gifts of those around us. It is for Your glory we build one another up. Amen.

Tuesday, 2/12/19

“Encourage with No Strings Attached”

Romans 12:8 (CEB)

If your gift is encouragement, devote yourself to encouraging. The one giving should do it with no strings attached.

- The scripture suggests encouragement is only a gift for some. I would argue that encouragement is something we can all give. Some encourage verbally. Others encourage with unspoken support. Some catch people when they fall. In what ways have those around you offered encouragement?
- The passage talks about giving encouragement with no strings attached. I wonder why the passage only states this about encouragement. Shouldn't we give any gift we have with no strings attached? How can giving with no strings attached apply to your work, family or within the church?

Prayer: God, let me be a person that sees the world through the lens of encouragement. Whenever I take criticism, may I see the positive ways I can grow. Whenever I see people living out your calling, may I encourage them to keep going. In doing so, I know you will use me to make a positive impact on the world. Amen.

Wednesday, 2/13/19

“Will the Church Survive?”

Colossians 1:18 (NLT)

Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead.

- Our culture promotes the idea that the church is no longer relevant. Many have predicted that the church will not be in existence in the future. This can be proven to a certain extent with many mainline churches experiencing a decline in participation. What are some ways the church remains relevant? What are some things the church does to make itself irrelevant?
- Not only has Christ existed since the beginning of time, Christ is the beginning. Christ has authority over all things and is the head of the church. If Christ is in charge, there is little doubt in my mind that the church will remain relevant. Will it look and feel different? Yes, but there is freedom in knowing that Christ will bring about the renewal of the church because Christ is the one in charge. We, as members of Christ's church, get to join in on that journey. Buckle up, it's going to be a great ride!

Prayer: Jesus, You are the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. You have existed from the beginning. You came to earth and showed us the way to live. You are the head of the church. We take our direction from you. Give us the courage and strength to follow You wherever You lead us because it's about Your glory, not our own. Amen.

Thursday, 2/14/19

“Think Outside the Box”

2 Chronicles 2:5-6 (NIV)

“The temple I am going to build will be great, because our God is greater than all other gods. But who is able to build a temple for him, since the heavens, even the highest heavens, cannot contain him? Who then am I to build a temple for him, except as a place to burn sacrifices before him?”

- The passage above is a quote from Solomon, the King of Israel. He is planning on building a grand temple for God, but he knows that God cannot be contained. Though we experience God in church, we must recognize that God exists in all things. Have you seen God today? If so where? If not, keep looking and come back to this question as you end your day.
- The church is a lot like the temple Solomon is building. Jesus Christ lives within each one of us. The church cannot be contained by a building, structure or gathering. When we move, the church moves. How can you have church wherever you are today?

Prayer: Lord, help me become more attuned to the way You exist in all things. Let me see You in the presence of others. Let me feel You as You dwell in my heart. Use me as part of your church no matter where I go. It is in Jesus' blessed name I pray. Amen.

Friday, 2/15/19

“The List”

Romans 16:1-10 (CEB)

I'm introducing our sister Phoebe to you, who is a servant of the church in Cenchreae. Welcome her in the Lord in a way that is worthy of God's people, and give her whatever she needs from you, because she herself has been a sponsor of many people, myself included. Say hello to Prisca and Aquila, my coworkers in Christ Jesus, who risked their own necks for my life. I'm not the only one who thanks God for them, but all the churches of the Gentiles do the same. Also say hello to the church that meets in their house. Say hello to Epaphroditus, my dear friend, who was the first convert in Asia for Christ. Say hello to Mary, who has worked very hard for you. Say hello to Andronicus and Junia, my relatives and my fellow prisoners. They are prominent among the apostles, and they were in Christ before me. Say hello to Ampliatus, my dear friend in the Lord. Say hello to Urbanus, our coworker in Christ, and my dear friend Stachys. Say hello to Apelles, who is tried and true in Christ. Say hello to the members of the household of Aristobulus.

- You may be thinking to yourself, “Why are we reading this list of people?”. It's because this list is the church. The church is made up of living, breathing, moving, thinking people. Without them, there is not church. Make a list of people who remind you of the church (hint: church can happen anywhere so your list can expand past Platte Woods UMC).
- I love verse three, which states that Prisca and Aquilla are “my coworkers in Christ.” That is how I view each and every one that attends Platte Woods UMC. That's how I view pastors and members that attend other churches. The witness of our church is only part of what happens in the Northland of Kansas City. We have many coworkers in Christ. I want to thank you for reading and praying along with me this week because you are my fellow coworker in Christ!

Prayer: God, we give You thanks for the church. It is a place where we come together to speak of your glory. We refocus our lives on what is most important. We learn from the amazing people around us. Thank You for the many coworkers in Christ that we get to see each and every day. Amen.

***This week's devotional was written by
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