

Friday: Faith Is the Foundation

Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

God Calls Us to Be His Faithful Workers

In spite of our sinful ways, God calls us to be his workers. Scripture tells us that Jesus did not pick people from society's elite when he chose his workers. Jesus' disciples were peasants, fishermen, and even a tax collector. Paul wrote, *"Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things . . ."* (1 Corinthians 1:26-28). The majority of God's work was done and continues to be done by the lowly and oppressed people.

Certainly, God can use celebrities and very successful people in his work. However, we need to remember that, even though we may not have accomplished anything of worldly significance, broken any records, or won any awards, God can use and transform us into effective workers in his Kingdom. With faith as our foundation, we *"can do everything through him who gives [us] strength"* (Philippians 4:13). Society gives many accolades to those who succeed, but there is no greater honor or privilege than to be chosen as God's vehicle to spread the Gospel. As John states in his Gospel, it is Jesus who does the choosing. *"You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit"* (John 15:16).

So why does God elevate the foolish and the lowly to be his workers? A reason may be found in 1 Corinthians 1:29: *"so that no one may boast before him."* It is only by God's grace that we are saved, called, and equipped to be in his service. If we come into God's work with impressive credentials, we risk taking the glory and credit for ourselves. God desires the weak and the lowly. As Paul said, *"Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me . . . For when I am weak, then I am strong"* (2 Corinthians 12:9-10). God uses ordinary people to do extra-ordinary things. Are you ready for duty?

Prayer: Lord, thank you for choosing us to be your hands, feet, and mouths to the world. Help us always to depend on you. **Amen.**



Wednesday: Discipleship Is the Path

Read Matthew 5:14-16

Living a Life of Light

Can people see God's light through you? Actions, words, and lifestyle can be visible indicators of God's presence within one's life. Our character, compassion, • gratitude, humility, perseverance, and faith will reflect God's light when he is glorified and honored above all things. Within each of us are lights that can show others God's glory and majesty, and we are to let that light shine. Our light may seem to us like a twinkling candle in a dark world, but God will use it and magnify it.

St. Peter said, *"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light"* (1 Peter 2:9). It is our purpose that our lives reflect our Redeemer in the midst of an unbelieving world. By word, deed, and actions, we are to acquaint those around us with the wonders of his love and the redeeming power of his death upon the cross.

When Christ is within us we are dead to sin, but our spirit is alive because of righteousness. With Christ, we live confidently *"know[ing] that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose"* (Romans 8:28).

"If we walk in the light, as he is in the light . . . the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). We are not to walk in the light of our own conscience but in God's light. When we walk in the light, things that are of darkness will hold no attraction for us.

Through Christ, we can live lives of light that don't flicker, fade, or glow dimly but with light that radiates bright intensity. The Lord, who is the light of the world, brings life and light to us all. In fervent gratitude, we are to hold up his light.

Prayer: Lord, you provide light in a dark world. Through your light, we see our need for you as our Savior. Help us to reflect your light among those around us. In Christ's name we pray. **Amen.**

Saturday: Generosity Is the Hallmark

Read Luke 21:1-4

Giving Transforms Life

Jesus said, *“It is more blessed to give than to receive”* (Acts 20:35). Putting these words into practice, we experience the truth of Jesus’ statement. In order to help us understand the blessings that come from giving, we can use the illustration of two bodies of water in the Holy Land.

The northern body of water is the Sea of Galilee. This large lake receives water from the melting snow of Mount Hermon to the north. Water flows out of the lake through the Jordan River to the Dead Sea in the south. Around the Sea of Galilee and within the sea is abundant life. On its banks are little towns and beautiful vegetation. The water is full of life with schools of fish swimming in its waters. In contrast, the Dead Sea is as dead as its name implies. Nothing lives in it, and nothing lives around it. Its waters are stagnant.

The contrast in these two bodies of water points out how giving can transform our lives. The difference is that water flows into the Sea of Galilee and out of it down the Jordan River. It lives because it gives. In contrast, the Dead Sea only takes water in. There are no outlets leaving the Dead Sea. It simply takes without giving. By only receiving and not giving, the water is never refreshed and life is destroyed.

Through our giving we are either like the Sea of Galilee or the Dead Sea. Do we look for ways to share God’s blessings with our church and others so as to resemble the Sea of Galilee, or do we hoard all that we can or, at best, give God some leftovers, which causes us to be similar to the Dead Sea?

By the grace of God, we can give and be transformed. Giving enables us to experience joy and live fulfilling lives. Through the working of the Holy Spirit, God can remove our attitudes of greed and covetousness. We can become the giving and generous people that he wants us to be.

Prayer: Lord, you are the owner of all the animals in the forest and the cattle on a thousand hills. Enable us to be generous and joy-filled givers who give you all praise and honor. Thank you for your grace that makes our living and giving possible. **Amen.**