

An Invitation

As we prepare to meet together and discern God's leading in our lives, it is good to pray and allow the Holy Spirit to speak to us through the Word. For this reason, I am inviting all of you to participate in the following meditation guide. There is nothing overly impressive or particularly profound about this. It is simply a tool for preparing to seek God's will. Hopefully, the practice of these scripture meditations will provide a good spiritual foundation for our work together in the two congregational forums.

Suggestions for Daily Reflections

While guiding comments and questions are provided, please understand that you are quite free to follow any direction that seems best. Whatever approach that you use for meditation on these scriptures is fine. Many find it helpful to keep a daily journal in which thoughts and feelings from the reflection time are written down. This need not be very extensive, for even a few minutes of journaling can be very helpful in clarifying the insights and questions that come to us while meditating on God's Word. Generally, fifteen to twenty minutes should be enough time for doing each devotional exercise, but be sure to take the time that seems right for you.

Another suggestion is to form a group of three to four persons who agree to meet together for discussing and sharing results of their devotional times. A meeting at the end of each week should be sufficient. Also, it can be very helpful for the group members to pray specifically for one another during this time, not only about doing the scripture meditations, but regarding other needs as well.

Allow these meditations to be gifts of God for you. They are simple, and as we do them together the Holy Spirit can bring us into a deeper sense of God's direction for our lives. Be careful not to bunch up several meditations in one day. If you miss one, skip it and continue on to the next one. The key is the daily discipline of receiving God's grace rather than the laborious duty of meeting a deadline. We need to keep a humble perspective that allows us to relax in God's grace rather than pressuring ourselves to make things work by our own efforts. This healthy kind of humility is reflected in an ancient Celtic prayer.

Dear God,
So far today
I've done all right.
I haven't gossiped,
lost my temper,
been greedy or grumpy,
been nasty,
selfish or overindulgent.
I'm very thankful for that.
But in a few minutes, God,
I'm going to get out of bed.
And from then on,
I'm probably going to need a lot more help.
Amen.

DAY ONE: Monday, May 23, 2005. [Psalm 1:1-6](#)

This Psalm introduces the great themes of all the Psalms. It does this by contrasting the way of God with all other ways. Only the person who delights in God's way is "blessed." What do you delight in? Is it in line with what God wants in your life, or are your "delights" outside of God's will? Do you sense God's favor and blessing in your life? Why or why not?

DAY TWO: Tuesday, May 24, 2005. [Genesis 1:1-5](#)

In the raging darkness, God is present, moving, and acting. Like a great wind of life, God is forming something new and wonderful out of the confusion and chaos. Then, with the Word, God illumines the new world with light, the prelude to all life. Where do you sense the wind of God moving in your life? Where is the Word of God bringing light into your world?

DAY THREE: Wednesday, May 25, 2005. [Genesis 2:4-7](#)

Like an inspired artist pouring love and labor into a masterpiece, God sculpts a human body out of the earth. Then, in the ultimate of all creative acts, the very life of God is "breathed" into this clay form, making us into living beings! As you visualize this scene, where do you sense in your own life that God is working, sculpting you and breathing new life into you? Is this painful or joyful? Where is this happening in Hus Church?

DAY FOUR: Thursday, May 26, 2005. [Exodus 3:1-6](#)

God encounters us on God's own terms, not ours. This is not at our convenience or in ways we would necessarily plan. Like Moses, we are all at one time or another led to the "far side of the wilderness." Have you ever encountered God in this fashion? If so, what did God say to you in this meeting? If not, then where and how have you encountered the living reality of God in you life?

DAY FIVE: Friday, May 27, 2005. [Numbers 14:1-24](#)

In a fit of fear, the Israelites want to find a new leader who will lead them back to Egypt. The land God has promised them is too dangerous and difficult, at least as far as they can see. Have you ever been frightened by what God wants you to do? Has it ever seemed as though God was asking more of you than you could give? Did you allow your fears to keep God's blessing from you, or did you proceed on trusting God for whatever would happen?

Despite their disobedience to God, Moses asks God to be patient and forgiving toward the people. Does anyone intercede for you in prayer? Who helps you deal with your fears?

DAY SIX: Saturday, May 28, 2005. [Psalm 23:1-6](#)

This is perhaps the most familiar passage in all the Bible. Yet, do we really know what it is saying? How is Yahweh your shepherd? Have you ever found yourself in a "valley of the shadow of death?" What was that like, and how were you comforted? In your life experience, do you find this scripture easy or difficult to believe?

DAY SEVEN: Sunday, May 29, 2005. [Psalm 46:1-11](#)

This Psalm is filled with imagery that expresses how God protects us and gives us strength. Which image speaks the most to you? What does the Psalmist suggest we do before we are to be "still?"

DAY EIGHT: Monday, May 30, 2005. [Isaiah 55:1-5](#)

This is one of the most picturesque expressions of God's grace in all of the Bible. St. John Chrysostom declared this passage to be describing the reality of worship, where we gather together at the great feast prepared for us through Christ's death and resurrection. Do you experience this mood in worship at Hus? If so, list some of these experiences. If not, what is keeping you from this "feast?"

DAY NINE: Tuesday, May 31, 2005. [Jeremiah 7:1-11](#)

The people of Jeremiah's place and time have made their faith so based on tradition that they think all there is to religion is just doing the rituals of worship. Here the prophet describes the people's faith as "trusting in deceptive words" while they live in ways that are self-centered and neglectful of those in need. Are there ways that people today think of their church life as just a religious duty to fill, while they live the rest of their lives according to their own desires? Could this be why the modern day church in the United States is becoming increasingly irrelevant to society? Is your faith a traditional duty, or is it the passion that drives your whole life?

DAY TEN: Wednesday, June 1, 2005. [Matthew 2:1-12](#)

Those who knew the Scriptures failed to notice the presence of the Messiah in their midst. On the other hand, some persons of very dubious ideas about God and who were from outside the proper religious circles could clearly perceive the birth of the Messiah. In their case, they were willing to leave all and travel far to have even a chance to find him. Are we more like the Magi or Herod and his advisors when it comes to seeing and seeking Jesus? Are we, like the Magi, astounded by the Truth of God and willing to risk everything to know Jesus? Or are we like Herod, more concerned about keeping things safely under our own control and working smoothly for ourselves than opening up to God?

There is no stopping place in this life
--- no, nor was there ever one for any man,
no matter how far along his way he'd gone.
This above all, then,
Be ready at all times for gifts of God
And always for new ones!
- Meister Eckhart

DAY ELEVEN: Thursday, June 2, 2005. [Mark 2:1-12](#)

Jesus surprises not only the Pharisees, but us as well, when he forgives the paralytic man's sins. The Pharisees question the authority that Jesus claims to have to forgive sins, while Protestants question Jesus forgiving the man's sins in response to the faith of his friends. This act challenges the Pharisees' entire view of God, while contradicting the Protestant tendency to make faith a private matter between an individual and God. What is Mark telling us here about the nature of faith? What does this mean for our understanding of the nature of the church? Have you ever been "carried" to Jesus by friends when you were too "paralyzed" to go on your own?

DAY TWELVE: Friday, June 3, 2005. [John 7:37-39](#)

Jesus made this statement near the end of the Festival of Tents. At this time, ceremonies would be performed recalling God's provision of water during the journey through the desert after Israel's deliverance from Egypt. In effect, Jesus is claiming the role of God, the One who provides for the people of God. However, Jesus dramatically goes a step further by declaring that anyone who has their "thirst" quenched by Jesus will also provide refreshment for others who "thirst." God's life will flow "out of the believer's heart" like "rivers of living water." Do you sense the Spirit of God in your heart? Does God's spirit flow from you, refreshing the lives of others? How so, or why not?

DAY THIRTEEN: Saturday, June 4, 2005. [Psalm 66:1-20](#)

Much of the Bible is about stories of God's showing love in actions. Here the Psalmist praises God for great acts of deliverance and love. These are things that can be seen by every one. Do you have stories of deliverance and love in your life? Are these clearly seen by those who know you? Write your own personal Psalm recounting your own stories about God.

DAY FOURTEEN: Sunday, June 5, 2005. [Psalm 119:57-72](#)

The writer of this Psalm is deeply in love with God. This love is expressed through a "delight" in doing what God wants. Do we have this kind of "delight?" Are our hearts filled with love to the point that obedience to God is the goal and passion of our lives? The Psalmist goes on to say that those who do not focus their lives on God and doing God's will are characterized by "callous and unfeeling" hearts. What kind of heart do you have? Is your heart responsive to God, or is it difficult for you to determine what your heart "feels?"

DAY FIFTEEN: Monday, June 6, 2004. [John 12:20-26](#)

How does the church of Jesus Christ grow? Jesus makes it clear that the life of the church is rooted in his sacrifice and death. Does this have any implications for how we are to make our own congregation "come alive?" Many biblical commentators call these verses a "missionary passage." What do you find here to support this observation? According to this passage, what does it mean to be a follower of Jesus? Is the congregation of Hus Church willing to expand its resources (to die to itself) in order to reach those who are "outside" and who have yet to meet Christ?

DAY SIXTEEN: Tuesday, June 7, 2005. [Romans 6:1-14](#)

Paul is dealing with the nature of how a Christian actually lives in the here and now real world. But the basis of how we live is not according to this world, but according to our relationship with Jesus. Paul uses the imagery of baptism to make this point. According to Paul, what happens in baptism that makes us able to live according to God's ways? Is our relationship with Christ purely private and spiritual, or does it have anything to do with how we act and live in the church and in the world?

DAY SEVENTEEN: Wednesday, June 8, 2005. [I Peter 5:1-11](#)

Peter is emphasizing the importance of leadership and discipline in the church. These have always been matters of much controversy among Christians. Yet, it is clear that without the proper practice of accountability there cannot be a shared life in the Holy Spirit. How do we make sure that leadership and discipline bring freedom and life rather than legalism and death? Dr. Thomas Gillespie of Princeton Seminary has said that the Presbyterian Church (USA) is in such dire straits today because we no longer practice discipline! What do you think? What would "good" discipline look like?

DAY EIGHTEEN: Thursday, June 9, 2005. [Revelation 2:17](#)

The imagery here is captivating even if a bit mysterious. It seems to indicate an incredibly personal gift to us by God, a gift so unique and special that it literally gives us a whole new understanding of who we are. Where in your life now do you feel gifted by God? Does your relationship with God through Christ give you a sense of being special and unique? What name might God write on your "white stone?"

DAY NINETEEN: Friday, June 10, 2005. [Revelation 22:1-5](#)

In picturesque language that recalls the imagery of Psalm 46, John gives us a grand painting of life in God's presence. John's vision helps us to see the sure victory of God over all opposition to God's purposes. This particular passage reveals what life is like where God's reign is complete. Does such a sure hope enable you to experience any of this reign in your present life? Is so, how? Is any of this reality found in Hus Church today?

DAY TWENTY: Saturday, June 11, 2005. [Psalm 146:1-10](#)

What part of this Psalm best describes your reason for worshipping God? Is your reason affirmed and experienced in the worship of Hus Church? Why or why not?

DAY TWENTYONE: Sunday, June 12, 2004. [Psalm 150:1-6](#)

As the Psalms began with six verses presenting the two paths we are to choose from, the Psalms end with six verses emphasizing the end result of walking in the right path, the one of loving obedience to a gracious God. The end result is praise, praise, and more praise! Is your path one that leads to the praise of God?

Blessings of God's Presence
(Written by Bishop Neil Jones)

*May God protect you in the valleys.
May Christ hold your hand on the path.
May the Holy Spirit strengthen you on the way:
In the sun,
In the dark,
When you are happy,
When you are sad.
May you know that God is always
Circling you around with love;
Protecting you,
Loving you.
May you be blessed in knowing this
Now,
Today,
Tonight,
Tomorrow,
All your days.
Amen.*