

In daily life - towards imitation

Here's a story or testimony to flesh this out...Prayer is first of all listening to God. It's openness. God is always speaking; he's always doing something. Prayer is to enter into that activity. ... Convert your thoughts into prayer. As we are involved in unceasing thinking, so we are called to unceasing prayer. The difference is not that prayer is thinking about other things, but that prayer is thinking in dialogue, ... a conversation with God. Henri Nouwen.

STUDY QUESTIONS – EXPLORING THE INFORMATION (ABOUT 30 MINUTES)

Study Questions based on John 10

What promises are there for the believer about hearing God?
What does this passage show about God's commitment to you?
How important was it for Jesus to listen to God? How do you think He went about it?
Are you more Mary or Martha? Why? What do you think God is saying to you about that?

Living it out

In what ways do you find it easiest to "sit at the feet of Jesus"?
What one thing could you do this week to enable this to happen a bit more in your life?

Prayer suggestion:

Use these Scriptures as a starting point: You are my friend. (John 15: 15) I made you only a little less than the angels, and crowned you with glory and honour. (Ps 8: 5) I am your shepherd, you shall not want. (Ps 23) I have loved you with an everlasting love, and therefore I am constant in my affection for you. (Jeremiah 31: 3.) I am silently planning for you in love. (Zephaniah 3:17) Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by your name, you are mine. Should you pass through the sea, I will be with you; or through rivers, they will not swallow you up. Should you walk through fire, you will not be scorched and the flames will not burn you. For I am Yahweh, your God, the Holy one of Israel, your saviour. You are precious in my eyes, you are honoured and I love you. (Isaiah 43: 1-4.)

Joining a group and other resources:

We encourage everyone to join a group if possible. We have daytime or evening groups and youth cells. If you would like to know more, please visit our website, or contact Guy on 01423 504160. There are many great resources to help you pray and enjoy the Scriptures on a daily basis.

www.pray-as-you-go.org A 12 minute guided prayer and meditation to listen to.

<https://www.wordlive.org> Many excellent daily reading approaches, available as an app.

<http://www.sacredspace.ie/> A short guided prayer and meditation to read.

Or download the app from Soul Survivor, with short daily videos: <http://bible.soulsurvivor.com/>

www.smcn.org.uk

INSPIRE

Everywhere...in everything



Weekly discipleship and spiritual growth resources for all ages, groups and individuals. Follow up material on Sunday's teaching for groups and individuals.

Week beginning: 16th November 2014.

GROWING AT HOME

Three suggested discipleship activities suitable for all ages to help you grow, based on up - to God; in - to each other; out - to mission

Up Mary sat at Jesus' feet and listened to all he said. (Luke 10: 38-42) Sitting at his feet showed that Mary wanted to learn from Jesus, and to be like him. Who is your role model? Who do you want to learn from and imitate? Talk about this together at a mealtime this week.

In Read this prayer together before bedtime, and use it to pray for people you know in the church community who are sick or in need.

'Watch, O Lord, with those who wake, or watch, or weep tonight, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend your sick ones, O Lord Christ. Rest your weary ones. Bless your dying ones. Soothe your suffering ones. Pity your afflicted ones. Shield your joyous ones. And for all your love's sake. Amen.' (St. Augustine)

Out For just £5 this month at church you can buy a copy of the "Engage with God Advent Family Creative Journal" Why not work through Advent together as a family using this brilliant resource once a week round the table? It helps us engage with the world around us and bless our local community too.

DAILY READINGS AND PRAYERS.

These daily readings are the same as the ones used in church every morning from 9 – 9.30. Feel free to join us, or use them at home. Read one or both of the readings asking yourself, "What is God saying to me, personally?" and, "How can I respond today?" If you are pressed for time there is a focus verse from the passages. Try reading the verse slowly, three or four times, allowing God to shape your heart and mind through His word. You can use these together with our daily prayer diary from the monthly newsheet.

Monday 17th November

Readings: Psalm 46, Revelation 10. Focus verse: 5 Then the angel I had seen standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven. 6 And he swore by him who lives for ever and ever, who created the heavens and all that is in them, the earth and all that is in it, and the sea and all that is in it, and said, 'There will be no more delay! 7 But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets.'

Tuesday 18th November.

Readings: Psalm 48, Revelation 11:1-14. Focus verse: 11 But after the three and a half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and terror struck those who saw them. 12 Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, 'Come up here.' And they went up to heaven in a cloud, while their enemies looked on.

Wednesday 19th November.

Readings: Psalm 56, Revelation 11: 15-end. Focus verse: 15 The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever.'

Thursday 20th November.

Readings: Psalm 61, Revelation 12 Focus verse: 7 Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. 8 But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. 9 The great dragon was hurled down – that ancient snake called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

Friday 21st November

Readings: Psalm 63, Revelation 13:1-10. Focus verse: This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of God's people.

Saturday 22nd November

Readings: Psalm 78:1-39, Revelation 13:11-end. Focus verse: 1 Then I saw a second beast, coming out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb, but it spoke like a dragon. ...14 Because of the signs it was given power to perform on behalf of the first beast, it deceived the inhabitants of the earth.

SUNDAY'S TEACHING: RESOURCES FOR GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS.

First thoughts:

When was the last time you really rested in the Lord?

This week's teaching in a nutshell:

The one main thing. Psalm 27; Luke 10: 38-42

Martha is commended in the story for welcoming Jesus, offering hospitality and having a very honest relationship with Jesus. Jesus repeats her name as term of endearment, not as a rebuke...while Mary takes the role of an early Christian feminist, sitting with the men and listening to Jesus....

Sometimes this is portrayed as are "You are either a Mary or a Martha" story. Two types, both important to Jesus. But in this story there are not two options: the Mary way is better. 'Martha, Martha,' the Lord answered, 'you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed – or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better (or the better *meal*), and it will not be taken away from her.' Jesus is saying the best meal is already being served.

We live in a consumer culture. The whole thing runs on dissatisfaction. The market does not exist to create satisfied customers. Business depends on customers being satisfied enough to appreciate the product, but not satisfied enough to stop with just one purchase. A truly satisfied customer would never return to the shop. We can feel like rats on a treadmill, trying to keep up.

But this is not how God envisaged life. There is a better way. Sitting with Jesus.

We are conditioned to a Martha mindset. Life is of course full of a lot of things we all have to do. In Luke 10 Jesus has sent disciples out to do things, and the parable of the Good Samaritan is about doing. But the question is: where is your doing springing from? Jesus is telling us when all is said and done there is one thing – the main determiner. God redeemed you because He wants to be with you. You do life better if you have a centre. Jesus came for you. There is stuff to do, we all have all role. There is a lot of doing. But he didn't "marry" you because you are going to be good at serving. Those are the outcome.

So how do you receive? How do you sit, in intimacy and obedience? Teaching? Silence? Prayer? Creative? Being with others? Space?