

**Walking in Christ's Light
Daily Prayer Journal
December 15-20, 2008**

*Growing our souls is a partnership with Christ.
To enable your soul's growth, use this material with Christ as your guide.*

Next Week's Sermon

Scripture: II Samuel 7:1-11 and Luke 1:46-55

(www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=11+samuel+7:1-11)

(www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=luke+1:46-55)

Theme: Our God is a God of surprises

Sermon: "The Upside Down Christmas"

Question: How do I respond to surprises?

MONDAY 12-15-08

Read: Luke 1:46-55(www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=luke+1:46-55)

Prayer: Mysterious and All Loving God, I praise You with my whole being. I praise You for the joy You bring to me in all of my life, even in the midst of pain. I praise You for the peace You bring even in the most difficult of circumstances. I praise You for the wisdom You are giving me as I live through trying times. I praise You for the hope that overcomes all fear that is with me each day! I praise You, Gracious and Loving God, with all my heart, mind, soul, and being! Amen.

Journal Reflection: Mary praised God for her opportunity to share God's love with the world. The rejection, the shame, and perhaps the persecution were nothing compared with her opportunity to share God's love with the world. Remembering God's big picture helped Mary! Trusting God to take care of her no matter what enable Mary to respond with love to this very dangerous undertaking. Let your mind follow Mary's lead today. Remember the mysterious power of God is at work within you all the time. You are a Heaven bound pilgrim invited to share God's love! Wow! Share it!!

Resolve: I will celebrate God's great salvation plan for the world today!

TUESDAY 12-16-08

Read: Psalm 89:1-4,19-26 (www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=psalm+89:1-4; 16-26)

Prayer: Thank You, God, for providing me with life each day so that I might sing of Your great faithfulness. I admit that I am not always faithful to You. I am ashamed at times by my wandering heart and mind. I find myself going through an entire day without ever thanking You for being with me. Yet, Lord, You are faithful. You are beside me all the way. Thank You for your faithfulness! Amen.

Journal Reflection: The Psalmist sings of God's faithfulness throughout all generations. During this day give yourself permission to observe and celebrate all the ways God is faithful to you and to your family. (Include more than your generation) Look for the positive, life-giving gifts you have received. Observe that God blesses even your "odd relations" in numerous ways. Celebrate God's faithfulness in some concrete action today. Write a note, make a call, or send an email to someone who has been an instrument of God's blessing for you.

Resolve: I will spend today giving thanks to God for God's faithfulness!

WEDNESDAY 12-17-08

Read: Romans 16:25-27 (www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=romans+16:25-27)

Prayer: Jesus Christ, Lord of my Life, I pray for strength today. There are days that I feel weak and useless. I wonder if anything matters. I wonder if evil really will win. Strengthen me today, Lord. Give me the courage to live Your truth for another day. Amen.

Journal Reflection: The Apostle Paul blesses the Roman church with this Scripture passage. It is a benediction. Paul knows they need Christ's strength if they are to remain faithful followers of "Christ's Way" to God. The difficulties of life were increasing for them. The government was getting ready to persecute them! They needed a blessing. Take a personal inventory of your weak areas. Where is it that you need Christ's strength? Let today be the day you open up your weaknesses to Christ's power. Receive Christ's blessing today!

Resolve: I am will allow Christ to strengthen me in my inner being.

THURSDAY 12-18-08

Read: II Samuel 7:1-11, 16 (www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=11+samuel+7:1-11;16)

Prayer: Holy Spirit, I am encouraged by Your faithfulness to King David. I remember what a low life he was at times. The self-righteous part of me cannot imagine You continuing to love him after his participating in murder and adultery. King David was so unfaithful! Yet, You remained faithful! Jesus was born into the family of King David as You promised. Thank You that Your faithfulness does not depend upon mine. Thank You for forgiving me as You forgave King David. Amen.

Journal Reflection: King David was a blessed and forgiven sinner. After all, King David had some whopping big sins! So you can take heart! God forgives! God's grace is real. Jesus demonstrated the power of God's forgiveness through His genetic makeup. Jesus was born into King David's family. Salvation came to earth as God promised to David—through the "house and lineage of David!" God keeps God's promises even when we do not. God forgives you even the most awful of sins! Today you can receive forgiveness from God and celebrate a clean slate with God. Today you can reach out and forgive others, even as God has forgiven you. After all, no one is perfect. No one is able to reach God's standards of living. Everyone falls short of the integrity God expects. So, celebrate today God's gift of forgiveness!

Resolve: I will accept God's forgiveness and let go of my self reproach!

FRIDAY 12-19-08

Read: Luke 1:26-38 (www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=luke+1:26-38)

Prayer: God of Heaven and Earth, Father of all life within this universe, I turn to You this day with joy in my heart and soul. Your love knows no boundaries. Your love cannot be stopped by anything. Your love will win out over death! Your love will victoriously defeat evil. Your love is the very essence of the universe. I celebrate Your love made real to all human beings through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Journal Reflection: Mary's courage is incredible. And, God's mysterious love is unfathomable. Imagine, God coming to earth so that we can know who God is. Imagine God being so in love with you that God was willing to take on the confining form of a human baby. Imagine God's great love! Imagine the God's moving through time and space in order for you to be forgiven and restored to life eternal. Let your imagination range throughout the universe and be aware that God's love is greater than anything you can imagine!

Resolve: I celebrate the mysterious, awesome love of God today.

SATURDAY 12-20-08

Read: Luke 2 (www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=luke+2)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, because I cannot come to You, You came to me. Because I cannot make my home with God, You came to make Your home with me. This day is filled with joy because my hope is fulfilled through Your gift of "no strings attached" love for me. Thank You for becoming flesh and living among us. Thank You, Lord Jesus, for the gift of Yourself to the world and to me. Amen.

Journal Reflection: Take some time today and ponder what it would mean to you if Christmas did not exist. If Christ had not come. If no angels had sung. If no shepherds had run to the manger. If no wise men traveled from the East. What would your life be like if no Christ child were born? Look at this reality with sharp and clear eyes. It is easy to just take things for granted. What if Christmas had not occurred? What if no hope, no joy, and no peace had every been proclaimed! What an ugly world! Now give thanks that Jesus did come and God's great saving love is available to you and all your family through Him! Celebrate that God's peace and joy is available to you right now through the gift of Christ Jesus at Christmas.

Resolve: Thank You, God, for the gift of Christmas!