

Community of Grace

Daily Walk for the week of August 10, 2020

Psalm 85:10...Trust

Written by Vicar Jamie Witt

Monday, August 10, 2020

Trust in Presence

“Those of steadfast mind you keep in peace—in peace because they trust in you. Trust in the LORD forever, for in the LORD GOD you have an everlasting rock.” Isaiah 26:3-4.

When righteousness and peace come together in a place of perfect lovingkindness there is harmony. In the middle of that place is trust in God who holds everything together in perfect grace and love. When we trust in God, we are joined with a strength that outlasts our own—it is everlasting. When we doubt, when we fear, when we think we are not enough, God is there lifting us up and reminding us that we can free ourselves from doubt, not to be afraid, and that we are more than enough. There is peace in the acceptance of God’s love and that reception compels us to share it with others. Trust in God’s presence and everlasting strength as you journey forward. Prayer: “Everlasting and loving God, thank You for Your constant presence with me providing strength when I feel weak. May I remember to trust in Your strength as I journey on in this difficult year. Amen.”

Tuesday, August 11, 2020

Trust in the Holy Spirit

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Romans 15:13. When we believe in the promises and love of God, we are trusting God completely. When we do that joy, peace, and hope abound. As baptized children of God we have been gifted with the Holy Spirit ever present in us and guiding us. In the difficult days we live in now we need to hold on to the Spirit, and

the hope that the Spirit brings. We need to remember our identity during this Pentecost as people led by the Spirit. Trust the Spirit to guide you in radical love of neighbor as we work toward keeping each other safe. Open yourselves to the work of the Spirit as we explore ways to bring about justice in our nation. During changes in our world we are never alone in navigating them. Our choices and actions are constantly guided by the Holy Spirit, we just need to be open to listening and responding. Prayer: “Holy Spirit, lead me and guide me. When I’m conflicted about what to do remind me to choose love. Empower me to make choices that show love and support justice always. Amen.”

Psalm 85:10...Welcome

Written by Mary Anderson

Wednesday, August 12th

God's Love For All Nations

“May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, that your way may be known upon earth, your saving power among all the nations. Let all the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.” Psalm 67:1-3. This psalm begins with a blessing which is similar to the priestly blessing in Numbers 6 and used at the end of many Christian worship services. The song refrain calls for all people throughout the earth to praise God. Our worship services should be open to all people and I feel ours are and even in the pandemic requiring online worship since March, all are welcome there as well. We see members and others joining in worship from their homes in other parts of Georgia or other states. God has blessed me and all of us and he would like us to share those blessings with others in new ways. I look forward to the day when we can gather in person once again but

until then, we can still worship God by joining online church worship and other activities, study our Bibles and God's word, share our faith with others and pray for one another. God hasn't left us during this time and He is in control. Let us praise God and care for others with our whole lives. **Prayer:** God of all nations, whose care spans not just the globe but the entire cosmos, we thank you for keeping us all in the tenderness of your love. May we spread your equitable care far and wide. Amen

Thursday, August 13th

God's Blessings

"The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, has blessed us. May God continue to bless us; let all the ends of the earth revere him." Psalm 67:6-7. God's blessings are not just in the past as written in this Psalm of David, but they continue in the fruit of creation and ongoing provisions for the people. God blesses us richly every day of our lives even in the midst of this pandemic. He has blessed me with a family that brought me to church at a young age, encouraged me to grow my faith by attending Sunday school, confirmation and Luther League. When I look back over my life, I can see God's blessings even in the hard times. He provided for my needs just as he has yours and will continue to do that if we keep him in our heart and let His Spirit guide us in all we do and say. God only asks that we respect and love him and welcome others we know or meet to know him too. **Prayer:** God of both storm and calm, thank you for being by our side through all things. We thank you for all your blessings, ask that you help us to focus on you even in difficult times and to share our faith with others. In Jesus name we pray. Amen

Friday, August 14th

Do What Is Right

"Thus says the Lord: Maintain justice, and do

what is right, for soon my salvation will come, and my deliverance be revealed. Happy is the mortal who does this, the one who holds it fast, who keeps the sabbath, not profaning it, and refrains from doing any evil." Isaiah 56:1-2. This chapter begins Third Isaiah and tells us God extends his covenant to all who are just and do what is right. We who keep his sabbath and refrain from evil will be happy. God asks that we trust him and keep his Sabbath day, a day of worship and rest just as he rested on the seventh day of creation. We know we are saved because Jesus died on the cross so all of our sins would be forgiven. We also know that we sometimes "mess up", not doing what God calls us to do by loving our neighbor and welcoming all into our lives. God reassures us that if we strive to be just and do what is right, asking his forgiveness when we fail him, our salvation will come when Christ comes again to deliver us to our heavenly home. We need to remember these words even when life gets hard. **Prayer:** Merciful God, whose hope outshines even the power and finality of death, we thank you for providing a way out of dangers. May we cling to your mercy always, especially in the face of judgment. Amen

Saturday, August 15th

A House of Prayer for All

"And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be his servants, all who keep the sabbath, and do not profane it, and hold fast my covenant—these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." Isaiah 56:6-7. The prophet Isaiah goes on to say that not just Jews but foreigners who love God and follow his com-

mandments and Word will also be invited into his house of prayer. I'm reminded of the song, "All Are Welcome" and find encouragement that I and all who believe in Jesus and follow him are welcome into his house forever. We all like to feel welcome and reaching out to visitors to our church is one way we do that well. When I was new in the community I live in (retiring with my husband here from Minnesota) and ventured up to the pool for the first time, I was nervous and shy about talking to a group of 5 or 6 women who were already in the water and talking to each other. But Lannette left the group, came up to me after I got in the pool and welcomed me. Once we started talking, I felt like I'd always known her and felt at home again in my new community. As many of you know, she invited me to church and Community of Grace became my new church home. Let us all reach out to others around us and make them feel welcome, sharing our faith and church home (wearing a mask, of course) and include them in God's house of prayer. While we social distance and protect ourselves and others wearing masks when outside our homes, we can still offer prayers to others and call or reach out in other ways to those in need. **Prayer:** God of all, as we encounter people who are from different places, from different religions, and from different backgrounds, guide us to be gentle and filled with love. Help us to recognize you in others no matter our differences and welcome them into our lives. Amen

Sunday, August 16th

That Which Defiles

"Then he called the crowd to him and said to them, 'Listen and understand: it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles...But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles.

For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander.'" Matthew 15:10-11, 18-19. The tradition of the Jewish elders included interpretations of the law and rules not directly stated in the law in Israel's scriptures. Speaking to the crowd, Jesus shifts the subject to what defiles a person or makes them ritually unclean. It is not what we eat, but what comes out of our mouths, which comes from our hearts, the center of our will and actions. Jesus went on to explain to the disciples what some of those actions are in verse 19. If we even have evil thoughts in our hearts like murder, adultery, theft, we are sinning against God whether we carry them out or not. It is hard not to have an "evil" comeback when someone says something that hurts us or even acts on their evil desires. We need to fill our hearts with the fruits of the Spirit as written in Galatians 5:22—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. How much better our world would be if we all followed Christ's teachings and guarded our hearts so we don't defile God and others. **Prayer:** God of all wisdom, keep us humble in the face of things that are difficult for us. Give us confidence in your guidance as we struggle with evil thoughts and deeds. Help us to come to you with clean hearts so we can be an example to others. Amen