

Devotions for the Week of July 7, 2019
LARGE-PRINT
North East United Methodist Church
By Rev. Dr. Drew M. Christian

Sunday, July 7, 2019

Read 2 Chronicles 7:14.

This past week, we celebrated the 4th of July. It is a day we celebrate our freedom, we remember in our prayers our troops who are fighting for that freedom, and we ask God to bring healing to our land.

Fifty-six men signed the Declaration of Independence. Their conviction resulted in untold sufferings for themselves and their families. Of the 56 men, five were captured by the British and tortured before they died. Twelve had their homes ransacked and burned. Two lost their sons in the Revolutionary Army. Another had two sons captured. Nine of the fifty-six fought and died from wounds or hardships of the war. These men were willing to “stand up” for what they believed in...to lose everything for what God was “calling” them to do.

Every day people die for freedom...every day people die for faith in Jesus Christ...and every day our country seems to grow farther and farther away from the Christian principles that it was founded upon.

Take time today to pray for those who fight for our freedom. Take time today to pray for those who die (165,000 every year) for professing Christ, to pray for those countries where there is no freedom to worship. Take time today to pray for our country, that our land and the family may be healed, that Christian values may once again be incorporated

into our schools and society, that Christians may continue to freely share their faith, and that “In God We Trust” will be more than a “catch phrase” printed on our money.

Lift up our country, but not only our country. Lift up our entire world to the God who created it all.

Monday, July 8, 2019

Read Romans 8:29-30.

Sunday’s message was titled, “Consume.” We spoke of how God not only chases us and desires to catch us, but God desires to “consume” us...to “*melt us, mold us, fill us, use us.*”

God chose us to become like His Son, Jesus Christ. Wow! What a thought! We were created to become like Christ. As Max Lucado puts it, “*God loves you just the way you are, but He refuses to leave you that way...He wants you to be just like Jesus.*” Just like Jesus. Romans 8:29 in The Message reads, *God knew what he was doing from the very beginning. He decided from the outset to shape the lives of those who love him along the same lines as the life of His Son...We see the original and intended shape of our lives there in him.*

Rick Warren, in The Purpose Driven Life, writes, “*The Bible says that all people, not just believers, possess part of the image of God...But the image is incomplete and has been damaged and distorted by sin. So, God sent Jesus on a mission to restore the full image that we have lost. What does the full “image and likeness” of God look like? It looks like Jesus Christ!*”

When we look at how we are living our lives, where our priorities are, how we handle our anger, how we deal with others, how we love our families...it is Jesus Christ himself

we should look at for our model, our inspiration. Certainly, in the light of Christ, who loved God first, loved even His enemies, and was willing to die for not only the righteous, but also the ungodly, we all fall short.

But that is the Good News. On our journey to become like Christ, we don't do it alone...As Warren writes, *"You cannot reproduce the character of Jesus on your own strength. New Year's resolutions, willpower, and best intentions are not enough. Only the Holy Spirit has the power to make the changes God wants to make in our lives."*

Read Philippians 2:12-13. God gives us the power. What areas of your life do you need to focus on, change, and grow in to become more like Jesus? How does knowing God wants you to grow into nothing less than the image of His Son make you view your priorities, habits, and everyday actions? Pray that God will give you the power of His Holy Spirit to begin changing you from one degree of glory into the next into the likeness of His Son. Pray for daily strength to become more like Jesus.

Tuesday, July 9, 2019

Read Ephesians 4:20-32.

Verse 22, in The Message, reads, *"Take on an entirely new way of life – a God-fashioned life, a life renewed from the inside and working itself into your conduct as God accurately reproduces his character in you.* Warren writes, *"God's ultimate goal for your life on earth is not comfort, but character development. He wants you to grow up spiritually and become like Christ."*

He goes on to talk about three responsibilities in becoming like Christ. First, we must realize that the Holy Spirit is living

within us and is constantly moving us closer and closer to becoming like Jesus. In order for us to connect and listen to the Spirit, we must be willing to step out in faith. We are called to *make every effort* in our growth toward becoming like Jesus, and we cannot simply wait for God to act first. In fact, God expects us to act, to step out in faith, to risk, to move forward when we don't feel powerful and confident...for we are told that it is in our weakness that God shows His power through us.

Secondly, we must change the way we think. **Read Romans 12:2.** We must allow God to direct our thoughts. In all decisions, thoughts, and goals, we must allow God to direct us through prayer, the Bible, and other Christians.

Thirdly, Warren says, "*We must put on the character of Christ by developing new, godly habits.*" We must pray for strength to change those habits that are detrimental to growing in our relationship with God and build Godly habits and disciplines that will lead us to become more like His Son. Remember, this is a progressive development, a gradual change, which will take the rest of your life. Don't expect to rid yourself of all ungodly fears, thoughts, and habits overnight. It is a process, a journey.

Is God calling you to step out on faith in an area of your life? To act while still weak? Are there decisions in your life that you need to back up on and allow God to direct your thinking? Are there ungodly habits in your life that you need to break and new habits you need to begin to become more like Jesus? Pray that God shows you the next step. Talk to another Christian friend about the steps you feel God calling you to...ask them to hold you accountable.

Wednesday, July 10, 2019

Read Ephesians 4:12-15.

God wants us to grow up into mature Christians. As Warren writes, *“Sadly, millions of Christians grow older but never grow up...It takes an intentional commitment. You must want to grow, decide to grow, make an effort to grow, and persist in growing. Discipleship – the process of becoming like Christ – always begins with a decision. Jesus calls us, and we respond: ‘Come, be my disciple,’ Jesus said to him. So, Matthew got up and followed him.”*

Warren goes on to mention three growth ingredients. First, we must study and apply God’s Word. Secondly, we must regularly connect with other believers. And lastly, we must learn to trust God in difficult situations, understanding that God uses our darkest moments to draw us closer to Him.

Are you being intentional in your walk with Christ? Are you making an effort in growing, changing, becoming more like Jesus? Are you going to God’s Word for guidance, studying and meditating on what God has to say to you? Are you connecting with other believers beyond Sunday morning? Are you seeking what God has to teach you in the midst of a difficult situation?

Pray for strength and guidance, and for God to connect you more with His Word and fellow believers. Pray that God will help you be more intentional about becoming like His Son, Jesus Christ.

Thursday, July 11, 2019

Read Philippians 2:1-11.

When we make a decision to accept Christ in our lives, to become a Christian, to live for God, we are making a counter-

culture decision. Instead of thinking like the world, we are to begin to think the same way that Christ thought.

The first step to thinking like Christ is to stop thinking “immature” thoughts that are self-centered and self-seeking. The second step is to begin thinking maturely, focusing on others and not yourself.

Read John 13:14-15. Max Lucado, in Just Like Jesus, writes, “*The mercy of Christ preceded our mistakes; our mercy must precede the mistakes of others. Those in the circle of Christ had no doubt of his love; those in our circles should have no doubts about ours. What does it mean to have a heart like his? It means to kneel as Jesus knelt, touching the grimy parts of the people we are stuck with and washing away their unkindnesses with kindness.*”

Right now, in your life, whom do you need to forgive, drop the grudge you’ve held against them for some time. What name is God bringing to the forefront of your mind as you read this that you need to show kindness to? Pray that God will give you an opportunity this week to show kindness and love to that person. Pray that God will help you move from a life that is self-centered to a life that is centered on others.

Friday, July 12, 2019

Read Luke 8:18 and James 1:21-25.

We must have an open attitude to God’s Word. Warren writes, “*Anytime you feel you are not learning anything from a sermon or a Bible teacher, you should check your attitude, especially pride, because God can speak through even the most boring teacher when you are humble and receptive.*” We must be constantly reading God’s Word and listening to God’s Word

and as the scriptures says we must *consider carefully how we listen*.

Are you approaching God's Word and the sermons you hear, looking for support for the way you already live and believe, or are you open to God's challenge to become more and more like Jesus? Are you open to recognizing that Christ is calling you to a higher standard, to change?

Pray that your heart will be softened to hear the message this Sunday and tonight when you read your Bible. Pray that your Spirit would be open to the changes and challenges God calls you to.

Saturday, July 13, 2019

Read 2 Corinthians 3:18 and Romans 8:29.

Max Lucado writes, *"No doubt about it: God has ambitious plans for us. The same one who saved your soul longs to remake your heart. His plan is nothing short of a total transformation."* Don't be afraid of the change. Sometimes it will hurt for we will be asked to take a very honest look at our lives, but the blessings will be awesome.

Read over the lyrics for "Spirit of the Living God." Which area are you having trouble with? Are you afraid to allow God to "melt" you or to "mold" you? Are you too full of the things of the world for God to "fill" you? How are you allowing God to "use" you to make a difference? Would you say that God has "consumed" your life or just parts of it? What parts of your life are you holding back from God?

Pray that you will have the strength to honestly see yourself in light of Jesus Christ and that God will help you to rely on the Holy Spirit for transformation. Take time with God today! Curl

up in His lap and share your heart. Allow God to “*melt, mold, fill, and use*” you!!! Don’t be afraid! God loves you so much!

Spirit Of The Living God

Spirit of the Living God

Fall fresh on me

Spirit of the Living God

Fall fresh on me

Melt me mold me

Fill me use me

Spirit of the Living God

Fall fresh on me

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**DON'T FORGET TO INVITE SOMEONE
TO CHURCH TOMORROW!!!**