



2019 YEAR OF SCRIPTURE

Monthly Devotions

November 2019

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This devotion is based on Luke 19-24, John, Acts, Romans, and 1 Corinthians 1-8. This is not a definitive study of these books. Scripture is an inexhaustible resource offering ever new inspiration.

Depending on time available for devotions the leader may choose the one section (below) that seems most appropriate for the congregation. The others may be commended for home study to be completed before the next monthly Council meeting.

Luke 19-24 “...to all nations”

Reflection

Luke's Gospel ends as it began, with good news for all. The Christmas angels announce Jesus' birth as “good news of great joy for all people...” (2:10b). Just before his ascension Jesus tells his disciples “...repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations” (24:47).

Application

Despite amazing progress, the modern world is threatened by age-old tribalism – division fueled by prejudice and based on race, religion, ethnicity or nationality. Think of those you consider enemies and discuss how you could witness that Jesus is their savior.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, help us to see others as you see them – as your beloved daughters and sons. May we never forget our enemies are loved by you no less than we are. Help us to love those who are different from us, those we fear, and those we struggle to forgive. This we ask through Jesus your son, messiah of Israel and the world. Amen.

John Divine Do-Over

Reflection

Among the ground-rules established before children's games is the infamous “do-over” which gives players the right to start all over again if they don't like the first results. John's Gospel portrays Jesus as the agent of creation, both the first one (“All things came into being through him...” 1:3a) and the new one (“And the Word became flesh and lived among us...” 1:14a).



Application

Can you think of ways Jesus has accomplished a “do-over” in your life and the life of your congregation? Attitudes, beliefs, behaviors that gradually changed in ways you never thought possible. Can you identify things in your life today that cry out for God to “do-over”?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, fix me, please. This I pray through Jesus your son, messiah of Israel and the world. Amen.

Acts “...together with certain women”

Reflection

The radical inclusivity of Jesus’ ministry begun in the Gospel continues in Acts. The disciples apply this principle immediately following Jesus’ ascension: “All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women...”

Application

How does this description of the earliest church demonstrate radical inclusiveness? How can your congregation witness to it today?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, grant us your Spirit that your church be a community for all people – a community unique in its embrace of people with nothing in common except you. This we pray through Jesus your son, messiah of Israel and the world. Amen.



Reflection

Anticipating a stop-over on his way to Spain St. Paul wrote Romans to introduce himself and his beliefs.

Application

Limiting yourself to what could fit on a post-card, how would you introduce your beliefs?



Prayer

Heavenly Father, may our relationship with you shape our identity. Enable us to express that relationship faithfully attracting others to Jesus. This we pray through your son Jesus, messiah of Israel and the world. Amen.

1 Corinthians 1-8 **Would you join this church?**

Reflection

St. Paul's letters to the Corinthian church were in response to their problems, conflicts and questions. The Corinthians were divided over beliefs, leadership, sexuality, and marriage. They even resorted to secular courts to resolve church disputes. While we might assume there was a "golden age" or "good old days" when the church was conflict free, apparently "church fights" are as old as the church. The issue is not whether there is conflict in the church, but only how it is dealt with.

Application

Can you think of examples of faithful and unfaithful ways to resolve disputes in the church?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, be with us as we struggle to become a community that reflects your love for each of us and all people. Help us to acknowledge our differences mindful that Christ between us is more important than whatever divides us. May the world know we are your disciples by our love, and may that love dominate our commitment to the truth and one another. This we pray through your son Jesus, messiah of Israel and the world. Amen.

