 

Feb.19-25

2018

A WORD for the Journey

These are short daily Bible readings that have been chosen to reinforce a particular teaching that is important to help us live successfully as disciples of Jesus. They can be used individually, with your spouse, friend or used as family readings. Each week’s readings correspond to the previous Sunday’s sermon preached at Beaches Baptist Church. You can download the sermon from <https://beachesbaptist.com/>

GIFTED TO GIVE

The Christian life is made possible purely and solely by God’s act of grace. In fact, life in general is a result of God’s grace- whether one is a believer or not. However, the Christian has received extra graces- the Greek word used for this is *charisma.* On placing one’s faith in Christ for salvation from sins, that person receives the Holy Spirit. With the Holy Spirit comes an outpouring of further graces (*charisma*) from God, which are known to Christians as *spiritual gifts.* These grace-gifts have been given to all of us in order that we may build up, strengthen and encourage the Church. Do you know what gift or gifts you have been given? Are you using them for the benefit of the Church?

Monday

Matthew 25:14-30 (MSG)

**14**“For [the Kingdom of Heaven] will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. **15**To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. **16**He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. **17**So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. **18**But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money.**19**Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. **20**And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.’ **21**His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’**22**And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.’**23**His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ **24**He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, **25**so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.’**26**But his master answered him, ‘You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? **27**Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. **28**So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. **29**For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. **30**And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

**Reflect:** God has allotted every person on this earth a stewardship. Some have more in the way of gifts and resources, some have less. It’s not what we have that matters, it’s how we use it for the glory of God.

Tuesday

Ephesians 2:1-10 (NLT)

Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. **2**You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. **3**All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God’s anger, just like everyone else.

**4**But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, **5**that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God’s grace that you have been saved!) **6**For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus. **7**So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus.

**8**God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. **9**Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. **10**For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

**Reflect:** The person who has received God’s gift of forgiveness through Jesus is God’s masterpiece- set aside especially to use God’s grace-gifts to do good works which he has assigned us to do.

Wednesday

Ephesians 3:7-13 (MSG)

**7-8**This is my life work: helping people understand and respond to this Message. It came as a sheer gift to me, a real surprise, God handling all the details. When it came to presenting the Message to people who had no background in God’s way, I was the least qualified of any of the available Christians. God saw to it that I was equipped, but you can be sure that it had nothing to do with my natural abilities.

**8-10**And so here I am, preaching and writing about things that are way over my head, the inexhaustible riches and generosity of Christ. My task is to bring out in the open and make plain what God, who created all this in the first place, has been doing in secret and behind the scenes all along. Through followers of Jesus like yourselves gathered in churches, this extraordinary plan of God is becoming known and talked about even among the angels!

**11-13**All this is proceeding along lines planned all along by God and then executed in Christ Jesus. When we trust in him, we’re free to say whatever needs to be said, bold to go wherever we need to go. So don’t let my present trouble on your behalf get you down. Be proud!

**Reflect:** God has gifted you to serve beyond your natural abilities. Don’t be intimidated by the task ahead of you- if it’s God’s will he has equipped you to handle it!

Thursday

Ephesians 3:14-21 (MSG)

**14-19**My response is to get down on my knees before the Father, this magnificent Father who parcels out all heaven and earth. I ask him to strengthen you by his Spirit—not a brute strength but a glorious inner strength—that Christ will live in you as you open the door and invite him in. And I ask him that with both feet planted firmly on love, you’ll be able to take in with all followers of Jesus the extravagant dimensions of Christ’s love. Reach out and experience the breadth! Test its length! Plumb the depths! Rise to the heights! Live full lives, full in the fullness of God.

**20-21**God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us.

Glory to God in the church!
Glory to God in the Messiah, in Jesus!
Glory down all the generations!
Glory through all millennia! Oh, yes!

**Reflect:** Meditate on God’s deep love and expansive grace that He has lavished on us. How will you express your gratitude to others?

Friday

Ephesians 4:1-10 (MSG)

**1-3**In light of all this, here’s what I want you to do. While I’m locked up here, a prisoner for the Master, I want you to get out there and walk—better yet, run!—on the road God called you to travel. I don’t want any of you sitting around on your hands. I don’t want anyone strolling off, down some path that goes nowhere. And mark that you do this with humility and discipline—not in fits and starts, but steadily, pouring yourselves out for each other in acts of love, alert at noticing differences and quick at mending fences.

**4-6**You were all called to travel on the same road and in the same direction, so stay together, both outwardly and inwardly. You have one Master, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who rules over all, works through all, and is present in all. Everything you are and think and do is permeated with Oneness.

**7-13**But that doesn’t mean you should all look and speak and act the same. Out of the generosity of Christ, each of us is given his own gift. The text for this is,

He climbed the high mountain,
He captured the enemy and seized the booty,
He handed it all out in gifts to the people.

Is it not true that the One who climbed up also climbed down, down to the valley of earth? And the One who climbed down is the One who climbed back up, up to highest heaven.

**Reflect:** Out of Christ’s generosity- His grace- we’ve all, who have received Him, received gifts to build up His church. How will you use your gift to pour out God’s love to others?

Saturday

Ephesians 4:11-16 (NIV)

**11**So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, **12**to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up **13**until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

**14**Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. **15**Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. **16**From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

**Reflect:** The aim of employing our gifts within the body of Christ- His church- as that we all become more and more like Jesus. Your contribution is by no means inconsequential, but is all part of God’s big plan of salvation.

Sunday

Ephesians 5:15-21 (NIV)

**15**Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise,**16**making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.**17**Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.**18**Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, **19**speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord,**20**always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**21**Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

**Reflect:** The Christian should not be controlled by outside influences but by the Spirit of God. To live any other way is unwise. Our attitude should be one of gratitude for God’s grace and a love for and desire to encourage our fellow believers in their walk with God.