

Think It Over
Going
Deeper

4-26-20

Going Deeper Beyond Sunday

Everyday Lordship

“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.” Matthew 6:10 (KJV)

If you would like to extend this over a week, you can easily do one of the points each day in your devotion.

Surely the most difficult kind of stress is the stress resulting from things you can't avoid or can't change:

- Uncontrollable circumstances: When you feel hopeless, such as being stuck in a pandemic.
- Uncooperative people: When people are mean or can't be pleased, and refuse to play by the rules.
- Unexplainable pain: When life doesn't make sense – the ‘Why me?’ question.

When you can't change the source of stress, the only solution is to surrender and accept it. This is what the second part of the Lord's Prayer teaches us: “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done.”

God's kingdom is not political or governmental – it's eternal. God's kingdom is not conceptual and not simply the words of God – it's transformational; it's the work of God in the world, changing us. God's kingdom is not material – it's spiritual. And God's kingdom is relational – connecting with God by getting connected with others in God's family. It's wherever Jesus is King and God's will is done: in heaven, on earth, and within us. In this devotion, we'll see how “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done” means making four stress-breaking choices about surrendering to Jesus.

OPEN WITH A PRAYER. THIS IS ONLY A GUIDE—SELECT THE POINTS YOU WANT TO MEDITATE ON.

SURRENDER TO JESUS MEANS:

1. LETTING GO OF CONTROL.

THE SERENITY PRAYER

“God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Living one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time, accepting hardship as a pathway to peace; taking as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it; trusting that you will make all things right if I surrender to your will so that I may be reasonably happy in this life, and supremely happy with you forever in the next. Amen.” (Reinhold Niebuhr)

In Psalm 46:10, what does the psalmist instruct us to do?

- Why is this well studied verse so difficult to master? What earthly things deter us from being still and giving God control?
- What might people say are the top three reasons they don't want to surrender to God's will?
- What have you seen people do when they are stressed and have not surrendered to God?
- How might someone measure success when it comes to giving control of life to God? What evidence would there be in someone's life?

According to Romans 8:6, how can we find peace and life?

- What are some ways to see hardship as a pathway to peace? Why is this so difficult to remember?
- How might someone be transformed by surrendering to God?
- On average, how many times in a day do you think the mind must make a decision either to be controlled by the sinful self or to be controlled by the Spirit? Give some examples.
- The middle of the Serenity Prayer says “taking as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it.” What does that mean, and how do we apply that to everyday life?

When we worship, we exalt God and seek him in all situations. God wants us to surrender to his will and know the peace only he can offer. When you think of surrendering to God, what comes to mind? What part of the Serenity Prayer seems to speak

to you the most? Describe a time you had been controlling a situation and then fully surrendered it to God. This week, use the Serenity Prayer to help you focus on surrender as you face life's daily challenges.

2. LEARNING TO BE CONTENT.

What does the author of Philippians 4:11-13 say he learned? Where does he say he gets his strength?

- Why is it easier for people to be content during "good" times; how can people learn to be content in "bad" times?
- Why do people think contentment is only inherited and not a skill to be learned?
- How can we learn contentment?

What does Psalm 37:7 say we should we do after being still, quiet, or rested with God?

- Why do people expect immediate results after surrendering to God?
- Why do people keep asking "Why?" when God is silent? What can we learn when God seems silent? How does that affect our faith?
- Would it help our pain and stress if we had God's explanation for it?

Contentment is not natural; it is something that we can choose and learn. Take some time to think of something you are not fully content with but cannot change. Make a conscious decision to be content with it and to practice being content. Take small steps if necessary, and pray for God's strength. Let your group know the results of your efforts.

3. LAYING DOWN MY PLANS.

Read 1 John 3:16. For whom should we lay down our lives?

- What are ways we can let go of some of our own plans in order to benefit others?
- What are tangible ways of laying down our lives for our brothers?

According to Romans 6:13, for what purpose should we offer our body?

- What is righteousness?
- If we were brought back to life from death, how could we use our body to further God's righteous purposes?

In Matthew 6:33, what does it say we should seek first as our primary concern?

- Why would God give us all we need if we live for him and make his kingdom our primary concern?
- What are ways God's work can be displayed in our lives during the current recession?

Think about problems you have overcome in your life. Look at how much of a particular problem was attributed to poor choices, to one of Satan's attacks on your life, or to no one's fault and simply because we live in an imperfect world. Then think about a fellow believer who is going through similar problems or crises you have already overcome. Reach out to support that person in prayer, in your emotional presence, or in some tangible way.

4. LEAVING THE FUTURE TO GOD.

Read Proverbs 3:5-6. What should we do so the Lord will make all our paths straight?

- Regarding our future, in whom or what do we usually place our trust?
- Why is it important to decide in advance to leave our future to God?

According to Psalm 37:18-19, how much will we have during times of famine if we obey the Lord?

- During hard times, what do we tend to do in order to feel at peace?
- How can we remind ourselves to trust that God will help us survive through hard times?
- What specific things can we do to leave the future to God?

In Luke 14:33, what did Jesus say must be given up in order to become his follower?

- What are hard things to give up in life?

According to Mark 10:29-30, if one gives up anything for Jesus and to share the Gospel, how much will he be given in the world to come?

- What are some things that are typically given up at times when we share the Gospel?
- What are we most afraid to give up in order to share the Gospel?

Think about a person God placed in your heart who has not yet heard about the Gospel. What are you afraid to give up in order to share with him or her? Decide to leave to God the outcome of sharing the Gospel with that person. Quiet your spirit to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit for times to share with that person and then trust God that he can use you.

PERSONAL APPLICATION AND COMMITMENT:

Surrender is the ultimate expression of faith, leading us to serenity through surrender in God's love. Stop now and pray the Serenity Prayer in Part 1 out loud. Would you like to have less stress and more serenity in this season of your life? Stop fighting and resisting.

Consider which areas of your life are not yet surrendered to God – perhaps habits, secret sins, relationships, or dreams. What stands in the way of your taking this step, and make a commitment to surrender during the coming week.