

DAILY BIBLE STUDY SHEET

Daily meditation on the Word of God is imperative to our growth. As the people of God, we should commit to reading Scripture every day. There are questions to help prompt your meditation. If you do not have a Bible, please contact the church office and one will be given to you. To locate the passages, use the Table of Contents to find the page number. The number before the colon will tell you the chapter to find. The numbers after the colon are the superscript numbers in your Bible indicating the verses to read.

Monday, April 3rd – Ezekiel 37:1-14

This week of Giving It Up is giving up our lives. This is a common theme throughout Scripture. God is a God of life and brings new life out of the dead spots in our lives. But for that to happen, we need to give up our whole lives to Christ. We start with our Old Testament lesson from yesterday. Ezekiel is part of the Judah that has been taken into exile by Babylon. Everything they knew and held on to as life had been dismantled. Their lives now were filled with sorrow, hopelessness, disappointment and grief. They could see no future as the children of God. God responds to this hopelessness through a vision to Ezekiel. Where does God take Ezekiel in his vision and what does Ezekiel see (vss. 1-2)? This seems like a graveyard. What does God ask Ezekiel (vs. 3)? How does Ezekiel respond (vs. 3b)? Do you sense a note of despair as well as humility in Ezekiel's response? What does God tell Ezekiel to do (vss. 4-6)? What happens when Ezekiel obediently does as he is told (vss. 7-8)? What is still missing? What happens next (vss. 9-10)? Now read verses 11-14. This is God's explanation of the prophecy. What is he telling Ezekiel? What does this say about having seasons of hopelessness? What is God's promise (vss. 12 & 14)? How is Jesus fulfillment of this promise for us? How can hanging onto the old things in our lives keep us living like dried up bones? What might a fresh breath of spirit in an old space feel like? Take some time considering what things you are wrestling with right now. What might you need to let die in your life so God can breathe new life into you?

Tuesday, April 4th – Luke 9:23-27

Jesus makes a call upon each of us to claim to be his followers, a claim that seems impossible to live into. As you read verse 23, what are the 3 things Jesus tells us we need to do? What do you think "deny yourself" means in this context? The Greek word translated deny means that we are to disregard our own interests or even prove the falsehood of our own desires and thoughts. How does this understanding of deny tie into taking up the cross? Why would both of these be needed in order to truly follow Jesus? To do these three means we give up this false life we live where we think we are god. For living like this life is just for us and we know best how to live it means that in the end we will actually lose it because our ways are not God's ways. How does Jesus emphasize the dichotomy between clinging to the old sinful life where we live like we think we should and what our life can be like if we give it all up to Christ (vs. 25)? As you read verse 26, Jesus speaks of some being ashamed of him and his message. What do you think Jesus means? Perhaps it is being ashamed of the life we are called to live rather than the one we are currently living. For when we give up our lives to follow Christ, it will be a life lived counter to the culture. Some folks refuse to give up their lives because they feel foolish about living a life following Christ. They are embarrassed. They are ashamed. And Christ says that when he returns, those who feel this way will find that Jesus is ashamed of them. But there is one piece of Good News in this text and it is in verse 27. What does Jesus promise? In that moment, Jesus was speaking to those who were with him and believed. Those who followed him. They would see the Kingdom of God through and in him. For those of us born after the ascension of Jesus, when do we see the Kingdom of God? Is it in the people called church? Is it in the world we serve? Is it in the new life we live following Jesus? Are you ready to give up your worldly life for a Kingdom life?

Wednesday, April 5th – John 13:36-38

Today we look at just how difficult giving up this life for Jesus truly is. This conversation takes place during the last discourse/teaching of Jesus before his arrest. What does Peter ask and what is Jesus' response (vs. 36)? Peter is thinking about the here and now moments of his day. What is Jesus referring to? When Peter protests, what is his reason for doing so (vs. 37)? What is Jesus' response to Peter's declaration (vs. 38)? As we read in Chapter 18, Peter does deny knowing Jesus three times. We want to think we would be willing to die for Jesus, but the truth about ourselves is most of us will deny Jesus first. Jesus wants us to give up these false lives that we cling to so desperately so we can receive the life that was meant for us. But this means we need to die not deny. Where do find yourself choosing to deny over dying? What are you clinging too that stops you from giving up your life to Christ?

Thursday, April 6th – 1 Peter 1:17-21

Today we return to Peter, the one who denied Jesus, and read what he says about giving up our lives. Remember as you read this that this writing is after the resurrection and Pentecost. As you read verse 17, what is Peter telling us about God? Another reason to give up superiority! But what does Peter say about the way we live our lives (vs 17b)? What is reverent fear? What does it mean to be in exile? Exile from what? For Peter, that means while we live in this world, we are exiled from the true Kingdom of God. Why should we live lives in reverent fear (vss. 18-19)? The call to give up our lives for Christ is because Christ gave up his life for us to set us free and give us new life thru him. How long has this plan of ransom been in place (vs. 20)? What does that tell you about how much you are loved? And if you are loved that much, would you not trust God to have a better life plan for you than the one you control and hang on to? And why can we trust God (vs. 21)? Remember, this is Peter who denied Jesus teaching us this lesson. Hear the Word of the Lord and give it up!

Friday, April 7th – John 11:14-44

We close this week back in John. This is the story of Lazarus, Mary and Martha's brother and Jesus. Read the whole text. What is the issue with Lazarus (vss. 14-17)? What does the conversation with Martha look like (vss. 20-27)? What is Jesus saying? What does Martha keep saying? Does new life have to wait until Jesus' return according to Jesus? Now read about Mary in verses 28-32. What does Mary say to Jesus (vs. 32)? Notice everyone believes Jesus could have prevented the death, but no one seems to grasp he can give new life. Now read verses 38-44. What is Jesus' point in verse 40? How does this tie into Jesus' prayer in verse 42? And what proof is there that Jesus can restore life (vss. 43-44). Now if Jesus can do this for Lazarus what might Jesus be able to for us when we believe and give up our dead lives for new life with him? What might be different if we learned to give up control, expectations, superiority, enemies and our very lives? What might Easter look like? What might we look like? Take time this weekend and next to pray for the strength to deny yourself and selfish ways so that you may have new life in Christ.

Saturday, April 8th – To prepare for tomorrow's worship, please read *Luke 16:10-13*