

VCEFC Daily Devotion
Feb 13- Feb 19, 2006

Feb 13 : John 5: 1-15 Do you want to get well?

Notes:

- v. 1 There were three Jewish festivals that required the Jews to travel to the temple in Jerusalem: the Passover, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles.
- V. 2-3 The five covered colonnades were probably built to shade the sick from the hot afternoon sun. Many people view the pool as a healing sanctuary.
- V. 5-7 Unlike other healing stories, Jesus takes the initiative to ask the man if he wants to be healed. But instead of simply saying yes, the man blames his condition on his inability to get healed. He focuses on the pool, but not on Jesus' ability to heal him.
- V. 8-9 Jesus purposely heals on the Sabbath in order to show the Jews that they have become enslaved to their traditions about how to observe the Sabbath and have forgotten that God seeks mercy above duty. He chooses to perform an act of mercy on Sabbath day.
- V. 10-11 The Mishnah, a compilation of the oral teachings of the Pharisees, names 39 things that could not be done on the Sabbath, and the 39th being the carrying of a load from one dwelling to another because it constituted a form of labor. The man again blames his actions on someone else, saying that he is just acting under orders.
- V 12-13 It is strange that the healed paralytic has no idea of the identity of his healer. Also, it is equally strange that the Jewish leaders had no regard for the healing of a man who has been crippled for almost a lifetime, their sole concern is for the breaking of a Sabbath rule as defined in their tradition.
- V. 14-15 Jesus' warning shows that the man's illness is connected with his sinful way of life. After experiencing such miraculous healing, the man still shows no sign of repentance or coming to faith. "Something worse" may refer to eternal judgment.

Meditate:

1. People usually resist changes, even when they are under undesirable situations, because changes always involve stepping out of your comfort zone. "Do you want to get well?" is a challenge for change. If Jesus asks you this question, what is your answer? Why?
2. "The man is a victim of a legend that gave him false hope." The legend leads the man to believe that healing will come to a person who gets into the pool first when it is stirred. However, he will never be that person because he is paralysed. Do you have any beliefs that give you false hope, and prevent you from receiving the true grace of God?

Feb 14: John 5: 16-30 I seek not to please myself but Him Who sent me.

Notes:

- v. 16 After healing the invalid, the Jewish leaders seek to kill Jesus for breaking the Sabbath. Jesus defends Himself in a two-part discourse. First, He explains His unique relationship with God the Father (5:16-30). Then, he points to several witnesses that affirm His identity, including John the Baptist, His own works, the Father, the Scriptures and Moses.(5:31-47)
- v. 17-18 Jesus' statement discloses His oneness with God. God has been at work and continues to work in sustaining His creation, so does His Son Jesus. (Colossians 1.17; Hebrew 1.3)
- v. 19-20 The foundation of Jesus' relationship with God the Father: Total dependency and submission(can do nothing by Himself but can do only what He sees His Father doing), and love.
- v. 21-23 Jesus' authority as the life giver and the judge: All the tasks here are tasks firmly established in the Old Testament as the works of God. Life is a gift from God (Genesis 2.7; Psalm 16.11); judgment is a work of God (Genesis 18:25; Judges 11.27). Because of who He is, Jesus has the authority to do what God does.
- V. 24-29 Jesus expands and interprets what life and judgment really mean.
 - (1) The way to receive life: The decision to hear the words of Jesus and believe God who sent Him has present consequences: Eternal life begins immediately and condemnation and death disappear.
 - (2) Warning of the last judgment: Every person will be resurrected when the Lord returns, but there are two results of the resurrection; one ends in life, the other in judgment. Eternal life is granted to those who have come to the light and believed in Jesus Christ. And judgment is executed upon those who refused to come to the light.
- v. 30 Jesus has the authority to judge. But He will only judge according to His Father's will. His whole life is to please God the Father.

Meditate:

1. What have you learned from Jesus' attitude toward God the Father?
2. What does "Jesus as the life giver and the judge" mean to you? How does it affect your choice today?
3. Who do you seek to please in your life?

Feb 15: John 5: 31-47 Come to me to have life.

Notes:

- To verify His identity as the Son of God, Jesus summons a wide range of witnesses, which include John the Baptist, His own works as well as three highly trustworthy witnesses: the Father, the Scripture and Moses.
- V. 31-32 According to the Jewish law, the testimony of one man is not a valid witness. Truth and validity has to be established by two or three witnesses (Deuteronomy 17.6; 19.15). Thus, Jesus' self-witness will not validate His claims, He needs the witness of another.
- v. 33-35 John the Baptist is Jesus' first human witness. His testimony concerning Jesus being the Son of God, Lamb of God, bridegroom, etc.(1:34; 3:27-36) is

necessary to prepare the Jews for salvation. He is the lamp- a vessel for the light, but not the light itself. His ministry produces great excitement about a coming Messiah, but the Jewish leaders do not really understand his message or receive the revelation concerning the one to whom John gives witness-Jesus, the Son of God.

- V. 36 All the work Jesus does are part of the one great work the Father has sent Him to accomplish. These works are signs providing witness to Jesus as the Son of God.
- V. 37-38 God the Father has also testified for Jesus. But with their spiritual sickness, the Jewish leaders cannot hear God's voice nor truly understand God's words concerning Jesus.
- V. 39-44 The written word of God corroborates Jesus' claim to be the Son of God. However, the Jewish leaders fail to recognize Jesus even they are rich in Biblical knowledge, because they do not have the love of God in their hearts, and they seek honor from people rather than from God.
- V 45-47 Moses had written about Christ (See Deuteronomy 18:15-18, cf. Luke 24:44), but since they have not believed in the Christ when He comes, they have not really believed in the writings of Moses.

Meditate:

1. Too often Jesus is described as simply a nice man, a gifted teacher, a dispenser of religious wisdom, or a prophet. As you learn more about Jesus, what conclusion about His identity have you drawn? How does this conclusion affect your attitude of life?
2. "You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life...yet you refuse to come to me to have life." Does studying the Bible draw you close to Jesus, the giver of life? If not, why?
3. Why were the Jewish religious leaders so blind to the truth? What have you learned from their failure?

Feb 16: John 6: 1-15 New Exodus: Feeding of God's people in the wilderness.

Notes:

- Jesus' feeding of the five thousand in the wilderness(6:1-15) and His rescue of His disciples as He walks on the sea (6:16-21) remind us of the Exodus stories of Israel, in which God fed His people with manna in the wilderness after they escaped from Egypt through the Red Sea.
- V. 1-2 The new Exodus story begins when Jesus leads a large crowd of people across the Sea of Galilee. However, the people follow Jesus only because they are attracted by the miracles He has performed. Most of them soon desert Him when their faith is challenged.
- V. 3-4 Three Passovers are mentioned in the Gospel of John. For the first (2.13) and third(11.55) Jesus makes pilgrimage to Jerusalem, only for this one Jesus remains in Galilee, and attracts a big crowd to follow Him instead of going to Jerusalem.
- V. 5-9 Jesus' question resembles Moses' question in the wilderness (Numbers 11.13). Philip's answer tells us the huge demand of the people, and Andrew's

- answer shows us how little they have: five small barley loaves and two small fish contributed by a boy. The new Moses of the new Exodus is their only hope.
- V. 10 Jesus directs the disciples to make the people (including men, women and children) sit down, but John adds an explanatory comment that the men alone numbered about five thousand.
 - V. 11 Like the father of a family, Jesus distributes the bread and fish. It reminds us of the Lord's Supper. Everyone eats as much as he wants just like the Israelites in the wilderness (Exodus 16. 8, 12, 18).
 - V 12-13 The left over fragments fill up twelve baskets. Jesus again supplies the gracious abundance displayed at the wedding in Cana of Galilee. In the face of human needs, Jesus is the abundance source of life. And His grace is always more than enough.
 - V. 14-15 Being impressed by the feeding miracle, the people identify Jesus as the promised prophet like Moses who will inaugurate the reign of God and supply manna from heaven.(Deuteronomy 18:15-19). Knowing that the people want to make Him king in political terms, Jesus withdraws from them because His kingdom is not of this world. (John 18:36)

Meditate:

When the humble offering of an unnamed boy was put into the hands of the Lord, it satisfied the need of five thousand men plus numerous women and children. Similarly, when we offer our lives as living sacrifices to God, they will become tremendous blessings to the world. Are you willing to place your life onto the hands of the Lord and become a channel of blessings? How does this decision affect your everyday life?

Feb 17: John 6: 16-21 Jesus is the great "I am"

Notes:

- By walking on the sea and bringing the disciples safely to shore, Jesus reenacts the crossing of the Red Sea during Exodus. (Exodus 14:1-15:21)
- V. 16-18 As the disciples make a nighttime crossing to the west side of the sea without Jesus, a storm strikes. The Sea of Galilee is notorious for its sudden storms.
- V. 19 It was five to six miles across the sea from the eastern shore near Bethsaida to the western shore near Capernaum, so the disciples are only halfway (three to four miles) across the stormy sea when they see Jesus walking on the sea toward them. Some interpreters propose that the disciples were simply following the coastline and saw Jesus walking on shore. However, it is then hard to explain why the disciples were terrified. According to the text, it was the sight of Jesus walking on the sea that made them fearful, not the storm.
- V. 20 Jesus immediately speaks words of comfort to his disciple. The words "It is I" can also mean "I am", which is the name used by God for His self-revelation (Exodus: 3.14; Judges 13.11; Isaiah 43.3, 11-13; 51.12). By saying "I am", Jesus reveals His identity as God.
- V 21 The immediate landing of the boat is clearly related to the power of Jesus' presence. In Hebrew literature the sea was a place of chaos, but Jesus delivers His disciples from the chaos. Jesus is fulfilling the role of God- feeding,

protecting, rescuing and guiding His followers despite the natural calamities that surround them.

Meditate: Storm usually comes suddenly to our lives when we are unprepared. How can we find true security in life?

Feb 18: John 6: 22-33 Do not work for food that spoils, but food that endures to eternal life.

Notes:

- v 22-26 The true intention of the crowd to look for Jesus everywhere is to find physical food instead of spiritual food. They miss the real significance of the feeding miracle, which points beyond itself to the true identity of Jesus as the source of spiritual life. Galilean peasants worked hard for their daily bread. It is not surprising that they responded favorably to a miraculous source of sustenance.
- V. 27 Jesus exhorts the people to labor for spiritual bread that results in eternal life. He is the one Who will supply this food by giving His own life and providing the Holy Spirit Who enables the believers to participate in God's life.
- V 28-29 It's human nature to assume that some God's prescribed tasks must be performed to earn the favor of God for eternal life. However, Jesus states it clearly that openness to God's grace in Jesus Christ is the primary task of those who wish to do the work of God.
- V. 30-33 For the people to put their trust in Jesus, they need to see an even greater miracle than the feeding miracle, just as Moses supplied the Israelites with daily bread from heaven for 40 years. Jesus clarifies that the real giver of heavenly bread was not Moses, but His Father, and the true bread of life is not manna, but Jesus Himself.

Meditate:

1. Are you a follower of Jesus? Why do you follow Him? What do you want from Him?
2. How much time do you work for "food that spoils", and for "food that endures to eternal life"? What do you really hunger and thirst for? What do you value the most in life?

Feb 19: John 6: 34-59 Jesus is the True Bread of Life

Notes:

- v 34-40 The people understand Jesus' words in a literal sense and ask for unlimited supply of bread. In declaring "I am the bread of life" Jesus offers Himself as the only satisfaction for the spiritual thirst and hunger of the people. However, the people have seen the miracles of Jesus, and yet they chose not to believe in Him for they fail to look beyond the miracles to its significance as a sign that Jesus is the giver of life. Only those who are drawn by the Father to Jesus can come to faith in Christ and have eternal life. Jesus receives all who come to Him, and nothing will tear them away from Him. As the Apostle Paul states, nothing can separate us from the love of God. (Romans 8.35-39)
- V 41-51 "The Jews" are the leaders of the synagogue community in Capernaum. They are concerned about Jesus' origin. Their disbelief reflects that they have no relationship with the Father, for the Father not only sends the Son, but also draws

- the believers into a relationship with the Son. Everyone who learns from God and listens to God will be drawn to Jesus, for Jesus speaks God's word. No one has seen God except the Son, yet those who have seen Jesus, have seen the Father. The bread that Jesus offers is not ordinary food that sustains life for a period of time, but bread that enables one to live forever.
- V. 52-59 The scandal between Jesus and the Jews deepens when Jesus mentions eating His flesh. The Jews no longer simply murmur, but argue among themselves. Jesus' talk on eating His flesh and drinking His blood reminds us of how He institutes the Lord's Supper. The Gospel of John is the only Gospel that has no explicit treatment of the Lord's Supper. John may have incorporated the idea of the Lord's Supper into this passage. An interesting term is used to describe how we "eat" this bread of life in v. 56. Instead of the usual verb for eating, a word used of animals "munching" or "chewing" is found. In this graphic way, Jesus calls us into a total, intimate, involved and on going relationship with Him. Just as the Son lives because of the Father, so we live because of the Son, our life as God's people is entirely dependent upon Jesus.

Meditate:

1. Are you one of those who are drawn by God to Jesus? What does Jesus assure you?
2. Do you have a "chewing" relationship with Jesus?