

VCEFC Daily Devotion: Reading the Gospel of John
January 30- February 5, 2006

- Wisdom: Turning “what you know” into “how you live”. Thus, apply what you learn from the Bible to your life EVERYDAY!!
- Be ready to share how you live out God’s words with your soul friends.

Jan 30: John 1: 1-8 The preexistence of the Word, Who is the Agent in Creation

Notes:

- The Word is Jesus.
- In the beginning: refer to the eternity prior to creation. It echoes Genesis 1:1.
- The Word- Jesus did not come into being like other persons or objects, but has his origin in eternity when nothing but God existed.
- The words and works of Jesus are the words and works of God.
- The Word(Jesus) is the hand of God in creation or God’s partner in creation.
- The Word has authority over all created things. There are no exceptions. Everyone must submit to the claims of the Word upon him or her, even if they fail to recognize these claims.
- The Word is not only the creator, but also the sustainer and redeemer of all creation.
- Light: it goes beyond the notion of God imparting reason or insight to men and women. It refers to revelation and salvation.
- Darkness: evil and falsehood.
- Light and life continue to come to all created things and persons through the Word, Jesus. He recreates and restores our relationship to God, others and the rest of creation.
- God announced the arrival of the Word through a human witness: a prophet name John
- The purpose of that witness is that all may believe in the light.

Meditate:

1. How do you honor Jesus as God today?
2. How are you going to connect your life to the source of life- Jesus? Do you allow the light of Jesus to shine into the darkness of your heart?
3. How will you bear witness of the light through your life, so that through you people may believe in Christ?

Jan 31: John 1: 9-13 The Destiny of the Word in the World

Notes:

- Give light: the light shines in the darkness reveals our human condition before God with utmost clarity.
- The world did not recognize: the world denied him and refused to obey him.
- Becoming the children of God: there are two kinds of life: life from above and life from below, life in the flesh and life in the spirit, earthly sonship and heavenly sonship.

- Natural birth does not enable a person to become a child of God. There is only one way to God, and it requires a birth from above. And there is only one who has the power to give us the gift of birth from above- Jesus Christ the Word.

Meditate: Why didn't the world receive the light? Have you ever refused to receive the light, too? Why? Are you a child of God? How would you prove it in your life?

Feb 1: John 1: 14-18 The Word lived among us.

Notes:

- Flesh: describes human existence, it speaks of human frailty and mortality.
- Incarnation: God was present in a person who experienced hunger and thirst, who knew fear and anger, and who died as a criminal.
- The glory of God: full of grace and truth.
- The Law: was a great gift from God, revealing His will to humanity. But the law was only preparatory revelation. Now in Jesus Christ God has revealed the fullness of His grace and truth.
- God is not visible to the naked human eye. Not only has no one ever seen God, no one is able to see Him. The only one who has seen God is the only Son. He has made God known.

Meditate: What does "God became human" mean to you? Have you experienced the grace and truth of Jesus?

Feb 2: John 1: 19-28 Who are you?

Notes:

- The Jews: must not be interpreted to mean any and all Jews. It refers to the Jewish religious leaders- the chief priests and Pharisees who comprised the religious establishment in Jerusalem- who opposed John the Baptist and Jesus.
- The Christ: Messiah: The Lord's anointed, someone filled with God's power and Spirit who would work some miracle on behalf of God's people: Like Moses, who was a spiritual leader and provided political redemption from Egypt. At the time of Jesus, the hope of Jewish people for a coming Messiah was widespread.
- Elijah: a prophet who was expected to come before the day of the Lord.
- John's denial: unusually emphatic. It is to emphasize that even John was a very gifted preacher who drew the attention of many people as well as the Jewish leadership, he was insignificant in comparison to Jesus.
- John describes himself as "a voice": he does not elevate himself as having a stature of importance and never identifies his own name. He only regards himself as a tool in God's hand, pointing to another on the horizon.
- Untie the thong of sandals: the job of a lowliest slave.

Meditate:

1. What have you learned from John's humble attitude as a servant of God?
2. The Baptist witnesses to the religious leaders, saying, "Among you stands one whom you do not know (1:26). His words challenge us. How do we fail to recognize God's presence among us? Can you name times and places when you have failed to discern God's presence in your life?"

Feb 3: John 1: 29-34 John's testimony

Notes:

- Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world: Jesus is the Passover lamb mentioned in Exodus 12. During the festival of Passover, a lamb would be killed and the blood of the lamb would be put on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the house, the angel who comes to kill the firstborn of the house will pass over it when he sees the blood. It points to the future death of Jesus for saving us from the punishment of our sins.
- John the Baptist, like the Jewish community, did not recognize Christ at first. He came to his knowledge of Christ's identity by way of divine revelation- God given insight.
- The Holy Spirit came down and remained in Jesus, who would baptize with the Spirit: Jesus is the one Who can give us new life.
- The Son of God: The only one and true revelation of God.

Meditate:

1. John the Baptist twice confesses: I myself did not know Him (1: 31, 33). But by God's grace and inspiration, John came to recognize Jesus as the Christ.

When did you first "warm-up" to or recognize Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God? What have helped you to truly understand the importance of Jesus to your life? Do you have a personal relationship with Christ? How can you prove it?

2. The saving work of Jesus is for the whole world (1:29), but not the private possession of Christians. John did not allow his spiritual insights to nurture only his own faith and experience, but he witnessed for Jesus and pointed others to Jesus. Have you also shared the grace of God with those around you?

Feb 4: John 1: 35-42 What do you want?

Notes:

- The two disciples respond to Jesus' question in a fashion typical of disciples searching for a famous teacher: Rabbi (teacher), where are you staying? Jesus is seen as a teacher and the two disciples are asking about the location of his teaching residence. But Jesus is also being depicted as Wisdom, who in early Jewish literature appeals to the audience: Wisdom...is easily discerned by those who love her, and by those who seek her she is found. Jesus is both the teacher and the Wisdom.
- Sensing the sincerity of the two disciples, Jesus initiates an invitation. Jesus does not answer questions directly in John's Gospel. Instead, he tends to push his conversation partners to a deeper level of understanding or response. So he says: Come and see. On the surface it simply means, come and see the location of my teaching place. But at a deeper level it is an invitation to discipleship. Also, seeing and believing are important themes in John's gospel and by the end of the Gospel Jesus will call His disciples, who believed in Him on the basis of what they had seen, to believe WITHOUT seeing(20:29).
- After the teaching session offered by Jesus, Andrew at once goes to his brother, Simon, and give him an extraordinary report: We have found the Messiah!!

Meditate:

1. John the Baptist points his disciples to the Christ and they follow Him. John prepared his disciples well. Does your life also point people toward Jesus? What do you say (your words) or do (your deeds) to get people “moving” in God’s direction?
2. The very first words that Jesus utters in John’s Gospel: What do you want? This is one of the great existential questions of life: What are you searching for in your life? Money? Peace? Happiness? Health? The first disciples found their answer. How about you?
3. What was the first thing that Andrew did when he had found Jesus? How about you?

Feb 5: John 1: 43-51 Follow me

Notes:

- Follow me: is the call for discipleship.
- In John’s Gospel, Jesus’ human origins are often a stumbling block for his listeners and disciples. So Nathanael dismisses Philip’s eagerness: Can anything good come from there? Philip simply repeats the earlier invitation of Jesus: Come and see. Philip wants Nathanael to base his judgment of Jesus on first-hand experience.
- Jesus’ compliment to Nathanael: indicates that Jesus knows more about him than he ever expected. Nathanael’s open doubts and questions are not bad things, but reflect a spirit of honest inquiry that requires evidence for faith. So, as we seek to proclaim the Christian message where we work, live and play, it might be helpful to remember that initial resistance or questioning of the gospel does not necessarily mean final rejection.
- Under the fig tree: a place where the Jews usually study the Old Testament.
- You shall see greater things than that: refer to the miracles that the Gospel is going to tell the readers.
- Angels of God ascending and descending: Refer to Genesis 28:12, means a place where heaven and earth meet. As Son of God, Jesus was sent down to the earth and became the Son of man to save and to judge. And as the Son of Man, Jesus would accomplish His earthly work of salvation on the cross, and he would then return to the Father, leading the way to God the Father for those who believe.

Meditate:

1. Do you have first-hand experience of Jesus? Or all that you know about Him are only second-hand information?
2. Reaching out to others is described by the Gospel as a normal practice of a disciple. How many people have you reached with the good news of Christ?
3. Encountering with Jesus always brings changes. Reflect how your life has been changed by your encounter with Jesus.