

## Devotionals for the Week of January 8, 2023

Our devotional section provides additional spiritual input for helping you go further and deeper in your journey with the Lord. It is our desire, our hope, and our prayer that this devotional section will be a helpful Spiritual Life tool for you to utilize on a regular basis. Each day's devotional will typically consist of Scripture, commentary, and a prayer response. Current Devotionals can be accessed each day online at [www.capecodchurch.com/devotionals](http://www.capecodchurch.com/devotionals) or by using the Cape Cod Church App (select "Connect" on the bottom main page and then "Daily Devotional" on next page). Be sure to check Saturday and Sundays for special postings of poems, stories, etc. Printed copies from the prior week are available at the Connection Desk.

### **Monday - The Touch of the Master's Hand - Communion with God -The Impact of His Presence**

As they continued their travel, Jesus entered a village. A woman by the name of Martha welcomed him and made him feel quite at home. She had a sister, Mary, who sat before the Master, hanging on every word he said. But Martha was pulled away by all she had to do in the kitchen. Later, she stepped in, interrupting them. "Master, don't you care that my sister has abandoned the kitchen to me? Tell her to lend me a hand." The Master said, "Martha, dear Martha, *you're fussing far too much and getting yourself worked up over nothing. One thing only is essential*, and Mary has chosen it—it's the main course and won't be taken from her." Luke 10:38-42 (MSG)

*Today's thoughts from today's verses:*

Today we begin week two of a five-week Devotional Series entitled, "The Touch of the Master's Hand." When it comes to realizing Christian spirituality that is truly triumphant, it is "the Touch of the Master's hand" that is absolutely essential and makes all the difference. This Devotional series calls us to an understanding of Christianity that is absolutely dependent on the touch and work of Christ living in and through us. This series is a compilation of separate weeks of Devotional material. They were selected and put together because they all contribute very nicely to this emphasis. This is truly a series to help the person who wants to explore, enter into, and consistently experience the "Deeper" Christian life. We hope the "Touch of the Master's Hand" Devotional Series blesses you and wonderfully guides you into a "Deeper" Christian experience.

This series has five weeks of Devotional material with two weeks having six Devotionals and three having five. This week has five devotionals (Monday through Friday). Week One: Divine Adjustments. Week two: Communion with God. Week three: The Presence of God. Week four: Becoming Spiritually Whole. Week Five: Tale of the Soul. We begin week two: Communion with God, with the following:

# “The Touch of the Master’s Hand”

*By Myra Brooks Welch*

‘Twas battered and scarred and the auctioneer

Thought it scarcely worth his while

To waste much time on the old violin,

But he held it up with a smile.

“What am I bid, good folk?” he cried.

“Who’ll start the bidding for me?

A dollar, a dollar ... now two ... only two ...

Two dollars, and who’ll make it three?

“Three dollars once, three dollars twice,

Going for three” ... but no!

From the room far back a gray-haired man

Came forward and picked up the bow.

Then wiping the dust from the old violin

And tightening up the strings,

He played a melody pure and sweet,

As sweet as an angel sings.

The music ceased, and the auctioneer,

With a voice that was quiet and low,

Said, "What am I bid for the old violin?"

As he held it up with the bow.

"A thousand dollars ... and who'll make it two?

Two...two thousand, and who'll make it three?

Three thousand once and three thousand twice ...

Three thousand and gone!" said he.

The people cheered, but some exclaimed

"We do not quite understand ...

What changed it's worth?" and the answer came:

"Twas the touch of the master's hand."

In answer to the question, "What changed," our poem proclaims triumphantly, "the touch of the master's hand." When it comes to realizing Christian spirituality that is truly triumphant, it is "the Touch of the Master's hand" that is absolutely essential and makes all the difference. This Devotional series calls us to an understanding of Christianity that is absolutely dependent on the touch and work of Christ living in and through us.

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The demands of living life in our hustle and bustle world can be exhausting and overwhelming. Like Martha, we get fussed up and worked up over relatively non-essential things and miss the one thing that is absolutely essential – spending special moments with the Lord. God is many things to us but one of the most precious things about Him is that He is a refuge to us. We experience Him as a refuge when in quiet moments alone with Him we drink deeply from the fountain of life. When quiet times alone with God become a regular part of our life experience, we not only get the breaks from the demands of life we need but we find vital replenishment and restoration of mind and spirit that make us fit to go back at it again. So, in essence, getting caught up in the whirlwind of the hustle and bustle of life often keeps us from the very thing we

need to be able to handle the hustle and bustle in healthy ways and of course that is a daily quiet time with God. So, if we know this, but continually struggle to have a quiet time, what will help us to get over the hump? That will be the focus of this week's Devotionals.

We ended last week with encouragement to make the commitment to seek God and his glory with all that we are in the sanctuary of personal prayer where we can commune with him and behold him and his glory as fully as possible. This is where we will behold God's glory and be changed into the image of Christ. This will result in our becoming a clear and complete reflection of God and his glory for those who are all around us to see and respond to. As ones who belong to God, we can count on him, through the impact of his powerful presence within us, to bring this about as we seek to live fully for him.

*Today's prayer response from today's thoughts:*

Lord, I see the one thing that is essential, and I want it to be true in my life. I commit myself to communing with you in prayer on a daily basis. I know what I am up against and how much I need your intervening grace in order for it to really happen consistently and fully in my life. I trust you as fully as I know how for all you are waiting to accomplish with me. Amen

## **Tuesday - The Touch of the Master's Hand - Communion with God - Becoming His Servant**

For even *the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life* as a ransom for many. Matthew 20:28

Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness." Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these *things*, he will *be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work*. 2 Timothy 2:19-21

*Today's thoughts from today's verses:*

Jesus knew who He was and why He was here. He came to serve and not be served. Jesus cared about both the physical and spiritual needs of people but their spiritual need for redemption was at the heart of who He was and why He was here. So, when

we look at ourselves, we must seek to be the kind of person who desires to serve instead of being served. We need to care about and seek to meet both the physical and spiritual needs of people but always with a view toward their redemption in Christ. In the light of the Scripture above, I think I would say it this way: I want to be one who exists to be a servant of God that He readily uses as a vessel to bless others in ways that contribute to the redemptive work He is bringing about in their lives. When we are so focused, then all the other aspects of being human beings who live life here on earth (family, work, community, friends, recreation, etc.) become the context for fulfilling our central calling and mission.

Quite a high calling. Perhaps it seems so high that it is out of reach. We have been restored to a relationship with God through redemption so that we can enjoy the blessing of God's presence and so that we become vessels who bless the lives of others as God's presence in us touches them in powerful ways. Quiet times with God are essential to our gaining and maintaining the focus necessary for God's calling and mission to be central in our lives. We really can be ones who exist to be true servants of God.

*Today's prayer response from today's thoughts:*

Lord, I ask you to expand this prayerful moment into a very special quiet time with you. I want to experience the joy of your presence more fully and have your desires for me take hold more completely. I bow before you in worship and surrender. With full confidence in you, Lord, I look forward to remarkable personal change and abundant service to your kingdom. Amen!

### **Wednesday - The Touch of the Master's Hand - Communion with God - Existing for His Mission**

Then Jesus instructed him not to tell anyone what had happened. He said, "Go to the priest and let him examine you. Take along the offering required in the law of Moses for those who have been healed of leprosy. This will be a public testimony that you have been cleansed." But despite Jesus' instructions, the report of his power spread even faster, and *vast crowds came to hear him preach and to be healed of their diseases.* Luke 5:14-15

For you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; *walk as children of Light (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.* Ephesians 5:8-10

*Today's thoughts from today's verses:*

Jesus knew that living to please His Heavenly Father was the key to staying on target with the central focus of His mission, the redemption of the world. Our Heavenly Father loved the world and gave His Son to be the redeemer of the world. Jesus came as His Father's gift to the world and as such He knew He must keep His eye on the Cross where He would provide redemption for the world. Why did Jesus instruct the healed leper not to tell anyone about his healing? Jesus knew what a distraction vast crowds could be to staying focused. The leper did not heed the instructions of Jesus and vast crowds were the result. We too are to live to please our Heavenly Father and constantly maintain our focus to exist for the mission of redemption to which He has called us.

When we become ones who make serving a priority, we face many distractions from the people we serve, and we often end up living to please them instead of our Heavenly Father. This problem is rooted in the dynamics involved with having people need us and how this feeds things within ourselves that are problematic. We need to be vigilant about maintaining a commitment to live to please our Heavenly Father. We must always remember that the "need" is not the "call." We are called to serve our Heavenly Father, not merely the needs of other people. As his servants, we seek to please him day after day by doing his will in a consistent and comprehensive manner.

Through daily quiet times with God, we connect with God himself, his ways, and how he is moving in our lives. When this is how we connect with God, we will know the specifics of his will for us in the outworking of the mission of redemption to which he has called us. The less we connect with God in these ways, the less we will exist for him and the mission of reaching the world.

*Today's prayer response from today's thoughts:*

Lord, it seems that being close to you and hearing your voice is the key to living for you and the things that are important to you. As a recipient of redemption, I want to

be an agent of redemption. Help me to be so in tune with you that being used by you in the lives of others flows smoothly and naturally. Lord, I am so thankful for having the exciting and fulfilling opportunity of existing for you and your mission of reaching the world. Amen!

### **Thursday - The Touch of the Master's Hand - Communion with God - Being "Still" Before His Person**

*But Jesus often withdrew to the wilderness for prayer. Luke 5:16*

*But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door, and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. Matthew 6:6*

*Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth! Psalm 46:10*

*Today's thoughts from today's verses:*

Jesus certainly knew the value of spending time alone with His Heavenly Father in prayer. It was the key to staying focused on His mission of redemption and constantly living to please the Father. "Be still and know that I am God." The verse speaks of knowing God and refers to knowing God in one's actual experience, not just truth about Him. He is always there and ready for us to come into His presence. The key to knowing Him in this way is the concept of "being still." This is one of the greatest battle grounds. This is the turf on which the enemy of our souls wages war. Making time for being alone with God in a prayer-closet kind of way, drawing near and staying near in those kinds of times, letting go of our own agendas, veiling ourselves to the ongoing distractions that persistently come to us from the detail of our life situation, etc., are all a part of "being still."

Communing with God in prayer in as full a way as possible takes time, practice, and spiritual effort. It doesn't just happen, rather it does just not happen. It is not an obligation to fulfill, but rather the very lifeline of true spiritual existence. We are fundamentally in a serious predicament if we are not significantly involved in a developing pursuit of communing with God in prayer. As we said yesterday, it is

indeed through daily quiet times with God that we connect with God himself, his ways, and how he is moving in our lives. When this is how we connect with God, we will know the specifics of his will for us in the outworking of the mission of redemption to which he has called us. The more we learn to be still before God in prayer, the more we will exist for him and the mission of reaching the world (I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!).

*Today's prayer response from today's thoughts:*

Lord, once again I ask you to expand this prayerful moment into a very special quiet time with you. I want to learn to be still before you. May I experience the joy of your presence and the touch of your hand. May I be established in your ways. May I be in tune with your voice of guidance and direction as I seek to live for you and the advancement of your kingdom. I love you and worship you, Lord. Amen!

### **Friday - The Touch of the Master's Hand - Communion with God - Claiming the Fullness of His Victory**

Therefore, *let everyone who is godly pray to You* in a time when You may be found; surely in a flood of great waters they will not reach him. *You are my hiding place; You preserve me from trouble;* You surround me with songs of deliverance. I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you. Do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding, whose trappings include bit and bridle to hold them in check, *otherwise* they will not come near to you. *Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but he who trusts in the Lord, lovingkindness shall surround him. Be glad in the Lord and rejoice,* you righteous ones; and shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart. Psalm 32:6-11

*Today's thoughts from today's verses:*

We said earlier that getting caught up in the whirlwind of the hustle and bustle of life often keeps us from the very thing we need to be able to handle the hustle and bustle in healthy ways. So, slowing down and carving out a spot in our lives for a daily quiet time with God where we truly get to know Him, and His restoring and replenishing presence is essential. And it is when we accept God's calling to the mission of



redemption and surrender ourselves to be ones who live to please Him that we will find that we are over the hump of not being able to maintain a daily quiet time with God? And this my friend will lead us into the joy of becoming ones for whom God himself is more important and more real than anything and everything this world can offer. And surely, we will learn that it is through communion with the Master and the touch of his hand that allows us to claim the fullness of His victory for our lives that we so desperately long for.

*Today's prayer response from today's thoughts:*

Please form your own prayer response to God that flows out of your sense of how God has been at work in your heart and life this week. Amen!

***Note:***

**Personal help, encouragement, and support are available for your “Deeper” Christian life journey.**

At the beginning of the week the following three things were said:

- (1) When it comes to realizing Christian spirituality that is truly triumphant, it is “the Touch of the Master’s hand” that is absolutely essential and makes all the difference.
- (2) This Devotional series calls us to an understanding of Christianity that is absolutely dependent on the touch and work of Christ living in and through us.
- (3) This is truly a series to help the person who wants to explore, enter into, and consistently experience the “Deeper” Christian life.

This week’s devotional set has given you a lot to consider and respond to and there is a lot more ahead as we look at another four weeks of “Deeper” Christian life devotional materials.

Help, encouragement, and support are a vital part of the “Deeper” Christian life experience!

So, there are several things to put before you:

- (1) I am available to help, encourage, and support you. Please feel free to email me at [kenhart5273@gmail.com](mailto:kenhart5273@gmail.com) anytime with questions, thoughts, or concerns and I will gladly interact with you. I can also be available by phone when needed.

(2) I would like to develop a program of training for the “Deeper” Christian life experience. This can be shared now on a one to one basis but eventually I would like to offer it in a teaching setting with a workbook and assignments. If you are interested in this just make that known to me by email.

(3) I would like to facilitate “Deeper” Christian life support groups on an ongoing basis in the future. If you are interested in this just make that known to me by email.

I most certainly hope the “Touch of the Master’s Hand” Devotional Series blesses you and wonderfully guides you into a “Deeper” Christian experience.

Blessings! Ken Hart