

## Devotionals for the Week of July 23, 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 Kingdom Plan of God – A Genuine Spiritual Legacy – Accepting Our Role as God's Agents**

Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do. Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was .... But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves. I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil *one*. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, *are* in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. John 17:1-5, 13-21

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

Today is the start of week five of a five-week devotional series entitled, "The Kingdom Plan of God." This series is all about the intentions God has for this world and all that he is doing to see that his intentions are realized. God has a kingdom plan through which he will ultimately rescue and restore this world we live in. The Gospel is the centerpiece of his kingdom plan. God puts himself back into the equation one person at a time through the redemptive work of his Son, Jesus Christ. Through the gift of redemption Jesus indwells his redeemed ones by means of the Holy Spirit. One person at a time, from the inside out, he makes his people into the amazing people they were meant to be.

This difference Jesus makes in the lives of his people is the very means He uses to impact the lives of people all around us. The work Jesus does in us and the work he does through us is the heartbeat of God's kingdom plan. The impact of this work goes beyond transforming the hearts and lives of people to transforming the very fabric of society itself. Over the weeks of this series, we will explore in detail the kingdom plan of God. We hope you will be encouraged, challenged, and guided as you seek more and more to become the kingdom person God has called you to be.

The 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 series has five weeks of Devotional material with two weeks having six Devotionals and three having five. Week One: God's on a Mission. Week Two: A Revolution of Blessing. Week Three: God's Agents of Truth. Week Four: The Spiritual Boldness of Living Fully. Week Five: A

Genuine Spiritual Legacy. We begin Week Five, A Genuine Spiritual Legacy, with the following:

John 17 is a prayer offered by Jesus to the Father on behalf of His disciples just before His crucifixion (We looked at this prayer in part in week three). He is praying that they will be steadfast in their faith when He is no longer with them. But then, amazingly, Jesus takes it much further and says, “I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word.” What a wonderful picture of how the impact of the original disciples and each subsequent generation lives on. Jesus’ prayer includes us, and we are a testimony to the reality that His request was granted. One generation after another has believed through the “word” of disciples who have “gone on” but in a very special sense “live on” because they fulfilled their role as “God’s Agents.” While such considerations are mind boggling, there is one specific consideration that is of supreme importance. When we have “gone on” will we “live on” because the impact of His “word” through us has gone forth, with us as “God’s Agents” having left behind others who have believed? How to leave behind a “genuine spiritual legacy” such as this, is the focus of this week’s Devotionals.

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

Lord, I join you in the desire you have for me to leave behind a genuine spiritual legacy by accepting the role you have for me as an agent of the Gospel. I really do want it to be that when I have “gone on” the impact of my life will “live on” because there will be others left behind who have truly believed. Teach me more fully than ever before how to leave behind such a spiritual legacy. Amen!

## **Tuesday – The Kingdom Plan of God – A Genuine Spiritual Legacy – Serving Unique Purposes as God’s Agents**

For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers and underwent decay. Acts 13:36

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now .... Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel. Philippians 1:3-5, 27

You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything. 1 Thessalonians 1:6-8

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

Each generation of believers has the opportunity to impact their world with the gospel of Jesus Christ. As we look back, we can see both good and not so good examples from generation to generation. God has His purposes in each generation, and we must serve those purposes. There are always conditions and needs present in our world and as we impact people with the gospel of Jesus Christ, we must remember that we do so in the context of those conditions and needs. We need to embrace people, right where they are in the middle of what they are going through, with love, compassion, and help. When this is done in a genuine way the message of the gospel can be shared with greater receptivity and thus there exists the very necessary and wonderful blend of both the words and deeds of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

May it be that when future generations of believers look back to us, they will see that as “God’s Agents” we truly served his unique purposes for us in our time. Every generation has the privilege and responsibility to reach people

for Christ and to impact society. In week one of this series, we said that the work Jesus does in us and the work he does through us goes beyond transforming the hearts and lives of people to transforming the very fabric of society itself. Each generation of Christians must address the needs and conditions of the world of their day and so contribute to making the world into the amazing place it was meant to be. The work of making the world into the amazing place it was meant to be will happen in part over the course of time (generation after generation) as God accomplishes the work of making people into the amazing people they were meant to be. But making the world into the place it was meant to be will always and only be an “approximation of the consummation” (quoted from David Bryant, author of “Concerts of Prayer”). When the fullness of God's mission of redeeming people and filling them with his glory is complete (consummation), he will then fully fulfill in his final earthly kingdom all the amazing purposes he has for mankind on planet earth and the world will be totally filled with his glory. Thus, “the Kingdom Plan of God” will be completed.

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

Lord, help me embrace people, right where they are in the middle of what they are going through, with love, compassion, and help. I confess I get so caught up in myself that I routinely choose to bypass people who are impacted by conditions that make me uncomfortable and have needs that I'd rather not be involved with. Change me, Lord. Show me how to give myself to others so that my words and deeds serve the Gospel and accomplish the unique purposes of your kingdom plan for today. Amen!

### **Wednesday – The Kingdom Plan of God – A Genuine Spiritual Legacy - Assuming All Risks as God's Agents**

Who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 2 Corinthians 1:4

For the Scripture says, “whoever believes in him will not be disappointed.” For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; for whoever will call on the name of the lord will be saved. How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, “how beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things!” Romans 10:11-15

But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. Romans 3:21-24

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

In our world today there are conditions that exist and needs that people have that are simply overwhelming. At the same time, however, we often find ourselves isolated and insulated from a world in dire straits. We seem to put great effort into protecting ourselves from the conditions of our times not realizing that when we do we often cut ourselves off from those people who have the greatest level of need as the result of experiencing the brunt of those conditions. We need to examine ourselves for the presence of fears that bind us and keep us from impacting our world with the words and deeds of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The gospel is for everyone regardless of the risks that reaching certain ones may present. Possible loss of comfort, dignity and respectability, and security, etc. must not keep us from the very people who most need us.

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

Lord, forgive me for being so concerned about what will happen to me that I am blinded to what other people who need you are going through. I see that the risk of someone missing you is a far greater issue than the risk of my involvement. Take away my fears, fill me with compassion and concern, and help me impact my world with the words and deeds of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Amen!

## **Thursday – The Kingdom Plan of God – A Genuine Spiritual Legacy – Overcoming Selfish Barriers as God’s Agents**

When Jesus went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things. Mark 6:34

Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.” Matt 9:35-38

Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come. And He was saying to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest” .... At that very time He rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit, and said, “I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight. All things have been handed over to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.” Turning to the disciples, He said privately, “Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see, for I say to you, that many prophets and kings wished to see the things which you see, and did not see them, and to hear the things which you hear, and did not hear them.” Luke 10:1-2, 21-24

But Peter, along with John, fixed his gaze on him (lamb man) and said, “Look at us!” And he began to give them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, “I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene--walk!” Acts 3:4-7

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

Jesus perfectly served the purposes of His Father. There were no barriers between Him and the people around Him that were of His making. And He was able truly to “see” the people He came into contact with. What happens when we truly “see” the people we come into contact with? Unnecessary barriers that keep us from being involved are taken away so that our focus is off of us. We are not caught up in wanting to be “seen.” We are not worried about what our contact with another will do for us or to us. We are not absorbed in promoting ourselves, our agenda, or our needs. Jesus longs to send us out into the harvest fields where he says that the harvest is plentiful. We must be willing. It is not difficult. We simply seek to be present and available for the welfare of another. Filled with the presence of God, His love and compassion overflow from us to another person as He enables us to “see” that person the way He does. With troublesome barriers out of the way, the purposes God has for us in the life of another can be fulfilled.

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

Lord, I do pray that you will send out workers into your harvest and I genuinely intend to be a part of the answer to that prayer. I choose to take my eyes off myself and onto you and others. Fill me with your love and compassion. Show me today someone my life can touch in very special ways. May your love and compassion overflow from me to them. Perhaps in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene they will rise up and walk. Amen!

## **Friday – The Kingdom Plan of God – A Genuine Spiritual Legacy – Advancing Hope, Joy, and Glory as God’s Agents**

For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything .... For this reason, we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted *it* not *as* the word of men, but *for* what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe. For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea .... For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? For you are our glory and joy. 1 Thessalonians 1:8, 2:13-14A, 19-20

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

As we participate in “the Kingdom Plan of God,” we have the opportunity to touch our world in ways that are both similar to and distinct from other points in history. The gospel never changes and thus the similarity of our opportunity. But the conditions and needs of our world today are unique and thus the distinctiveness of the opportunity before us. Breaking down unnecessary limitations, “seeing” others through the eyes of our Heavenly Father, embracing people and their needs in the midst of the conditions of our times, bestowing genuine love and compassion, and communicating the true message of the Gospel, will allow us to leave behind a legacy where the impact of the gospel through us “lives on” as we advance hope and joy and the glory of God.

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

Lord, thank you for your Word and the work it is performing in me. My life is being transformed so that more and more I am living for you and not myself. I am getting more of a handle on what it means for me to be an agent of the Gospel so that I am sharing my faith with others. Please continue to help me connect with other people no matter who they are and no matter what conditions encompass their lives. Living for you is all about hope, joy, your glory. I know that as you use me to advance hope, joy, and your glory in the lives of others, I will someday leave behind a genuine spiritual legacy that truly contributed to your amazing kingdom plan. Amen!