

**MONDAY 1.16.23 – Mark 9:35**

We like to win, don't we? We like it when we are looked upon as the best at something. Humanity is always looking for an advantage when it comes to winning or being first. First place in a race. Winning an election. First place in a contest. Winning the heart of someone we are courting. Wouldn't it be nice if we could be assured of a win if we followed a few instructions? A simple recipe? How about one, very simple command? Serve others. All others. Period. You win. It is that simple. We cannot be guaranteed victory for many of the endeavors we choose to take on. But when it comes to our faith and where we stand with God, He makes it quite clear. Serve. Love. Go forth and spread the Good News. The directions are right in front of us. Will we follow them?

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

---

---

---

---

**TUESDAY 1.17.23 – Colossians 3: 23-24**

<sup>23</sup> Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, <sup>24</sup> since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. What do you do? When asked that question, we often answer with our vocation. I am a plumber. I am a lawyer. I am a pastor. I am a mom. The statement "in whatever you do" goes beyond our vocation and probes into all aspects of our lives. I was once asked to speak at a high school graduation. My opening statement was, "Many people have been asking you "What are you going to do after graduation?" Today I want to ask you "What are you going to be after graduation?" I think today's verses are really asking the same question. "In whatever you do, what are you going to be?" At work, at home, at a party, when you are all alone, when you are at the store, when you are driving. In whatever you do, are you being a good reflection of Christ? Are you being an Ambassador of the Good News. As we head into 2023 let's purpose to be all that Christ wants us to be, in whatever we do.

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

---

---

---

---

**WEDNESDAY - 1.18.23 – Acts 21:1-16**

Well-meaning friends sought to dissuade Paul from going to Jerusalem. The disciples in Tyre, the Prophet Agabus, Paul's missionary team—even trusted Luke—was begging Paul not to journey to Jerusalem. They knew what awaited him there—suffering and persecution. Paul responded, "Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." The great apostle renewed his resolve and continued on God's path for him, regardless of the potential cost. Paul discerned the will of God for his life, and he refused to compromise because of coming affliction. Like Paul, when we know what God wants us to do, we must do it. For most of us, the problem is not that of knowing God's will but obeying it.

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

---

---

---

---

**THURSDAY 1.19.23 – Jeremiah 33:3**

We are obviously skilled at discerning light from darkness and varying colors and sounds. On the other hand, are we able to discern the signs of the times? Try as we might, we are not able to put a timetable or date on future events, though we look with interest at promises coming to pass. Hebrews 5:14 claims that "strong meat belongs to those ... who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

It is our duty and obligation to discern good and bad and to learn to conform our behaviors to those standards. In Jeremiah's second vision, he is told directly by the Lord to call on Him regarding things he does not know. Sometimes it is a stretch to force this wonderful verse to apply to our situation. But it is never a stretch to know that it is right to call on the Lord about discerning right from wrong, good from bad, righteousness from evil, and then working to conform our behavior to those standards.

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

---

---

---

---

**FRIDAY 1.20.23 – Psalm 32:8-9**

No one likes to have his intelligence insulted by being compared to an animal that lacks understanding. Yet this is exactly what God does to us when we choose to ignore His direction and instead follow our own desires. Today's passage warns us not to be like the horse or mule that needs to be controlled by bit and bridle because we have rejected God's offer to instruct, teach, and counsel us. Further, in Isaiah 53:6 and I Peter 2:25, we are compared to sheep that have gone astray. Sheep have no innate sense of direction. In Proverbs 3:5-6, we are *commanded* to "Trust in the Lord" with all our heart so that God can keep our paths straight. Not to trust is disobedience—sin; and we will suffer the consequences of ignoring Him. Even though, mercifully, God is slow to anger and has provided for our forgiveness when we stray (I John 1:9), let's be smart and choose God's way *first*.

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

---

---

---

---

SUNDAY MORNINGS – 9:40am

- Kids** CHILDREN'S CHURCH (Ages 4 – 4th Grade)  
LOCATION: Kid's Wing on the Lower Level  
*available during the 9:40 service*
- NURSERY (through Age 3)  
LOCATION: Kid's Wing on the Lower Level  
*available during the 9:40 service*
- Youth** YOUTH GROUP (5th – 12th Grade)  
LOCATION: Youth Activity Center (across street)
- Adults** WINTER SUNDAY MORNING E2 CLASSES  
Explore the Bible - Gene Steinruck  
Masterwork - Randy Hutchison  
Where Do We Go from Here - Joel Day, Barry Wills
- Membership - Bob Lehman - 7wks

SUNDAY EVENINGS – 6:00pm

- Kids** MESSIAH KIDS (Ages 4 – 4th Grade)  
LOCATION: Kid's Wing on the Lower Level  
CURRENT SERIES: Answers for Kids
- Youth** YOUTH GROUP (5th – 12th Grade)  
LOCATION: Youth Activity Center (across street)  
*5th–8th Grade meet downstairs*  
*9th–12th Grade meet upstairs*
- Adults** DIVE DEEPER WITH DOUG - will resume 1/8/ 2023

WONDERFUL WEDNESDAYS - 6:00pm FAC

Meal at 6pm - Study to follow  
Ephesians by J.D. Greear

WOMEN'S STUDIES

TUESDAY EVENINGS 6 -7:30pm - Soup & Study - Beginning 1/10

THURSDAY MORNINGS 9 - 11am - Women's Study - Beginning 1/11

TO SIGN UP OR REQUEST MORE INFORMATION FOR ANY GROUPS OR CLASSES, PLEASE  
USE THE CONNECT CARD IN YOUR BULLETIN. THANK YOU!

**Acts 20:13-38**  
**Final Instructions**

Paul's message to the Ephesian believers has three parts:

1. A Review of the \_\_\_\_\_ (vv 18-21)

Despite threats on his life, Paul preached the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles in Ephesus. Paul taught the Word to those who placed their faith in Jesus for eternal life so they would develop into spiritually mature believers.

2. A Testimony of the \_\_\_\_\_ (vv 22-27)

The one fact Paul knew for certain is that he's going to be opposed and imprisoned, but that doesn't matter to him. He wants to do the will of God and to run the race of the Christian life.

3. A Warning about the \_\_\_\_\_ (vv 28-38)

Satan wants to attack you as a believer, and he often does it through false teachers. He wants you to believe lies that will cause you to veer off the pathway of the Christian life. So, Paul issues four warnings to help us to live the Christian life successfully and to finish well.


- Warning #1—Don't be \_\_\_\_\_ (v 31)
  - 1 Corinthians 10:12
- Warning #2—Don't be \_\_\_\_\_ (v 32)
  - John 15:4; 8:31
- Warning #3—Don't be \_\_\_\_\_ (v 33)
  - 1 Timothy 6:8-10
- Warning #4—Don't be \_\_\_\_\_ (vv 34-35)

TAKING OUR NEXT STEP TOGETHER IN THE WORD



January 16th – January 20<sup>th</sup>

INTRODUCTION:

Part of our purpose and strategy as a church is to Edify and Equip  every believer. We desire to see every person take their next step with God, both individually as well as with families and small groups (E2 Communities). This devotional is to aid us in just that. We invite you to join us in daily devotion.

OVERVIEW:

Monday's and Tuesday's readings will be a follow up on Sunday's message "Final Instructions" from Senior Pastor Doug Lyon. Wednesday's through Friday's devotions will help prepare us for the message on 1.22.23, "Hearing God's Voice", from Senior Pastor Doug Lyon.

KEY/MEMORY VERSE:

"Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord." Psalm 31:14