

## My Prayer Journal

*Use this weekly prayer to help you begin your time with God each day.*

### Prayer of Confession:

*Holy God, we give You thanks that You take the initiative in calling out to us in the midst of our everyday, ordinary lives. Help us to recognize You in those moments, and not to overlook the opportunity to partner with You in Your transformational mission. When we feel inadequate for the tasks You lay before us, help us to hear the assurance of Your presence. We pray in the holy name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.*

### My Prayers this Week:

#### Family Time:

Most of your families have been adjusting to working or doing school from home. It can be so difficult to completely change schedules and begin new routines. Maybe this time has brought some difficult moments into the home or fear of the unknown. The great news is in all of these changes you are able to become closer as a family and build a foundation on Christ. I pray that through this you would be able to eliminate fear and build your faith in Jesus more.

### MONDAY 11.16.20

### Judges 6:1-16

This week, we will be looking at various biblical stories of people who were called, by God, from their ordinary, everyday lives into an extraordinary purpose defined by God. The theme Scripture for this week is Moses' experience of God at the burning bush, giving him the commission to lead Israel out of Egypt. After doing so, and once the people had entered the promised land of Canaan, the people lived as a loose confederation of tribes. Occasionally, God raised up a judge—more of a military leader than what we would consider a judge—to defend Israel against various other tribes. In today's reading, the Midianites have devastated Israel's crops, and a farmer named Gideon is hiding in a winepress, threshing wheat there in hopes of keeping his crop safe from the marauding Midianites. An angel of God commissions Gideon to "save Israel out of Midian's hand," but Gideon identifies himself as only the weakest member of the weakest clan in his entire tribe. Still, God insists that, together, they can, and will, defeat the Midianites.

- What does the fact that Gideon was hiding in a winepress tell you about his image of himself?
- When have you been asked to act beyond your self-image?

### TUESDAY 11.17.20

### 1 Samuel 16:1-13

Years after the events of yesterday's reading, the loose confederation of tribe demanded a king to rule over them. Saul was anointed king, but when Saul turned away from obedience to God's instruction, God rejected him as king. In the perhaps familiar story from today's reading, God sent the last judge of Israel, Samuel, to the family compound of a man named Jesse, having chosen one of Jesse's sons to succeed Saul as king. Of course, Samuel expects that one of Jesse's oldest, strapping sons must be God's chosen, but after seven seemingly perfect candidates are passed over by God, Samuel asks Jesse to call for David, the youngest, who is tending sheep out in the fields. David, the least likely of all Jesse's sons, is anointed as the future king, and Samuel learns a powerful lesson—"The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

- What reasons can you think of for God choosing the seemingly weaker candidate for His service?
- Who would you rather have help—someone whose heart was committed to the cause, or someone more physically capable who wasn't 100% in?

### WEDNESDAY 11.18.20

### Jeremiah 1:4-19

Many generations after David was king, the kingdom divided into a northern and southern kingdom, and eventually, the northern kingdom fell to Assyrian invaders. When the Assyrians were defeated by the Babylonians, the Babylonians began to besiege the southern kingdom as well. In the midst of this, God called to a boy by the name of Jeremiah, the son of a priest, to be His prophet. The word Jeremiah uses to describe himself could be a young man anywhere from his early teens to early twenties but it is clearly someone not yet considered fully mature. As such, Jeremiah is not at all confident in his calling. God assures Jeremiah that He will put words in Jeremiah's mouth, and that He will protect Jeremiah. Jeremiah will need it—because the word he is called to preach will make him extraordinarily unpopular. Although the southern kingdom was living in confident self-delusion of God's permanent protection, Jeremiah was called to tell them that their destruction by Babylon was imminent, due to their moral failures. For more than forty years, Jeremiah preached this message, even living to see the fulfillment of his prophecy.

- Why do you think Jeremiah's first reaction to God was fear?
- When have you been afraid to respond to God's call?

### THURSDAY 11.19.20

### Luke 5:1-11

The story of Jesus' call of the first disciples, Simon Peter and his business partners James and John, is well known. As the story goes, Jesus simply wants to borrow a boat from one of the fishermen on the lake, so He can teach the people on the lakeshore from a distance. After His teaching, He directs the owner of the boat, who happens to be a fisherman named Simon Peter, to a particular spot offshore, where his nets collect a massive haul of fish. So huge is the catch that Peter and Jesus call to Peter's partners, the brothers James and John, to help drag it into their boats as well. Still, the boats nearly sink from the weight of the fish. When Peter exclaims, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!," he recognizes his own poverty as compared to God's gift of abundance. The encounter is so impactful that all three of the fishermen, Peter, James, and John, make a decisive separation from their pasts. Pulling their full boats ashore, they leave it all laying there, to follow Jesus in His mission to "catch men." One might call it, today, a spiritual awakening.

- How shocking is it that Jesus would ask three ordinary fishermen to be the foundation of His ministry?
- Does it shock you to think that Jesus would call you to follow Him from exactly where you are right now?

**FRIDAY 11.20.20**

**Acts 16:6-15**

On his first missionary journey, the apostle Paul had stayed in the region known as Asia Minor, in what is modern-day Turkey. But in the middle of his second journey, he had a vision of someone in Macedonia, across the Aegean Sea in modern-day Greece, begging him to come there. After sailing to the port city of Neapolis, he went on to the larger inland city of Philippi. There, he and his fellow missionaries shared the good news of Jesus with a group of women gathered by the river. Among them was Lydia, who was a dealer in purple cloth. While that may not sound particularly impressive in our 21st century context, in that time, there was a royal monopoly on purple dye, which was very expensive. This, along with the fact that she is described as having a “household” of her own, suggests that Lydia was an important businesswoman in the Roman Empire. Yet, when she heard the gospel message, she and her entire household responded to the calling of Christ, and were baptized—making them the first documented converts to Christianity in Europe.

- What do you think would convince an important businesswoman to invite a group of travelers she didn't know to stay at her house? Is God calling you to a radical form of hospitality from beyond your social world?

**SATURDAY 11.21.20**

**1 Corinthians 1:26-2:5**

Paul theologizes on what is really at the heart of this week's readings in his letter to the church in Corinth. Like the people we have read about this week, Paul reminds the members of the church in Corinth that they were called not from the ranks of the wise or influential, but from what the world looked upon as the “weak and foolish.” Paul himself did not display “superior wisdom or eloquence” in his preaching to the Corinthians, but rather trembled in weakness and fear. Yet Paul insists that God does this for a reason—so that it is clear that the things being accomplished by those sent by God can only be accounted for by their being done through the power of God's Holy Spirit, and not through any natural talent or ability in the persons themselves. It is to God's glory that He empowers ordinary people to do extraordinary things. That way, Paul says, our faith will not be misplaced. As Christians, we don't trust in our own abilities to accomplish things for God, but in God's ability to empower us to do great things for Him.

- Why do you think Paul calls the Corinthians' attention to their origins in comparison to their current stature?
- What has God called you to, that will move you beyond the ordinary and into the extraordinary?



Daily Study Guide

November 15-21, 2020

**Sermon Series: Being Jesus**

**Week Three: “Jesus @ Work and School” - Rev. Gregory P. Finrock**

*Scripture for Sunday, November 15: Exodus 3:1-12*

“Moses was taking care of the flock for his father-in-law Jethro, Midian’s priest. He led his flock out to the edge of the desert, and he came to God’s mountain called Horeb. The LORD’s messenger appeared to him in a flame of fire in the middle of a bush. Moses saw that the bush was in flames, but it didn’t burn up. Then Moses said to himself, Let me check out this amazing sight and find out why the bush isn’t burning up. When the LORD saw that he was coming to look, God called to him out of the bush, ‘Moses, Moses!’ Moses said, ‘I’m here.’ Then the LORD said, ‘Don’t come any closer! Take off your sandals, because you are standing on holy ground.’ He continued, ‘I am the God of your father, Abraham’s God, Isaac’s God, and Jacob’s God.’ Moses hid his face because he was afraid to look at God. Then the LORD said, ‘I’ve clearly seen my people oppressed in Egypt. I’ve heard their cry of injustice because of their slave masters. I know about their pain. I’ve come down to rescue them from the Egyptians in order to take them out of that land and bring them to a good and broad land, a land that’s full of milk and honey, a place where the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites all live. Now the Israelites’ cries of injustice have reached me. I’ve seen just how much the Egyptians have oppressed them. So get going. I’m sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.’ But Moses said to God, ‘Who am I to go to Pharaoh and to bring the Israelites out of Egypt?’ God said, ‘I’ll be with you. And this will show you that I’m the one who sent you. After you bring the people out of Egypt, you will come back here and worship God on this mountain.’” (CEB)

*Things that really impacted me from today's sermon:*

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**Prayer Requests**

- Julie Johnson
- Bettina Esser
- Charlotte Ottley
- Delaney Digman
- Bill Reichter
- Bob Vincent
- Peggy Cruse
- Bill Cruse
- Sophia Miller
- Judy Hoffman
- Nini Schneider

Everyone affected by the COVID-19 outbreak

Friends and family of Kathy Henkel

Share prayer requests online at [livingwordumc.org](http://livingwordumc.org)