

My Prayer Journal

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

Prayer of Confession: Holy Lord, we long for wisdom, but we confess that we prefer it to be our own. We ignore the possibility and promise that come from life together with You. We drown out Your gift of wisdom in favor of our own, for we believe that we know better. We want to decide when and where we will receive and apply Your wisdom. Forgive us, loving God. Bring an end to the self-righteousness that ignores You and awaken us anew to the wisdom that comes only from You. Show us how to walk in Your ways and how to listen to Your promise every day. We pray in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

My Prayers this Week:

Family Time:

Have you ever believed something a friend told you, only to find out later that it wasn't true? Did the thing you believed that wasn't true lead you to behave in a way that you wouldn't have if you hadn't believed them? The Bible teaches us that there are a lot of people in the world who believe things that can lead them to behaviors that can be harmful to themselves or to other people, because of what they have decided is most important. Part of what Jesus taught us is that what we believe about Him, and whether we believe His teachings, should make a difference in how we live in the world and how we make decisions. All of us make decisions about what to do, what to say, and how to think based on something we believe—and God wants that something we believe to be Jesus and His teachings!

MONDAY 4.17.23

Mark 9:14-27

This week, we are kicking off a new sermon series called “Reframing Your Worldview.” More than at any other point in world history, every single person has the opportunity today to be confronted with an incredibly diverse array of cultures, opinions, and choices. Throughout this series, we will be talking about what it means to say that we have a “Christian worldview,” beginning this week with the question, “Does it really matter what I believe?” In today’s reading from Mark, an exasperated Jesus refers to the crowds around Him—including His disciples—as “O unbelieving generation!” For Jesus, “belief” had a very particular meaning: to align one’s worldview with reality as seen from God’s perspective, and as revealed in Jesus’ own life and teachings. Jesus’ exclamation demonstrates that the crowds around Him continually took a different worldview, much as the world has continued to do ever since. Just as the father in today’s story wrestles with belief and unbelief, there are many people today who are desperate for God’s truth, but whose lives are being shaped instead by a sea of shifting worldviews and opinions. Don’t miss the fact that even though the father confessed his struggle with unbelief, Jesus still graciously healed the man’s son.

- What do you think the man believed after this encounter?

TUESDAY 4.18.23

2 Thessalonians 2:13-15

In today’s reading, the apostle Paul makes an eye-opening claim—that we are saved “through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit and through belief in the truth.” It might help to understand that an orthodox Christian understanding of salvation includes the fact that we “have been saved,” we “are being saved,” and we “will be saved,” all at the same time. Theologically, we refer to those three aspects of salvation as “justification” (we have been saved), “sanctification” (we are being saved), and “glorification” (we will be saved). When Paul writes here of “being saved,” he is writing about God’s ongoing work of sanctification in our lives, actively saving us, today, from the power sin holds over our lives. Thus, we are being saved “through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.” But notice that Paul adds to this description of how we are being sanctified the words “and through belief in the truth.” If we have any question about whether what we believe matters, Paul makes clear that our “belief in the truth” plays an active role in our present-day salvation/sanctification. No wonder Paul here, and elsewhere, is so emphatic about “holding on to the teachings we passed on to you.” Salvation involves being formed into belief in Jesus’ truth.

- Has your worldview changed through the Holy Spirit? How?

WEDNESDAY 4.19.23

Psalms 78:1-39

In the Old Testament, “belief in God” was equivalent to “trusting God” or “being faithful/loyal to God.” From God’s original choosing of the people of Israel as His covenant partners, the people were expected to teach every succeeding generation to believe in God through teaching them about God’s commandments and God’s history of saving Israel in times of trouble. The beginning of today’s Psalm reminds us of these facts ... but the Psalm goes on to tell us that even so, quite frequently, the people of Israel failed to “believe in God or trust in His deliverance.” No matter how many wonders God sent to Israel, no matter how many times their lack of belief led to disaster, there were many who refused to believe/trust in Him. In fact, much of the Old Testament is the story of clashing worldviews—the worldview of God’s prophets that insisted that trusting God and staying loyal to God’s covenant was the path to glory, versus those who insisted that trusting in military alliances, wealth, and/or foreign gods would yield blessing and success. Today, as then, our worldview is being influenced by a great many voices, whether we realize it or not. And today, as then, our best option is to align our worldview with that of God and God’s prophets.

- Which outside voices carry most influence for you?

THURSDAY 4.20.23

Luke 8:1-15

Jesus taught frequently about the nature of “belief,” and the challenges every person faces to persevere in faith. Today’s reading from Luke contains the familiar “parable of the sower,” in which Jesus teaches His disciples about the differing ways in which the truth of the gospel—the Word of God—will be received. As you read Jesus’ explanation of the parable in the final section, take note of the fact that what inhibits the seed of God’s Word from taking root in peoples’ lives is always some force—we could say some worldview—that is external to and opposed to God’s purposes for the world. In the first example, evil forces turn the person away from the truth with absolute intentionality, claiming that what is good is in fact evil. In the second, believers fall away “in the time of testing,” most likely influenced by false teaching that does not prepare one for the reality of suffering as a believer. In the third example, it is specifically riches, pleasures, and other worries of life that keep a person from maturing in belief—they have been swayed by the worldview that idolizes material blessings. Those with a Christian worldview, meanwhile, are able to persevere in faith even while bombarded by a world of differing priorities and even direct challenges to belief.

- How would you describe the state of your own “soil”?

