



LGC Daily Devotion Guide 2010

Week 23

June 6–June 12

I. Adoration

1. Invocation Prayer

“Dear Lord and Father of mankind, forgive our foolish ways; reclothe us in our rightful mind, in purer lives Thy service find, in deeper reverence praise. Amen.”

(John Greenleaf Whittier, 18078-92)

2. Adoration through Psalm 23

(We'll use this Psalm, not for today's Bible reading, but for the sake of focusing our thoughts on God)

- Read slowly this passage at least three times and each day gather one situation in which David experienced God as his shepherd and relate it to similar situations in your life, and translate your response to a prayer of adoration.

II. Confession

Pause now and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you your sins and ask for forgiveness.

III. Thanksgiving

List, one by one, things for which you should give thanks.

IV. Scriptural Reflection:

In our pursuit to understand the love of the Lord and responding to His love, we shall continue our scripture reading based on III John and the Book of Ruth. Reading slowly and reflectively the assigned passage twice at least and consider the questions below each day:

June 6

III John

This letter addresses a person by the name of Gaius, a leader of a local congregation toward the end of the 1st century, and John also talks about two other persons.

Gaius: vv. 1-8

- (1) John is referring to Gaius as one of his spiritual children (v.4). Do you have someone in the Lord, outside of your own filial family, to whom you can relate in a similar way to that between John and Gaius? How can such a relationship be cultivated? Why is it a good thing?
- (2) The theme of truth and love is being repeated again in this short letter. John commends Gaius on both. How does John link Gaius' walking in the truth to his love (vv. 2-7)? How can we learn from Gaius?

Diotrephes: vv. 9-11

- (3) List the accusations that John levels against Diostrephes.
- (4) What do you think is Diostrephes' core problem?

Demetrius: vv. 13-14

- (5) Demetrius is mentioned following v.11 as an example opposite to Diostrephes. How special is Demetrius?
- (6) What have you learned about God's love and loving God today?

June 7

Ruth 1:1-5

- (1) The story happens with the time of the Judges as the background. How would you describe this time, especially given the remark at the end of the entire book of the Judges?
- (2) What prompted Elimelech to leave Bethlehem (the house of bread) for Moab (traditional enemy territory)? Put yourself in their shoes, how difficult a decision was it? Can you identify with their struggle?

- (3) How long did they expect to stay in Moab and how long did they end up being there? What happened during this extended stay in Moab?
- (4) While most scholars opine that the meanings of the sons' names are really unknown, the name of Elimelech is "God is King", and that of Naomi is "be pleasant and lovely". Given the emphasis the Jews put on the meaning of their names, how would Naomi feel towards her God in all these? (See 1:20)
- (5) What would you do, if you were Naomi?
- (6) What have you learned about the love of God and loving God today?

June 8 Ruth 1: 6-14

- (1) When Naomi asked the two girls to return to their mothers' homes, where were they exactly? At home or already on the road? Why didn't Naomi think of it earlier?
- (2) What caused her to change her mind?
- (3) Orpah decided to head back home, while Ruth decided to stick with Naomi. From what Naomi said of Orpah, and Ruth's reply, what was the main difference between Orpah and Ruth? What do you find the most touching in Ruth's reply?
- (4) In-law relationship is universally problematic, how can we learn from Ruth and Naomi?
- (5) What did the women exclaim when they saw Naomi? What does this imply?
- (6) What have you learned about the love of God and loving God today?

June 9 Ruth 2: 1-7

- (1) Look up Leviticus 19:9-10 ; 23:22 and Deuteronomy 24:19-22. Why does God set up such provisions? Do you think today's farmers or crop producers would follow these instructions? Why or why not? Search yourself and see how you might have fallen short of the heart of God in this respect, even though you might not be a farmer.
- (2) What kind of a situation Naomi and Ruth found themselves in

after their return to Bethlehem? What does Ruth's action say about her and her decision to come with Naomi?

- (3) How did the foreman refer to Ruth and what insight might it give you into Ruth being a young, foreign woman in a foreign land? How did she face her challenge?
- (4) What have you learned about the love of God and loving God today?

June 10 Ruth 2: 8-13

- (1) From how Boaz addressed Ruth, what likely was the age of Boaz?
- (2) How Jews in general in OT times treated gentiles can hardly be disputed. How special was Boaz then in his treatment of Ruth?
- (3) What explanation did he give for such a special treatment in vv.11-12?
- (4) What has this meant for Ruth?
- (5) What have you learned about God's love and loving God today?

June 11 Ruth 2: 14-23

- (1) Read the wonderful instructions that Boaz gave to the men concerning Ruth, and reflect on the decision this young widow made in taking care of her widowed mother-in-law. What conclusion can you draw?
- (2) What impact do you think Boaz's acceptance of Ruth would have on his household servants?
- (3) Naomi identifies Boaz as one of their "kinsman-redeemers". Of the many obligations of this person, look up Lev. 25:25-30, 47-55. From this, what can you understand about "redemption"?
- (4) In this portion of narrative, what stands out to you?
- (5) What have you learned about God's love and loving God?

June 12 Ruth 3: 1-18

- (1) If you were an old widow without any means of ongoing support, what would be the things that worry you most? According to v.1, what was Naomi's worry?

- (2) If you were Ruth, would do you what Naomi told you to in vv. 2-4? Why or why not?
- (3) How did Boaz interpret Ruth's action? Was it one of lewdness or of noble character? Why?
- (4) From the way Boaz subsequently dealt with Ruth, what do you think of Boaz and Why?
- (5) What have you learned about God's love and loving God today?

V. Meditative Reflection

This week we shall continue reflecting on Celtic spirituality.

June 6

What kind of Christian can best endure suffering? That Christian doesn't exist.

I could handle your problems easily. You could handle mine with a yawn. But it didn't happen that way. I got the ones I couldn't handle; so did you.

June 7

Many a Christian worker has raised up a work that perhaps was worthy to be called 'church life' or 'body life'. Once built, problems developed. He fought tooth, tongue and nail to preserve his work. Why? I wonder. Why fight to preserve it? It will stand if it is Christ. If part of it stands, and that part is really Christ, then having nothing but that little part surviving is far better than a large work that has to be held together by reason, logic, theology, fear, accusation, doctrine or whatever. In my judgement, the worker might seriously consider stepping back, even out-dying to his work, letting the fire fall on that work and seeing just how much of it can survive.

June 8

There are many great success stories around, but those works very rarely reflect the bride of Jesus Christ. Sometimes she seems to be as elusive as her Lord. Rarely do you see her beautiful and whole, gathering somewhere in the city. Rarely will you ever gather in a place where you will sense the deep work of Christ in the corporate body of people. Being with a people who have been made one ... and whose oneness — tested by the long trek of time — is found in nothing, absolutely nothing, but Christ. Such a people is rare, exotically rare. Rare because that glorious work which the Father did in the Son was so rare.

June 9

Another way to know that the Lord has gained some ground in your life: when you can accept criticism, even if viciously served, without a sense of resentment and with no need to retaliate.

Joseph said about his brothers, if you remember, that ‘they meant it to me for evil but *God* meant it to me for good.’

June 10

Christian workers especially have a tendency to talk of anything that opposes their little world and their little work as being from the devil. (My, how much of that attitude I have witnessed in these last 30 years.) Such an accusation on the part of a worker, ‘I’ll tell you, this whole thing is of the devil,’ surely makes it rough on the poor brother who is really causing the problem. He wakes up to find all his friends now thinking he’s the devil ... or a reasonable facsimile.

It’s an uncomfortable feeling, is it not, to be sitting out there in a meeting and hear that what you are doing is ‘the devil’s work’. I hope you survive; but frankly the chances are very slim that you will. Sure, I wish Christian workers wouldn’t talk that way. Such talk has clubbed my blood for a generation. But they do. For centuries past they have and for whatever centuries lie ahead they will continue to. If the day comes that someone says of you, ‘*This* is of the devil’, I admonish you, check your heart, check your mouth, check your motives. Get clean, get your motives pure, surrender your will, opinions, desires and hopes to the Lord. Then lift up your head to the hills and know that all things are permitted from the hand of the Lord. Sorrow, joy, hope and fear. Refuse to accept *even* this as from the hand of the Lord and chances are you will get bitter. A bitter Christian is a devastated Christian.

June 11

One brother wisely said, ‘The cross is usually exactly the opposite of what we thought it was.’

When suffering comes your way, there is one thing that you certainly will do: you will ask the Lord, ‘*Why* has this happened?’

There is something else almost as certain.

You will receive no answer.

If the ‘why’ could be removed, dear brother, most of the transforming power of the cross would disappear. The ‘why’ factor of the cross is perhaps its sharpest, most effective, most deadly aspect. Remove the ‘why’ factor of the cross and there really isn’t much suffering involved in it.

June 12

Then what of those who are delivered, and delivered instantly from their sufferings? And what about this matter of exercising faith and therefore being delivered?

Sitting over there near you are two Christians. One is doing great, the other is in great pain; yet, the second seems to be just as worthy as the first. Why do his afflictions persist? Is it a lack of faith? What a quandary. What are we to believe? Of the two, who is closer to God? Has the afflicted brother failed in faith? Will the proper exercise of faith always triumph over affliction?

He who has been delivered by his faith has triumphed. He who is not delivered, yet faithfully (though weakly) yields - this one has also triumphed!

And if the truth is known, there is yet a third brother, the one who suffers and yet cannot find the strength to yield gloriously. He is only willing not to become bitter under the strong hand of God. He has no glorious story of healing or yielding, but it may just be that the pain he is going through is great enough and the work of God strong enough to penetrate past all his grumblings and groanings and change the inner man, Maybe, just maybe, even this one has triumphed!

VI. A Time for Silence

You have mediated much today with your intellectual faculty today. Now have a moment of silence (the length is up to you, 5 or even 30 minutes), and ask God quietly, “Lord, is there any important message from you today that I might have missed? Show me, your servant is listening?”

VII. Supplication

Use the following chart to cover people and ministries that you want to remember before the Lord:

	Your family	Other people	Church Ministries	Other Ministries	City & World	Others
Sunday						
Monday						
Tuesday						
Wed						
Thursday						
Friday						
Saturday						

VII. Benediction

“God bless this city, and move our hearts with pity, lest we grow hard. God bless this place with silence, solitude and space that we may pray. God bless these days of rough and narrow ways, lest we despair. Amen.” *(Jim Cotter)*