



LGC Daily Devotion Guide 2010

Week 29
July 18—24

I. Adoration

1. Invocation Prayer

O Lord, I do not pray for tasks equal to my strength; I ask for strength equal to my tasks. In Jesus' name. Amen. (Philips Brooks, author of "*O Little Town of Bethlehem*" 1835-1893)

2. Adoration through Psalm 29

(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 thought about this psalm that points to God's character that should be reflected in our lives and translate it into 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:

We shall continue the reading of the Gospel of Mark as we pursue the theme of imitating Jesus. Read slowly and reflectively the assigned passage twice at least and consider the questions below each day:

July 18

Mark 4: 1-9; 13-20

The fame of Jesus and the size of the crowd grew at the same time, but it appears that Jesus was speaking mainly in parables to them and Mark selects a few to be retold here. The first one is about the fates of the seeds being sown. Vv. 3-9 tell the parable and vv. 13-20 provide the explanation. It is important to note that in understanding a parable, one has to focus on its central teaching, and not on minor details, unless being made plain by Jesus himself.

- (1) In what ways is the use of the sower and seed sowing vividly fitting to the sharing of the gospel?
- (2) Can you relate the four outcomes of the seeds to people or incidents that you have come across (or in your own life)?
 - (a) Seeds fell along the path: taken away by Satan
 - How did Satan do this in a hearer's heart?
 - What can you (the sower) do?
 - (b) Seeds fell on rocky places: dried up by trouble or persecution
 - since trouble or persecution happens "because of the word", should you encourage the hearer keep his or her faith secret to avoid it?
 - What can you (the sower) do?
 - (c) Seeds fell among the thorns: choked dead by worries, wealth and worldly desires
 - What might be the most potent of the above in choking a hearer?
 - What can you (the sower) do?
 - (d) Seeds fell on good soil: acceptance and multiplication
 - How can the soil be good?
 - Is there anything you (the sower) can do to make sure the soil of the hearer is good?
- (3) What is the core message of this parable to you?

July 19 **Mark 4: 10-12; 21-25**

Vv. 10-12

- (1) In the New Testament, “secret” or “mystery” refers to God’s plan of salvation hidden in the past, but now made plain by the coming of Jesus. Why then did Jesus use parables in many of his public teachings?
- (2) Tom Rees once made a remark that “the same sun that hardens the clay, melts the wax”. How may his remark help you understand the quote from Isaiah 6:9-10 in v.12?

Vv. 21-23 Try not to tie this parable of the lamp with the one in Matthew 5 and read this within its own context and pay attention to the connective “for” in v.22.

- (3) Who is the Light of the world? And with this Light having come to the world, what is being (and will be) disclosed and brought out into the open? What has this to do with you?

Vv. 24-25 This parable has to do with how we hear (Jesus’ teachings), and v.25 is linked to v.24 by the word “for” (NIV somehow omits it)

- (4) With what measure did the Pharisees use in their hearing of Jesus? And what was the consequence?
- (5) With what measures did the disciples, like Peter, use in their hearing of Jesus, and what was the consequence?
- (6) What is the core message to you today?

July 20 **Mark 4: 26-34**

- (1) A kingdom is usually understood in terms of (i) the extent of its reign, (ii) its location and (iii) its people or citizens. Try to apply these to the Kingdom of God.
- (2) The first parable of the Kingdom is about (a) the continued growth day and night, (b) the growth is unknown to the sower, and (c) the “immediate” (in the original Greek in v.29) harvest. What does this parable teach you about the Kingdom of God and to what aspect(s) (i.e. i, ii, or iii above) does it refer?
- (3) The second parable of the Kingdom is about (a) its small or insignificant beginning, (b) its ability or power of growth, and (c) the final size being “the largest of all”. What does this parable teach you about the Kingdom of God and to what

aspect(s) does it refer?

- (4) Although Jesus was speaking mostly in parables, obviously he has meant to be understood, as much as he would only explain them further in private to his disciples, what impact might these parables have on the listening crowd?
- (5) What is the main message to you today?

July 21 **Mark 4: 35-41**

- (1) After a day of teaching and healing, Jesus was obviously exhausted to the point that he was oblivious to the squall. What does it tell you about Jesus?
- (2) How serious was the squall? How did the disciples react to it?
- (3) Why did they wake Jesus up? From what they said, what did they expect of Jesus?
- (4) How did Jesus calm the storm? Why would he choose such a method to calm the storm? And what was the effect?
- (5) Was Jesus being reasonable in his remark to the disciples? If you were one of them, during this storm, how might you have reacted?
- (6) Have you gone through life’s storm that might be comparable to this squall? How did you handle it? What would have been the remark to you by Jesus?
- (7) What have the disciples learned that night?
- (8) What have you learned about Jesus today?

July 22 **Mark 5: 1-20**

- (1) What can you learn about demonic power from this man?
- (2) Can you describe what a person is like under demonic power? How are people without Christ similar to this person?
- (3) From the exchange between the evil spirit(s) and Jesus, what more can you learn about the spirit-world and why would Jesus entertain their request?
- (4) The rearing of pigs was necessarily a pagan practice and that puts both the herdsmen and the demon-possessed man likely as gentiles. Does the reaction of the herdsmen to both the healing of the man and the drowning of pigs strike you as odd? What would yours be, if you were one of them?

- (5) Why did the man beg to follow Jesus? Why did Jesus reject his request? (Note: Decapolis, meaning ten cities, refers to the cities east and northeast of Jordan, all gentile cities, including Damascus.)
- (6) What is the most significant lesson you have learned today and how can you apply it to yourself?

July 23 Mark 5: 21-24; 35-43

- (1) Based on what you have read so far in Mark, how did the rulers of the synagogue view Jesus? Why then did Jairus choose to fall at Jesus' feet? Would you as one who might have got angry at Jesus because he blatantly broke the rules of Sabbath? Why or why not?
- (2) If you were Jairus, what would you think upon the news in v.35? What impact might the healing of the bleeding woman have on him? What can you tell of his faith, as Jesus said, "Don't be afraid, just believe."
- (3) Why did Jesus choose to revive the little girl only in the presence of a few disciples and the parents? Why would he exclude the wailing crowd from this?
- (4) Reflect on v.41, and see how it might touch you.
- (5) In what way you wish to imitate Jesus today?

July 24 Mark 5: 25-34

- (1) What would be the physical condition of a woman who had bleeding for 12 years? See Leviticus 15:19-24. What was the implication of her forcing her way through the crowd, as a result, (should the people become aware of her uncleanness?)
- (2) Apart from her health problem, try to describe her other conditions, physical, emotional and spiritual (i.e. attitude toward God)?
- (3) Imagine: she took great courage to come, she took great strength to force herself to the front, she had great faith (touching Jesus' cloak was enough for her), and she "felt" instant healing. How would you describe her feeling at that very point? What adjective might be the most appropriate?
- (4) Why did Jesus ask "Who touched my clothes?" Did he now

know? Why then did he ask? What's the purpose?

- (5) Why did the woman "tremble with fear"? Would it not be the opposite of the adjective you just used to describe her?
- (6) Her faith has already healed her, but now with her falling at Jesus' feet, willing to tell him her whole story, Jesus pronounced something more, "Daughter, you faith has 'saved' (Greek original) you. Go in peace, and be 'whole' of your suffering." What if, she chose to sneak away without willing to be confronted by Jesus? She would still be healed, but would she be saved? Why or why not?
- (7) What have you learned about Jesus today?

V. Meditative Reflection

This week we shall continue reflecting on The Aidan Liturgy from the Northumbria Community's 'Celtic Daily Prayer.' (Permission to reprint granted).

July 18

IONA

The mountaineer and the fisherman and the shepherd of the Isles live their lives in lonely places, and the winds and waves bear to them messages from the unknown beyond.

Wilkie

This, then, is the Iona of Columba.

There is the bay where the little, sea-tossed coracle drove ashore. There is the hill — the Hill of Angels — where heavenly visitants shone before him. There is the Sound across which the men of Mull heard vespers sung by hooded monks — heard the Lord's song sung in a strange land. There is the narrow strip of water across which holy men came to take counsel, sinners to do penance, kings to be crowned. The little island speaks with a quiet insistence of its past — for was it not at once the fountain and the fortress of the faith, at once the centre of Celtic learning and of Christian charity?

Troup

In Iona of my heart, Iona of my love,
instead of monk's voice
shall be lowing of cows;
but ere the world shall come to an end
Iona shall be as it was.

Attributed to Columba

How wonderful it is to walk with God
along the road which holy men have trod.

Theodore H. Kitching

Follow the example of good men of old,
and God will comfort you and help you.

Columba

July 19

RENEWING OF VOWS

Go back to the old wells, to the sweet waters. Isaac dug the wells again which they had used in his father's day. Returning to 'the old wells' may mean the renewing of a promise, Many couples in particular renew their vows, or return to places that for them hold important associations.

The union of your spirits here
has caused Him to remain,
for wherever two or more of you
are gathered in His Name
there is love.

Noel Paul Smokey

We seek a clear light to shine
upon our troubled way.
We ask You to give us clearer directions.
Where we have missed the way
and wandered far, bring us back
at whatever cost to our pride.
Take away our stubborn self-will,
for we know that in Your will alone
is our peace, We seek that peace.

Peter Marshall

July 20

DACHAU

If I said 'Yes, I forgive, but I cannot forget,'
as though God, who twice a day washes all the sands
on all the shores of all the world, could not wash
such memories from my mind, then I know nothing
of Calvary love.

Amy Carmichael, If

Not every pilgrimage is a pleasantly inspirational experience! Art Katz in his testimony-book Ben Israel writes of his visit to the concentration camp at Dachau:

I was totally unprepared for what greeted me at this museum of death . . . the gas rooms with the jets still in the ceiling. Here my

brother-Jews had been herded like cattle into cars. Women and children. Stripped naked. Old men and young boys. Why was the ear of God silent to the shrieks and prayer of these helpless, innocent ones who were slaughtered like cattle? My stomach turned sick and my eyes blurred with tears ... Outside were the conveyor belts where the bodies were dispatched to the giant ovens ... the mutilated bodies were slowly and systematically fed into the flames. The huge smokestacks never ceased their ugly belching — twenty—four hours a day as the ovens were stoked with the House of Israel.

And later, on the train that took him on his way...

In an instant the truth dawned: Katz, except for the accident of birth, the caprice of time and place, you might have been born a German Aryan. It could have been you stoking bodies into the ovens. He shuddered and looked long into the blue eyes of the German man opposite.

'I have been to Dachau,' he said quietly.

July 21

DARM STA DT

In my dream, behold I saw a man clothed in rags, standing in a certain place, with his face from his own house, a book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back. I looked, and saw him open the book, and read therein, and as he read he wept and trembled ...

John Bunyan

Repentance is seen by many as unfashionable and outmoded. Like sin, it is not to be talked about. But John the Baptist and Jesus himself made it central to their teaching of the Kingdom of God.

In Darmstadt, on State Highway 3 between Frankfurt and Heidelberg, stands a small chapel. Its building was the first of many victories for the sisters in establishing their Land of Canaan. Basilea Schlink and her community of Mary Sisters believed for the land, the finance, the permission, and with each obstacle, they sought deeper repentance lest any inward attitude blocked the release of God's blessing. Repentance is at the heart of their community, repentance, the joy-filled life.

As Christian walked on he came to a hill which grew steeper and steeper. The load on his back was very heavy as he climbed. Near the top there was a cross, and just as Christian came to the cross his burden fell from his back. It rolled and tumbled down the hill until it fell into a dark hole, and he saw it no more.

John Bunyan, Pilgrim's Progress

July 22

A PLACE OF QUIET

He walks with God
who speaks to God in prayer,
and daily brings to Him his daily care.

Anon

In every man lies a zone of solitude
that no human intimacy can fill:
and there God encounters us.

Brother Roger of Taizé

Speak to me, Lord, give me Your peace.
Show me the way to go.
I need Your love, I need Your strength,
all of my needs You know.

Be by my side, be in my heart.
Be in my every prayer.
Filling my life, filling my soul,
all of the time be there ...

Give me Your love
- give me Your peace ...

Ros Robertson

July 23

ST. CUTHBERT'S ISLAND

St Cuthbert's Island adjoining the shore of Lindisfarne is a wonderful parable of quiet, for it is always in sight of the main island,

and yet for hours and hours at a time it is completely cut off. It seems designed especially to experience a day of solitude, long enough to limit your freedom, but not as inaccessible as the life of the true hermit.

Here Cuthbert, and almost certainly Aidan before him, escaped from the pressures of community and of missions and turned their face towards God.

Thank you, Lord, that You have set aside places,
special trysting places where we can meet with You.

Alistair Eberst

How wonderful it is to talk with God
when cares sweep o'er my spirit like a flood;
how wonderful it is to hear His voice,
for when He speaks the desert lands rejoice.

Theodore H. Kitching

We've all got little cells in our hearts, little hermitages that God wants to fill. For some there's a physical place of silence. It's hard to be silent. It's hard to stop. To know God in the quiet is worth a lot — it's there we'll get our vision and our peace to come through whatever hits us.

July 24

SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

Jennifer Lash, in her book *On Pilgrimage*, tells a story about Gustava's son Cornelius, who had said to her as she left to go on pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, 'I hope you find what you are looking for.'

At the end of her journey I asked her what she had found. 'I have sown seeds,' she said. 'Now I must go home, live and work and wait for the harvest. I'll tell you in two years.'

As we ate together Gustava was full of tales; eager with all the adventures, but she was also very happy to be going home. Certainly it had been difficult, sometimes grim. How

had she coped? 'I trained myself to remember the faces of the children; they were so clear, as if they were with me.'

I asked Gustava why she had gone. 'For my sins,' she replied smiling. Never has anyone seemed so loving, open, caring and sinless. Gustava is a Catholic. She explained to me that, although you may be absolved of sin, the sin is itself a separation from God. She had wanted to work through that separation. 'Also I wanted to thank,' she said, 'thank for my life and health and my immediate family and I wanted to pray for two particular people.'

I thought of Cornelius's remark to his mother. One is always looking. Perhaps finding is simply looking further. 'Looking' is life. Maybe a pilgrimage puts that 'looking' into keener focus.

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

“Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. Amen.”

(Hebrews 12:3)