

“VACATION FOR THE SOUL”
“Reverence of God: Paying Attention to God”

We have begun a new sermon series, “Vacation for the Soul.” As a child, I always looked forward to summer vacations. I still feel that sense of relaxation when summer hits. I spend long evenings on the deck, ride my bike for both exercise and enjoyment, find more moments to be with family and friends. I believe we need vacations, we need time when the pace slows down and we can savor life a bit more. In scripture, that is called “Sabbath.” Our lives have become so complex and driven, that this summer is a good time to focus and reflect on a vacation for our souls, so that we might grow deeper in our spiritual walk and learn to find the paths which connect us with Christ. Our study guide will help us focus on one of the classical Spiritual Disciplines and on Wednesdays there will be a prayer time from 12:10 pm -12:40 pm in our chapel to practice that discipline and have a prayer pause in the week. Last Sunday we began with the concept of Sabbath and the Spiritual Disciplines of Meditation. This week our focus is on “prayer.” Each day in the Study Guide I will offer a different prayer practice. Remember the prayer words we picked up in January? I would also like you to spend time meditating on your prayer word this week, especially if you haven’t recently. May our prayer life reconnect us to God and remind us of this precious treasure we hold in earthen vessels. Pastor Cindy

Things I’d like to remember from today’s sermon: **“Reverence of God: Paying Attention to God”**

Prayer for the Week

Teach us your ways, God of Wisdom, for you are righteous and just. Plant your Word in our hearts, water it from the streams of your everflowing mercy, that it may bloom and produce in us the fruit that is a blessing to you and pleasing in your sight. Amen. Psalm Prayer based on Psalm 1, in Upper Room Worship Book, #225

This week’s sermon may be viewed at <http://sundaystreams.com/go/firstwichita>

Study Guide

Monday, June 11, 2018 Mark 3: 20-22, 31-35

Chapter one has 45 verses and chapter two has 28 verses and by verse 21 in chapter three, Jesus' family was convinced he was "out of his mind." Up to this point, Jesus has been baptized, tempted, preached, healed, taught, exorcised demons and called his disciples. At least according to the author of Mark, Jesus' ministry is moving fast and furiously. No wonder Jesus' family is concerned. What was he thinking confronting the religious leaders, healing people, teaching in such a way to stir up trouble? In Mark 1: 35, early in the morning Jesus withdraws to pray. Others might think he is "out of his mind" but Jesus is centering his ministry in prayer. *Today, find fifteen minutes, withdraw into your office, a bedroom, in a park or on a walk. Pray the psalm prayer listed this week. Pray it again. Then listen to what God is saying to you in this time of prayer.*

Tuesday, June 12, 2018 2 Corinthians 4: 7-9

We have this "treasure" in earthen vessels or clay pots or clay jars. Some pots are sturdier than others, but all can become cracked or broken. Mosaics are made from broken pieces, and stained glass is broken glass welded together and they are beautiful. I don't know why Paul uses the metaphor of earthen vessels, but I like to think that it is because God does beautiful things with brokenness. We are all sinners saved by Grace, we are all weak and broken and have places in our lives that are still healing. "But we have this treasure in clay pots," and that treasure points to God's amazing grace and love. Today, find something broken that has been repaired, a piece of pottery or glass ware, find a mosaic in a park or a piece of stained glass in a building or on a computer. Spend time with God and see how something precious can be made out of broken pieces and ask God to do something beautiful with those parts of your life that are hurting, broken and in need of healing.

Wednesday, June 13, 2018 2 Corinthians 4: 8-9

Paul notes that life is not easy, and in fact, it is often difficult. No matter what happens, they do not give up, they are not "down and out" they are not crushed or discouraged. We have this treasure in earthen vessels. Today, from 12:10-12:40 there will be a prayer service in the chapel. This is a pause in the middle of the week. A chance to be in a space with beautiful stained glass and have some intentional time with God. If you can join in this prayer service, take time, either during the noon hour or some other time during the day to pray. *I would invite you to use a breath prayer. Breathe in: Lord Jesus Christ, Breathe out: Son of God, Breathe in: Have mercy on me, Breathe out: a sinner. So we breathe in Jesus, breathe out our faith he is the Son of God, breathe in mercy and breathe our sin. This is our prayer and our faith.*

Thursday, June 14, 2018 2 Corinthians 4: 15-18

Paul writes they are not beaten or depressed by the difficulty of life. Instead they know that the "inner being" is being renewed day by day. Focusing on the unseen instead of what they see or know, they are trusting the eternal and everlasting love of God. This treasure points to the extraordinary power, love and grace of God which works in our hearts, our spirits and lives. Prayer is the vehicle, the channel through which we are connected to God's Spirit and to each other. *Today in prayer, pray in silence, with no words. Use an object to focus your mind and heart, it could be a candle, a picture, a painting, a rock or tree. Today, be still, be silent and listen. In the silence, find the peace of God in the midst of all of life's troubles.*

Friday, June 15, 2018 Psalm 138

This psalm is one of praise, singing and gratitude. It acknowledges that in times of trouble God is there and God's faithful love lasts forever. There are many ways to pray; silently, using a psalm, using a breath prayer. There are many ways to come into God's presence and connect. One is to be intentional with what we are doing and praying as we work, as we play, as mow the lawn, do a load of laundry, watch our kid's at a ball game, as we peel potatoes or do the dishes. *Today, find ways to intentionally be in touch with God in your daily tasks. Pray the psalm prayer used in this study guide that the wisdom of God might help you see God and hear God in all you do.*