





Theme: Authentic FAITH in a World of Artificial Intelligence **"Finding Peace in an Anxious AI World"**

Weekly Memory Verses:

¹³ For you have rescued me from death; you have kept my feet from slipping. So now I can walk in your presence, O God, in your life-giving light. –Psalm 56:13


Meditation Moments for Monday, January 19 – Read **Exodus 14:5 and 9-16**. As scary situations go, being an unarmed former slave on the edge of an inland sea and seeing your former master's mighty army closing in on you, would have to rank high. It had to feel like the world around them was closing in on them rapidly, much like we can feel that happening with artificial intelligence seeming like it's taking over. Pharaoh had chariots, horses, trained troops and modern weapons. Israel had their bare hands, and God. Then Moses spoke the extraordinary words we'll see often this week: "Do not be afraid."


 The terrified Israelites saw only two choices: "It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!" God said, "March through the sea," which they didn't think was possible. Faced with a choice you saw as hopeless, when have you found a way through that you had ruled out? Can you see God's hand in that?

 This passage highlights the paradox Christ-followers often face. In verse 14, Moses said "you need only to be still." In verse 15 God told Moses, "Tell the people to move on." Both messages were needed. How have you learned to discern when God is calling you to be still and trust, and when God's call is for you to "move on" and take action?

Prayer: *Gracious God, help me to both be silent and listen when I need to, and then take action when you call me to move. May I be aware of your presence even with the world changing rapidly around me, knowing that you are God and I do not need to be afraid. Amen*


Tuesday, January 20 – Read **Psalm 37:5-11**. When we read Bible verses that say, “Do not fear,” we’re often inclined to think, “Yeah, but they don’t know what I’m facing!” But the Bible writers did not live in some movie fairyland. This psalmist knew well that “people succeed in their own way” and “carry out their wicked schemes.” Despite that, he said, “Trust in the Lord—be still before the Lord.”


 When we read “[God] will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn,” we tend (especially if things are tough) to ask, “When?” The psalm hints at an answer we may struggle with: “Wait patiently for him.” How can God’s promise to renew us inwardly give us strength to press on in faith even at times when our lives seem broken?

 Did you know Jesus quoted Psalm 37 in the Beatitudes? “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth” in Matthew 5:5 was from this Psalm. This is “revolutionary stuff,” wrote commentator Michael Green. Do “the meek” (not “weak” people, but “in control of their passions, humble”) ever win, even in this life? Are you strong enough to be that kind of winner?

Prayer: *Dear God, it’s easy to think that strength means being powerful and in charge. Help me to remember that meekness, depending on you, is a strength that is always available to me. Amen.*

Wednesday, January 21 – Read **Isaiah 43:1-7**. Far from promising us that trust in God ensures that nothing bad can ever happen in this life, Isaiah knew that, sooner or later, bad things come to all of us. In John 16:33, Jesus said, “In this world you WILL have trouble.” Isaiah wrote, “When [not “if”] you pass through the waters ...WHEN you walk through the fire.” But he began with those familiar words that are found more than any other in our Bible: “Do not fear.”


 An ancient tradition said King Manasseh killed Isaiah. Jesus was crucified. The Romans beheaded Paul the apostle. Does that history belie the truth of this passage’s promises? Hebrews 2:15 said Jesus’ resurrection can “free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.” In what ways can the fear of death limit our ability to live for God and others? To what extent has faith in Jesus freed you from that fear?


 Verse 4 begins, “Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you.” Do you have a family, good workplace, small group at church, friends at school, or some other place where you feel precious and honored? How can you take in the fact that you are precious and honored by God??

Prayer: *Lord of my life, when I walk through the fires and floods of life, help me not to be afraid because you are with me. Even when I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I remember that you are with me. Encourage my heart with these words. Amen.*

Thursday, January 22 – Read **Mark 6:34-52**. Scary situation #1: a large crowd was hungry. The disciples said, “Send them to get food,” but Jesus said, “You give them something to eat.” Then his power provided lots of food for them to share. Scary situation #2: a strong wind blew across the Sea of Galilee. The disciples were struggling. Jesus came and said, “Do not be afraid,” and stopped the wind. The


disciples were amazed. Both episodes gave insight into human fear and heavenly sufficiency.


 Our sanctuary seats about 300 people. Imagine facing twenty times that many hungry people when Jesus says to you, “You give them something to eat”! Jesus gave the disciples the privilege of serving as a channel through which his power could feed the crowd. How is God calling you to be conduit through which God’s power can work?

 In your own words, how would you state the lesson(s) the disciples could have learned if they had understood about the loaves? How can taking these stories seriously increase your freedom to lead a more hopeful, worry-free life when the world tells you to be anxious?

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, I am reminded that the disciples felt anxious even when you were right there with them in the flesh! As I follow you, teach me to open my heart to you when life around me feels out of control. Help me not to trust in my own understanding, but to trust in you. Amen.*


Friday, January 23 – Read **Luke 12:22-32**. We may not face marching armies, or huge crowds who need food. But every day we face cars that wear out, bills that need to be paid, technology that feels overwhelming, and the simple questions like, “What’s for lunch?” Jesus asked us not to worry about those things. Even in this world, he said, those needs are usually met, for the birds and for us. But he sought to raise our sights beyond this world, saying, “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.”

 What would it look like if you applied Jesus’ wisdom (“life is more than food, and the body more than clothes”) to your everyday activities, including anxiety about new technologies like artificial intelligence? What would rise higher on your list of priorities, and what might drop to a lower rung? Do you believe that changing your priorities in that way would increase or decrease your worries?

 Considering modern medical research, consider the irony and insight of Jesus’ question: “Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life?” Worry shortens our lives! How can you distinguish between wise planning and excessive worry?

Prayer: *Gracious God, I look at the birds, and I am amazed they don’t seem to worry. Help me, like them, to rise above my anxiety and float on the winds of your love. May I feel that breeze every moment, especially when I look down and start to be afraid. Amen.*

Saturday, January 24 – Read **Isaiah 30:15-18**. In Isaiah’s day, the Assyrian Empire threatened Israel from the north. King Hezekiah was worried and sent emissaries southwest to ask Egypt for help. It was futile—Assyria’s army was far stronger than Egypt’s. On God’s behalf, Isaiah pleaded with Israel to turn back from these missions. Trust in God, who loves you and longs to show you mercy, he begged. There’s no help in Egypt’s swift horses. Instead “in repentance and rest is your salvation.”

 Make this Scripture personal. Have there been times when God could have said to you, “In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your

strength," but you would have none of it? To what extent are you willing to lay aside striving and worrying, and live in quietness and trust? Do you believe Isaiah's words apply to your life: "The LORD longs to be gracious to you... Blessed are all who wait for him"?

Prayer: *God of love and grace, it's hard to rest when life gets moving fast. It's hard to repent and return to you when I get going down the wrong path and start listening to the wrong voices. May I listen to you, rest in you, and be honest with you about my anxieties so I find peace in you. Amen.*