




Theme: Authentic FAith in a world of Artificial Intelligence


"Good News vs. Fake News"

Weekly Memory Verses:

¹⁰⁵ Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path. –Psalm 119:105


Meditation Moments for Monday, January 12 – Read **Luke 10:38-42**. In the first century, to "sit at someone's feet" meant learning from that person. In [Acts 22:3](#), the literal Greek phrase the apostle Paul used to describe his education was "at the feet of Gamaliel" who was a great Hebrew rabbi and teacher. In this story in Luke, Martha did what the culture valued in women. She cleaned the house and cooked the food, caring for and serving others. Mary did what the culture valued in men. She became a disciple by sitting at Jesus' feet. Jesus put no gender, educational, or status limits on who he wished to teach. He wanted **all** his followers to grow spiritually through study.


 One of the things that got Jesus in trouble with religious leaders was that he challenged gender role stereotypes often. One sister was "preoccupied with getting everything ready for their meal," the other one, "sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his message." Which one sounds more like the way you live your life? Jesus said, "Mary has chosen the better part." Are there ways in which you are choosing, day by day, to "sit at the Lord's feet" and learn more by studying his message so you can be grounded in a fast-changing world?

 Jesus did not downgrade the value of Martha's role as hostess. He simply pointed out that it, like the men's work as fishermen, should not be life's highest priority. He said, "One thing is necessary." *The Message* version of the bible translates it, "One thing **only** is essential". What would making Christ the only truly essential thing in your life look like? How would it affect your priorities, time use, leisure activities and other choices? How might it offer you greater freedom in your life?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I have lots of things I must do. It's hard to stop all my doing to "sit at your feet." Help me recognize how important that is to my growth as your follower, and act on it. Amen.


Tuesday, January 13 – Read **1 Corinthians 1:18-25, 30 and 2:6-8**. The apostle Paul knew a crucified savior didn't impress most Hebrews, Greeks, or Romans. His message was "foolish" to some and "scandal" to others. It was counter cultural. Yet he preached Christ crucified and risen with deep passion as a life-changing reality, the most vital wisdom to study and learn. God's wisdom, he said, was greater than the wisdom of this world. God's Word to us, not sheer human logic or ingenuity, would change people's lives. What his carefully trained mind used to scorn was now the heart of his faith and joy.


 Paul recognized that his message was "foolishness" to the Greeks and "scandal" to the Jews in verse 23. The story seemed to invite people to mock. The message sounded "weak," yet carried God's power. Verse 18 stated Paul's conclusion: God's weakness is greater than human strength; God's foolishness is greater than human wisdom. In what part(s) of your life today do you need to trust that God's saving wisdom is wiser than any other kind of wisdom you might rely on?

 Maybe you consider yourself an educated, relatively prosperous, 21st-century citizen—a "high achiever." Did these verses mean God loves less educated or prosperous people more than intellectuals or the socially prominent? What was the apostle's point in saying, "You are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption." In which of these life aspects has Jesus most fully become your wisdom? In which are you still growing?

Prayer: *Dear God, I am grateful that your strength and wisdom are greater than the world's! I need that—I can't save myself. Help me to trust and depend on you for what I need most. Amen.*

Wednesday, January 14 – Read **2 Timothy 2:14-15 and 23-25**. Some people argue that they don't need to "interpret" the Bible. They claim to take the Word at face value saying things like, "The Bible says it. I believe it. That settles it!" It appears the apostle Paul would disagree. He urged Timothy to put effort into reading and applying the Bible's principles accurately. Interpreting the message of truth correctly also involved embodying its principles in the way he taught and shared. "Be kind toward all people" was an important part of effectively guiding their study.


 You may have heard the saying that "if you don't stand for something, you'll fall for anything." In what ways are you learning and understanding more of the Bible's overarching message, and not just snippets here and there? How can an informed, Christ-centered study of the Bible help you discern truth from falsehood among the many religious and secular ideas that clamor for your attention?


 Verse 14 says, "Keep reminding people of these things..." Paul didn't just call Timothy to study the Bible for himself. He wanted him to accurately share its story with others. How is what you learn in the Bible shaping your life, especially the ways that you interact with others in your family, school, neighborhood, or workplace? Are there spiritual subjects that make you feel like arguing rather

than building community? How does the Holy Spirit help you deal with those feelings?

Prayer: *Lord of my life, help me to keep growing into a “tried and true worker” for your kingdom. Make me accurate, kind and gentle in sharing what I learn from you. Amen.*


Thursday, January 15 – Read **Psalm 119:11-12 and 103-105**. To stay centered spiritually with Bible reading calls for us to open our heart as well as our mind to what God wants to say to us through the Bible. Sometimes all we know of Psalm 119 is that it is “the longest chapter in the Bible.” But it is so much more than that. Today’s passage offers a lovely prayer model that can prepare us to “hear” and value God’s word on the pages of Scripture.

 “I have hidden your word in my heart,” the psalmist wrote. What does it take to move the word from the printed page (or the screen) into your heart? One effective way to start is to choose a short Bible passage (e.g. [John 3:16-17](#), [Psalm 23](#), or even if you want to start with a really short passage [Psalm 119:11](#) from today’s reading) and commit it to memory this week.

 It’s important to remember that The Bible is more than just a big book of inspirational verses and some dos and don’ts. It’s a love letter from a God who made you to love you and longs to restore that relationship when it’s been broken. It’s written to us as a story, and like any story, it requires proper context. The Bible we hold in our hands today has been translated across multiple languages and was originally written in a culture much different than ours. This is important to understand because without proper context we can easily misread and twist the Bible’s words. How can you grow in your ability to relate all the “pieces” of the Bible to the big story it tells?

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, in the Bible, I find the centuries-old story of how you’ve dealt with all kinds of people who loved and followed you. Help me learn more about how you weave my walk with you into that same story. Amen.*

Friday, January 16 – Read **James 1:22-25**. Staying grounded in our faith during changing times involves studying, but it is not simply an intellectual exercise. James the apostle said God seeks “doers of the word,” not just “hearers.” That idea shaped the life of John Wesley, Methodism’s founder. Based on what they studied in Scripture, he and his friends got actively involved in helping prisoners and widows in Oxford, England. Holding together personal and social holiness has remained important to Wesley’s spiritual descendants ever since.

 Have you ever known a person who “talked a good game” about religious devotion, but whose actions and attitudes did not match their words? If so, how did that person affect the other people over whom they had influence? When have you discovered a mismatch between your words about faith and your actions? In what ways has your allegiance to Christ altered your activities, priorities, and lifestyle?



James used a phrase that may sound odd at first, writing of “the perfect law, the law of freedom.” When have you found in your own life that ignoring God’s principles so you can do whatever you feel like produces, not freedom, but a hurtful kind of slavery? In what ways have you found that living out God’s calling increases your freedom rather than limiting or frustrating it?

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, I want the true freedom you offer me. Help me use my freedom to serve and bless others, as you did. Amen.*

Saturday, January 17 – Read **Ephesians 4:11-16**. “God’s goal,” Ephesians said, “is for us to become mature adults...fully grown, measured by the standard of the fullness of Christ.” At times we find that unity with Christ and one another is still hard. But God calls us to become spiritually mature so that even another person’s errors or unloving behavior cannot knock us off course. That doesn’t mean becoming a passive “doormat.” This kind of community requires us to speak the truth in love, with our understanding of truth grounded in thoughtful Bible study guided by the Holy Spirit so that we become more like our Savior Jesus Christ. All our different gifts need to work together so that we can strengthen and equip one another.



Building God’s kingdom to change the world calls us to take our faith beyond just the weekend worship service. Can you recall some of the steps that moved you beyond being an “infant” in your faith, and helped you grow toward greater maturity? What are you doing in your day-to-day life that nurtures spiritual maturity in you and others, building up the body of believers in love? What one or two items are most clearly on your growth horizon right now?

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, you are building me—you are building us—into a community of spiritually mature people, growing in every way into your life of love. Help me to do my part as a faithful builder growing more into your image. Amen.*