

## MONDAY

Bible verses through the Gospel of John

**JOHN 11:14-15** *14 Then Jesus became explicit: "Lazarus died. 15 And I am glad for your sakes that I wasn't there. You're about to be given new grounds for believing. Now let's go to him."*

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Did you wake this morning with an expectation of encountering something of the splendor of God? Did you swing your feet out of bed anticipating enjoying the God-ordained beauty in your day? Are you cultivating a zesty life, or drudging through your days, ticking off your to-dos, oblivious?

If you've been less than zesty, or even oblivious, it's not incurable. Ask God to open the eyes of your heart today to see and savor Him, in the miraculous and in the mundane.

Dear Lord, thank You for the beauty You surround each of us with daily. The greens of grass and trees, the reds of tomatoes and strawberries, the smell of the air after a rain. God you are magnificent in Your beauty and goodness! And You're gracious in your blessings. Open my eyes to notice them. In Jesus' Name, Amen. *Encouragement for Today*

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Two friends meet in passing one day, and the first notices that the other man looks quite despondent. So he asks, "Hey, how come you look like the whole world has caved in on you?"

The sad fellow says, "Let me tell you. Three weeks ago an uncle died and left me ten thousand dollars."

"Well, I'm sorry to hear about your uncle's passing, but that's a bit of good news for you, too, isn't it?"

"Hold on, it gets better," says the glum guy. "Two weeks ago, a great-aunt I never knew passed away and left me twenty thousand, free and clear."

"Well, you can't be disappointed about that!"

"No, I'm not, but listen ... last week my grandfather went to his rest and I inherited almost one hundred thousand dollars!"

"That's incredible! But why do you look so sad?"

The depressed man shakes his head and says, "Well ... this week? Nothing!"

*Joe's Clean Laffs/Mark's Musings*

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"John Patton, in his book, *From Ministry to Theology*, relates the story of a rather green chaplaincy resident, naive to many of the pressures and pains of a teaching hospital. While on call one night, the intern was summoned to the room of a woman whose baby had been stillborn a few hours earlier. 'We want our baby baptized,' the young mother said, cradling her lifeless daughter, her husband at her side. 'Her name is Nicole.'

"The intern didn't know what to do, but asked them to come to the chapel a few minutes later. In the meantime he tried to find another, more experienced chaplain to take over, but to no avail. He was on his own and quite unsure as to how to proceed. He had not only professional uncertainties about what he had been asked to do, but theological qualms as well. Still, he knew he had to meet with grieving parents. He sketched in his mind something to say, hoping it would be appropriate to the moment.

"The young parents arrived at the appointed time, but the chaplain found he could not say what he had prepared. Instead, and almost without realizing what he was doing, he took a tissue, wiped at the tears in the eyes of the parents, then wiped his own tears and touched the tissue to the baby's head and said, "Nicole, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." He said nothing else--the tears were more eloquent than words could have been."

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## TUESDAY

**John 11:16** *6That's when Thomas, the one called the Twin, said to his companions, "Come along. We might as well die with him."*

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Today's walk took me through the development near my home. There's a beautiful old stone house that I have admired since moving here more than 10 years ago. I have spoken to an older retired couple working in their yard nearly every time I passed there. They must work long and hard in the garden because their home is beautifully landscaped. Among the bountiful flowers and bushes I could see Greek statues and bird baths. There are trees whose names I am not familiar with and lush ground cover of deep greens that remain that way well into winter.

But this year I have noticed a change. The bushes have grown beyond their earlier, well manicured size. Many of the smaller trees have taken over their spots as branches hang lower nearly covering the flower beds below. This once pristine garden spot has become a reflection of the condition of its' care takers. They have grown too physically old to keep up with it.

"How are you today my friends?" I asked as I passed by their front porch.

"We are as fine as can be expected, sir," the gentleman replied.

"Are you ready for winter?" I asked.

"No, my friend. Like the season we now find so beautiful, we are in the Autumn of our lives. Our time together is now measured in seasons. I pray that we survive the winter," he said.

Then turning toward his wife he said, "My love is not doing very well. My heart aches for her. I am not sure that we will..." He began to cry.

I nervously brushed the leaves on the sidewalk with my feet not knowing whether to say something or permit him to continue. "I don't know if I ever told you this. But your beautiful handy work, your gift for bringing life to the world in the form of breathtaking flowers and trees, has lifted my spirits many times just when I needed it," I said.

Then as he stepped carefully off the porch he pointed to the garden path that began nearby and wrapped the entire house. "That trellis covered with roses was designed to look like the gates of Heaven. I envisioned that one year we would enter those gates one last time and walk along the garden path together. I knew there would come a time when she would not be able to stand for long periods. I vowed to never walk that path alone. She has been by my side forever."

I walked over to the gate and looking at the surroundings I asked, "Have you walked through it this year?"

"No. That is why it is in such disrepair," he replied. "But it is our dream to see April together once more. And have one more walk along..." he stopped.

"Do you have a wheel chair?" I asked.

"Yes, on the back porch. We only use it in the house. I couldn't maneuver her outside. The pathway is not paved," he said.

"Yes, but I can. Tell your wife you're going for a walk. I'll get the chair."

We began the journey together, perhaps one last time, but with one stipulation. "Forget that I am here," I said. "I want this to be your moment together. I will remain quiet and out of the picture. Think of me as the hands of God supporting her." I tell you as sure as I am writing this, I did indeed feel invisible. But the second we crossed through the gate, I could visualize her standing there beside him. I was witness to a remarkable moment when he began to sing softly to her.

We had stopped for a moment and he knelt down in front of her. It almost looked like he was about to propose. He sang, "One more walk along the garden, one more stroll along the shore." Caressing his face, she leaned over and kissed him.

*Bob Perks, "One More Walk Around the Garden"...arr.*

## WEDNESDAY

**John 11:17-19** *17 When Jesus finally got there, he found Lazarus already four days dead. 18 Bethany was near Jerusalem, only a couple of miles away, 19 and many of the Jews were visiting Martha and Mary, sympathizing with them over their brother.*

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"My favorite story about integrity: A lawyer performs a service for a client. The client asks what the fee is. The lawyer says, '\$100.' The client hands the lawyer a \$100 bill and leaves. After the client is gone, the lawyer realizes that the client actually gave him two \$100 bills that had stuck together. The lawyer now realizes he has an integrity dilemma: Should he share this with his partner or not?"

*Michael Josephson*

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A minister's widow was planning a week's vacation in California at Sky lake Yosemite, but she wanted to make sure of the bathroom facilities. She couldn't bring herself to write "toilet" in a letter. After the first page, she referred to the bathroom as "BC." "Does the cabin where I will be staying have its own 'BC'? If not, where is the 'BC' located?" is what she actually wrote. (Bathroom Closet)

The campground owner took the first page of the letter and the lady's check and gave it to his secretary. He put the remainder of the letter on the desk of the senior member of his staff without noticing that the staffer would have no way of knowing what "BC" meant. Then the owner went off to town to run some errands.

The staff member came in after lunch, found the letter, and was baffled by the B.C., so he showed the letter around. The staff member's wife, who knew that the lady was the widow of a Baptist preacher, was sure that it must be a question about the local Baptist Church. And he sat down and wrote:

"Dear Madam,

I regret very much the delay in answering your letter, but I now take the pleasure in informing you that the BC is located nine miles north of the campground and is capable of seating 250 people at one time. I admit it is quite a distance away if you are in the habit of going regularly, but no doubt you will be pleased to know that a great number of people take their lunches along and make a day of it. They usually arrive early and stay late.

The last time my wife and I went was six years ago, and it was so crowded we had to stand up the whole time we were there. It may interest you to know that right now there is a supper planned to raise money to buy more seats. They are going to hold it in the basement of the 'BC.'

I would like to say that it pains me very much not to be able to go more regularly, but it is surely no lack of desire on my part. As we grow older, it seems to be more of an effort, particularly in cold weather.

If you decide to come down to our campground, perhaps I could go with you the first time, sit with you, and introduce you to all the folks. Remember, this is a friendly community."

*Laugh & Lift*

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When my grandson Billy and I entered our vacation cabin, we kept the lights off until we were inside to keep from attracting pesky insects. Still, a few fireflies followed us in.

Noticing them before I did, Billy whispered, "It's no use Grandpa. Now the mosquitoes are coming after us with flashlights" *Chris Hansen*

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My husband and I divorced over religious differences. He thought he was God and I didn't.

*Lew Frazer*

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Ham and eggs...A day's work for a chicken, a lifetime commitment for a pig.

*Lew Frazer*

## THURSDAY

**John 11:20** *20 Martha heard Jesus was coming and went out to meet him. Mary remained in the house.*

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"The greatest single cause of atheism in the world today is Christians who acknowledge Jesus with their lips, then walk out the door and deny Him by their lifestyle. That is what an unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable." - *Brennan Manning*

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"What does an airport chaplain do?" This is the frequent question asked when our Tampa Airport chaplaincy work is brought up in conversation.

I quickly fill them in by admitting that the major function we perform is by assisting the airport employees. Yes, we have some contact with travelers. One example was when the public address system asked for a chaplain, recently. I responded and was told there had been a passenger death, in-flight, on an incoming Delta aircraft. A chaplain was dispatched to meet this plane when it came into the terminal after landing. I was also informed that this passenger who died was among a group of 70 folk gathering in Tampa for a cruise together.

Now it was necessary to use the public address announcements to bring these cruise passengers to gather in the chapel. Once they were informed of the death of one of their group, they conferred together and decided to go ahead with their cruise plans. A chaplain called the cruise company, informing them about the group. The cruise line then sent a bus to meet their passengers. These folk were treated to a lunch after they were escorted aboard their ship.

But the day-to-day work of airport chaplains involves our walking about the numerous work places of shops, cocktail lounges, fast-food and fancy restaurants, as well as airport ticket counters and the maintenance folk with their mops and brooms. As a non drinker, visiting the lounges was initially one of the most disagreeable things I had to do. But it's in visiting the employees where we do our hardest and most important work – asking questions and listening to their prayer requests and needs. In Tampa, this means seeking out some 6,000 workers scattered over acres of carpeted and tiled walk ways.

The most leading question that elicits the greatest response is a simple, "Have you any prayer request that I might help you with?" And it is from these requests that indicate the reason why a chaplain is helpful in any business. Our 20 chaplains report all the requests they receive during their 4 hour volunteer rounds each week. Confidentiality is maintained with no names given except for those for whom prayer is asked.

Here are brief samples of one, four-page prayer list circulated among our chaplains; a hospital visit made to an employee in a coma, concerns about a merger between two airlines, upcoming breast biopsy, death of twin sister, job for an out of work husband, approaching childbirth, cancer treatments, heart condition, diabetes, death of son, coronary surgery, safe and good vacation in travel to Rome, 1- year-old puppy, Pixie, had surgery; pending divorce, eye surgery, and employee who lost a brother and an Aunt in the same week.

And that's a sample of what airport chaplains do. And, oh yes, we do perform marriage ceremonies when required. Some perform worship services and chapel devotions in addition to the above tasks.

*Chaplain Shields Moore*

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### **Life changing Prayers of the New Testament.**

Read these through slowly but start memorizing them weekly!

EPH.3: 14-21 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, 17so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith ; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth 19and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God . 20Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, 21 to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

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If you live to be one hundred, you've got it made. Very few people die past that age.

*George Burns*

## FRIDAY

**John 11:21-22** *21 Martha said, "Master, if you'd been here, my brother wouldn't have died. 22 Even now, I know that whatever you ask God he will give you."*

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A cowboy was trying to buy an insurance policy. The insurance agent was going down the list of standard questions. "Ever had an accident?"

"Nope, nary a one."

"None? You've never had any accidents?"

"Nope. Ain't never had one. Never."

"That's hard to believe. No accidents at all?"

"Well, a rattler bit me one time."

"Wouldn't you consider that an accident?"

"Nope! The varmint bit me on purpose!" *GCFL*

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"My daughter Michelle is the commander of a Coast Guard Cutter. When she gave my husband Bob a tour of her ship, he was impressed by the neatness of all decks.

"However, when Bob went to Michelle's house with her, he couldn't believe the disorganization. 'Why is everything in its place on your ship,' he asked, 'but your house is such a mess?'

"My house,' Michelle said, 'does not take 30-degree rolls.'"

I found the story quite humorous, but it made me wonder. How often do others notice that things are just fine in our workplace, but not at home? Things may be "in its place" at work (and elsewhere), but at home things are "a mess."

It's a problem that everyone who works struggles with, but especially preachers because we often view our work as being done "for God" so we feel justified in pouring more of our time and effort into our work. But there is always the danger -- the temptation - that we may be neglecting things at home.

Early in my ministry, my wife used to complain, "You always have time for anybody else who comes to you with a problem, but you can't find time for me." There were times she was right. I felt compelled to make sure that everything was in order at "work", but I sometimes allowed things at home to be a "mess." I'm sure there were many times my children felt the same way. I would like to think that I've learned from my mistakes and have a better balance now.

My message today comes with an encouragement for all of you who work to make an assessment of your own. Are you more interested in keeping things in order at work than you are at home? May God help each of us as we strive to fulfill our God-given responsibilities to our spouses and children.

*Laugh & Lift*

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Did you know...That Sir Isaac Newton had largely discovered the working of the law of gravitation when he was twenty-three?

That Henry Clay, the "great compromiser," was sent to the United States Senate at twenty-nine and was Speaker of the House of Representatives at thirty-four?

That Raphael painted his most important pictures between twenty-five and thirty?

That Mozart only lived to be thirty-five years old? Maybe we're just late bloomers.

*Sermon Fodder and Steve Goodier*