



**A Collection of
Original Devotions**

by Dr. Bob Sizemore
and Mrs. Betty Sizemore

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Remembrances from Dr. Bob Sizemore

I came to Fairview in 1991 as interim pastor while the church was searching for a new pastor. I was a full-time educator working in Fairfax County Public Schools administration at the time and filling in for churches who needed a substitute or interim pastor on the weekends. We were members of Fredericksburg Baptist church where I taught the Baraca Bible Class which was broadcast live on the radio station WFLS on Sunday mornings. Many people had heard me, so they were familiar with my “sermons,” and I felt that was a major factor in Fairview calling me to be their full-time pastor. I took a leap of faith and left education (and a terrible commute on I95) to accept the call. In January 1992 I became a full-time pastor at Fairview, a position that lasted for 21 years.

Since I had had very positive feedback from the radio broadcasts while at Fredericksburg Baptist Church, I persuaded Fairview to seek a new opportunity to reach out by broadcasting our 11:00 AM Sunday morning service on the radio. Steve Curtis and his wife Shay would record the sermon from the service and the choir anthem or special music on a CD which Steve took to Radio Station WFVA AM and it was played on the air the following Sunday. The church was paying for the 30 minute time slot, but it was proving to be well worth the money as many people started to visit and then became members as a result of hearing the radio broadcasts. This lasted for about 15 years, until technology and society changed. After I retired, the church decided to discontinue funding the 30 minute service. However, the radio station offered me the opportunity to do a one-minute devotional three times a day each weekday, Monday through Friday, at no cost! That continues today.

Upon retirement in 2014, I also wanted to send out email devotionals during the week, so my wife and I started that ministry from our home computer. We called them “Daily Devotionals” at first because we were sending short devotionals out to individuals who requested to be included on our list each weekday. The list grew from about 150 in the beginning to over 450 currently. And many people forward them to their friends and family members. We have had to slow down in recent years to sending them less frequently, and now the name is just “Devotion.” But we continue to try to get out at least two per week.

From the Fairview Baptist Church Historical Archives

Devotion 1-01-23

Scripture

Jesus said, “Love God with your whole heart, soul and mind, and love your neighbor as yourself.” Luke 10:27

Devotion

Let me wish you a Happy New Year. It is my prayer that it will be the best year that you have ever had. Most of all, I pray that you will have a closer relationship to God than ever before.

Let me urge you to make a commitment to talk to God in prayer each day, worship him in church, and share your faith with other people as God leads you. If you want to experience God’s presence and feel his love, you may have to make some changes. As the old saying puts it—“If you always do what you’ve always done, you’ll always get what you always got.”

This new year is truly a gift of God. Let’s thank God for all of the blessings that he has bestowed upon us. One of my blessings is to have the privilege to communicate with you through these devotionals. Please feel free to share any prayer requests that you might have or any topics you’d like for us to discuss.

As we begin a new year, let’s take the miracle of Christmas with us. God loves us so much that Jesus actually walked among us to express his love, even to die on a cross for us so that if we give our lives to him in love and service, our sins are forgiven and heaven awaits us.

It seems too good to be true, but God loves each of us that much. This year will you really receive his love and share it with others by what you say and do?

Prayer

Lord, I resolve to love and serve you in this new year. Thank you for loving me enough to be with me every step of the way. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

Devotion 1-05-23

Scripture

Jesus said, “This is how you should pray: ‘Our Father who art in heaven...’”
Matthew 6:9

Devotion

As we begin a new year, it’s a time to reflect on who we are—God’s child. How often do you think about that? Someone named J. I. Packer wrote these words: “If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he thinks of being God’s child and having God as his father.”

The Lord’s Prayer begins” “Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Don’t ever forget who you are. You are a child of God. He loves us as his beloved children. As I’m sure I’ve said before, my father was killed in World War II when I was two years old. I have no memory of him at all. My mother never remarried. At times I would be jealous of the other children who had fathers. But as I got older I was told in church that God was my father. I never really missed my earthly father because I had no recollection of him. But I remember the other children and teenagers talking about their fathers. I never have felt really deprived because I know that God is my father. He will be with me throughout my life and all of eternity.

Do you think of God as your father? It’s a wonderful thing to know that the creator of the universe is our father, and to know that he thinks of us as his beloved children. As we begin the new year, don’t ever forget who you are and whose you are. God loves us so much that he sent his Son to tell us who God is, and Jesus died and was resurrected so that we could have eternal life.

You are a child of the King—the King and creator of the universe. He loves you and is with you. Reach out to him in love and praise.

Prayer

O God, thank you for loving me enough to create me, call me your child, and spend eternity with me if I accept Jesus as my Savior. I pledge as best as I can to live like you are my father. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

Devotion 1-07-23

Scripture

“Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of God will give you.” John 6:27

Devotion

As we begin a new year, let me ask if you believe God really wants us to work hard all of the time. Of course, God doesn't want us to be lazy, but sometimes we forget that we need to spend time just thinking about God and his blessings. In Psalm 127:2 we read, “In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat—for he grants sleep to those he loves.”

In one of his devotionals, pastor Rick Warren says, “If you are a parent, and you've gone in your children's room at night, you know the joy it gives to you just to watch them sleep. Our heavenly Father must enjoy watching us sleep and rest. He created us to need rest.”

This year, let's find a balance in working hard, even in God's service, and setting aside time to rest from our labors, contemplate the glory of God, and spend time with him in prayer. Let's also spend quality time with our children and grandchildren. As someone has said, “Love to a child is spelled T I M E.”

In summary, be careful that we don't spend all of our time on good things and ignore the best things, such as spending time with those we love and worshipping God.

Prayer

Lord, thank you for giving me life. I'm sure you created me to love, return your love, and reach out to others in love and friendship. I want to follow the example of Jesus in love and concern for others. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Devotion 1-09-23

Scripture

“Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?”

“But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!”

1st Corinthians 15:55 and 57

Devotion

This weekend I attended a memorial service at the church we attend and where I served as a pastor for over 20 years. As I listened to the pastor who was conducting the service I remembered words that I spoke at many funerals. You may remember them from a devotional years ago. Some of them are as follows.

“We know that this day of death will come for us and those we love. To the unbeliever it is a day to be feared, but to those who love God, it is a step we take which finally brings us home. (The deceased) has gone home. For him there is no more pain, just the presence, peace, and the love of God. Last week he closed his eyes in death, and when he opened them he was looking into the smiling face of God, who I believe said these words of scripture—‘Well done, good and faithful servant, come in and inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of time.’”

“Right now I believe the deceased is seeing beautiful sights he had never seen before, hearing beautiful music he had never heard before, and experiencing joy he had never imagined before.”

“So we do not grieve for (the deceased), although I know you will grieve because you will miss him. And we do not come to think about his death, but to give thanks for his life—the life of a good (husband, father, grandfather and friend), the life of a good man.”

“May God rest his soul and may God bless you.”

Prayer

O God, thank you for the life, death and resurrection of Jesus which makes it possible for us to spend eternity with you if we commit our lives to you and accept Jesus as our Savior. It is in Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

Devotion 1-11-23

Scripture

“... in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” Romans 8:28

Devotion

Recently I read these words: “When you were born, you cried and the world rejoiced. When you die, may the world cry and you rejoice.” God created us and I believe that there was great rejoicing in heaven and among our parents and relatives. But we cried. Our parents, relatives and neighbors felt the birth was a great blessing. But all we knew was that we were in pain. Sometimes we feel that if we are suffering or in pain, God has turned his back on us; quite the contrary is true. God is with you whatever you are going through. He created you because he loves you, and the painful experiences we have may lead to our greatest happiness. Of course, in this life we may never understand that “in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28)

But I and many of you have lived long enough to see these words become a reality in our lives. And if we love God and have truly given our lives to God by accepting Christ as Savior, the pain we experience now will lead to our good in this life and the next. The question is often asked, “Why do bad things happen to good people?” At best we only know partial answers. But the time is coming when all things will be revealed, and our life with God in heaven will be so wonderful that we won’t even be concerned with answers to the questions we had in this life.

Prayer

Thank you, Lord, for all of your blessings. Most of all I thank you for loving us so much that you sent your Son to be crucified and resurrected so that if we really accept him as Savior, we will be forever with you in heaven In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

Devotion 1-13-23

Scripture

“Jesus said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” Acts 20:35

Devotion

I believe that you would agree that what we want more than anything is to be happy. People spend all of their time and talents seeking happiness, but it seems that if happiness itself is our goal, many of us fall short. Saint Francis of Assisi perhaps discovered the secret to happiness when he prayed:

“O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.”

In other words, as we read in scripture, “It is more blessed to give than to receive,” and the most important thing we can do is give our lives to Christ in service and love. We all know that it’s difficult to put God and other people ahead of ourselves. But try doing it, and pray for God’s help.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, I know that you are my Savior and I should give my life to you, not just once, but every day. And I know that I should give others my love, friendship and support. Help me to live my life in such a way that I will know that it is more blessed to give than to receive. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

Devotion 1-17-23

Scripture

“My kingdom is not of this world.” John 18:36

Devotion

Today let me say a word to those of you who feel empty, unhappy or just know that something is missing in your life. The first thing I would ask is what is your relationship to God? Do you talk to him in prayer? Do you ever talk to others about him? Do you worship him with other believers?

The reality is that we have been created with a longing that only God can fulfill. As someone has said, “If nothing in this world makes us truly happy, it’s because we were made for another world.” In John 18:36, when Pilate asked Jesus if he were the king of the Jews, Jesus responded, “My kingdom is not of this world.”

I am sure you have had the feeling that something is missing in your life. Many of us try to fill the void with entertainment, the things that money can buy, or relationships with other people. There is nothing wrong with any of these things. God may bless you with people you love and who love you. But our ultimate and lasting happiness will only be realized when we spend eternity with God in heaven (in his kingdom). Someone wisely said that “life is a bridge to be crossed, not to build your house on.”

In the meantime, let’s stay as close to God as we can, strengthen our relationship with God as much as we can, and share his love with others as often as we can.

Prayer

O God, I thank you for all of the blessings that you have bestowed upon me. But I know that the best is yet to come, when I am united with you in heaven. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

Devotion 1-21-23

Scripture

“Jesus said, ‘Do not worry about tomorrow. God will take care of your tomorrows too. Live one day at a time.’” Matthew 6:34

Devotion

I’m sure that many of you are now facing or will face difficult circumstances in your life. Some will be very painful, even life-threatening. It’s not a matter of if we will be in such circumstances, but when. There are many scripture passages which assure you that whatever you may face, God is with you and your eternal future is secure. Let me share some of them now.

“Don’t ever forget who you are. You are an heir of God and co-heir with Christ.”
Romans 8:17

God has said, “Never will I leave you or forsake you.” Hebrews 13:5

“Cast all your cares on God because He cares for you.” 1st Peter 5:7

“If God is for us, who can be against us?” Romans 8:31

“Seek first the kingdom of God, and all these other things will be added unto you.”
Matthew 6:33

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”

Matthew 7:7

I suggest that you memorize these verses of scripture. Repeat them often. You are loved by the creator and sustainer of the universe. Nothing will ever separate you from the love of God. Whatever you must endure, your life will have a happy ending because one day you will close your eyes in death and open them to be looking into the smiling face of God who I believe will say,

“Welcome home, my child, to the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of time.”

When you know that God really loves you and heaven awaits you, enjoy each day which brings you closer to home.

Prayer

Lord, in the midst of the trials and tribulations of life, it’s so easy to forget who I am and where I am going. Thank you for loving me and bringing me home to you. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

Devotion 1-23-23

Scripture

Read John 20:10-18

Devotion

One of my favorite stories in the Bible is when Mary Magdalene went to the tomb where Jesus was placed after his crucifixion. She was heartbroken. But the tomb was empty. As she stood outside the tomb, the risen Savior appeared to her and asked, “Why are you crying?” She didn’t recognize him and said, “If you’ve carried him away, tell me where you have put him.” Jesus looked at her and simply said her name, “Mary.” Then she recognized him and cried out in joy.

The point I want to make is that knowing that Jesus was raised from the dead will have little meaning for us until it becomes personal - when you realize that the Son of God is calling you by name. Jesus lived, died and was resurrected not just for mankind in general, but for each of us in particular. He had you in mind. The question is, will we reach out to God in prayer and thank him, and receive the eternal life he wants us to have?

There is no one in the world God loves more than you. Reach out to him in prayer. Set aside a “quiet time” every day to talk to him in prayer. Read about the life of Jesus in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and worship him regularly in church with others. The Son of God loves each of us enough to die for us and be raised from the dead so that we too can live forever. Let’s thank him and spread the good news.

Prayer

O God, thank you for giving me life - eternal life. I will worship and praise you as long as I live, and share my faith with others. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

Devotion 1-26-23

Scripture

Jesus said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” John 8:12

Devotion

On a couple of occasions in these devotionals I have shared perhaps the greatest example of faith that I have read about or heard. It’s about words carved on a wall in a Nazi prison camp by a man who had been starved, tortured and beaten, and knew that he would be executed—probably in a gas chamber. These were the words that he had carved:

I believe in the sun when I never see it shining.
I believe in love even when I am alone.
I believe in God even when He is silent.

We have never endured that kind of torture, but we have been alone, cried out to God, and there was only silence. But God was with that man and has taken him home to heaven.

There is so much pain that we can’t explain. But God is with you; He has never left you and never will. The sun will shine again—probably in this world, but definitely and eternally in the world to come, because it is then that we will see God, and all of our dreams will come true.

Prayer

Lord, I know that many who read these short devotionals are going through tough times and have been for years. We don’t know what the immediate future holds, but in the end we know that we will experience joy beyond our wildest imagination. In the meantime, please let us feel your presence and experience the joy of being your child. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

Devotion 1-30-23

Scripture

“Be joyful always, pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” 1st Thessalonians 5:16-17

Devotion

Today I want to ask, “How much time do you spend in prayer?” The creator of the universe wants to hear what we have to say, but the incredible fact is that most of the time we turn down his offer to talk to him. The well-known minister, David Jeremiah, said, “Prayer is the hardest work I do and Satan fights me every step of the way.” We need to understand that prayer is a conversation between two people who love each other—you and God. If we really love God we will want to talk to him and share our joys and sorrows, our dreams and our fears.

There are at least five kinds of prayers—prayers of confession, thanksgiving, praise, intercession (when we pray for others), and petition (when we pray for ourselves). Today, let me focus on just one of them and I’d like to explore the others in the coming weeks.

Prayers of Thanksgiving: The sad truth is that most of us, much of the time, think about what we don’t have rather than giving thanks to God for what we do have, which are all directly or indirectly gifts from God. Please set aside time today to really thank God for his blessings. Let me suggest that you don’t put it off; do it now.

Prayer

Lord, I do thank you for all of your blessings. I know that everything I have is a gift from you. Please forgive me when I take them for granted. Today I want to thank you for creating me, loving me, and allowing me to live in a free country, and for family and friends who love me. Help me to use my blessings to benefit others and reach out to them with your love. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

Devotion 2-04-23

Scripture

“Jesus said, ‘Do not worry about tomorrow; God will take care of your tomorrows too. Live one day at a time.’” Matthew 6:34

Devotion

In the past I have shared the story of a little boy who was flying a kite. The kite had gone so high that it was hidden by the clouds. A man approached the boy and asked him what he was doing. The boy said he was flying a kite. The man said, “Are you sure? You can’t see it.” The boy replied, “No, I can’t see it, but every little while I feel a tug so I know for sure it’s there.”

How long has it been since you felt a tug from God? He reaches out to us in many ways. He may touch us in a personal way through reading scripture, attending church, praying, listening to other people share their experiences with God, or just looking at the stars on a clear night and knowing that this world must have been created; it didn’t just appear from nothing.

I hope that you have felt a tug from God recently because he loves you and he wants you to feel his presence. But we must seek God. Find him for yourself by inviting Jesus to come into your life, or recommit yourself to him and spend time with other people who also are seeking to know God and feel his presence.

We have not been able to send out any devotionals for a while because both my wife and I are having health issues. Betty’s eye surgery has prevented her from typing the devotionals. Things should be back to normal soon.

Prayer

Lord, I ask you to touch those who receive these devotionals who are facing difficult times. Most of all, I ask you to give all of us a new touch of your spirit and let us be reminded that you love us and will always be with us. Thank you for your love. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

Devotion 2-06-23

Scripture

“Listen to my cry for help, my God, for to you I pray.” Psalm 5:2

Devotion

Betty and I want to thank those of you who emailed us expressing your best wishes when the last devotional was delayed because of our health issues. Betty’s eye surgery was successful and I’m holding my own. Quite a few said that you would pray for us. Please do. We believe in the power of prayer. I’m writing this because we want to encourage you to ask us to pray for you. Give us as much or as little information as you wish.

Scripture has much to say about the power of prayer. Let me mention just a few verses:

2nd Chronicles 7:14 “If my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”

Psalm 86:6-7 “Hear my prayer, O Lord; listen to my cry for mercy. In the day of my trouble I will call to you, for you will answer me.”

Jeremiah 29:13 “You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all of your heart.”

Philippians 4:6 “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”

Look up other scripture passages each day, and lift up your prayer to God.

Prayer

O God, I’m going to talk to you every day. The more doubts that creep in, the more I will reach out to you. Most of all, I will thank you for your daily blessings, and I will pray every prayer in the name of Jesus. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

Devotion 2-08-23

Scripture

“...God has said, ‘Never will I leave you or forsake you.’” Hebrews 13:5

Devotion

We received a large number of requests for prayer after we sent out the last devotional. It was a pleasure to hear from old friends throughout the country, and even one couple from Hawaii.

Many of you are facing very difficult problems and we will continue to pray for you. God is with you if you reach out to him. Often the problems that we face can be used to strengthen us if we turn them over to God in prayer.

In one of his books, pastor and author Rick Warren said, “God tests us with stress before He trusts us with success. God is going to test us before He blesses us.” It has been my experience that this is true. In reality, we can learn more from our failures than our successes. We were born to live for God and praise him. Sometimes that requires the real lessons of life to be learned the hard way. Don’t give up when things are going badly. Ask God to help you learn from these situations and bless you because of them.

Please remember that regardless of how you feel, God is with you. There is no one in the universe God loves more than you. When you feel the weakest, God is there to give you the strength you need. When you feel the most alone, his arms are around you. Reach out to God. He is always reaching out to you.

Prayer

Lord, thank you for loving me so much that you sent your Son to live, die and be resurrected so that I could live forever with you. I know that you are with me now and will always be with me. In Jesus’ name, I pray and give you thanks. Amen.

Devotion 2-10-23

Scripture

“Be still and know that I am God.” Psalm 46:10

Devotion

Do you ever think about how much God loves you? The creator of the universe took human form and walked among his creation as Jesus—the Son of God. He really understands if we feel rejected because he was misunderstood, and he had to face death as we do. But we must understand that Jesus had the power to avoid these things, but he didn't because he loves us. And he didn't suffer and die for mankind in general; it is as if he suffered and died for each of us as individuals because each of us is a child of God.

I think that it can be said that there is nothing or no one in all of the universe any more precious to God than you (than each of us). Talk to God in prayer regularly. Thank him for his love, and know that if you have accepted Christ as Savior, one day you will close your eyes in death, and when you open them you will be looking into the smiling face of God who will say, “Well done, good and faithful servant. Come in and inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of time.” I have heard all of these words since I was a little boy. I can't fully understand them, but I do accept them, and I hope that you do too. Give your life to God by accepting Jesus as your Savior, and know that the best is yet to come.

Prayer

Lord, there is so much that I can't understand, but I do believe that you love me with an everlasting love. I may not be smart enough to comprehend your love for me, but I am smart enough to accept it. Thank you for loving me so much. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Devotion 2-14-23

Scripture

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

Devotion

Tuesday is a very special day, it's Valentine's Day, a time to tell the people you love how much they mean to you, and to thank God for giving us people to love, particularly that one special person.

I was an educator for 24 years and a full-time pastor for 21 years. God blessed me to serve in some important positions in both school systems and churches. But the most important role that I have played is being a husband and father who thanks God every day for his gift of a woman whom I could love for a lifetime. I'm no longer a full-time pastor, school administrator, teacher, or coach, but I am still a husband and father. The greatest blessing God has ever bestowed upon me was to meet a special woman to whom I have been married for 52 years.

How did you meet your special Valentine? Our meeting was very romantic. We were teaching in different high schools and we were standing in line at one of them to get our chest x-rays which we needed in order to teach for the next year. I noticed her as we stood in line, but I was too shy to say anything. I asked the x-ray technician for her name and the school where she was teaching, and I did get her phone number from a mutual friend at that school. When I called her, all I could say was, “I know that you don't know me, but I watched you get your chest x-rayed.” The rest is history.

Say something special to the people you love on Valentine's Day, and most of all—thank God for letting your paths cross.

Prayer

Lord, I have so many things to thank you for, but most of all I thank you for sending your Son to die for my sins and make it possible for me to live with you forever. And I thank you for giving me people to love, to share my life with. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Devotion 2-17-23

Scripture

“God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in times of trouble.” Psalm 46:1

Devotion

When you are frightened or depressed and things are out of control, it's time to go to God in prayer, and ask people whom you know well and trust to pray for you. God loves you and is always with you. Remember that the God who is cheering you on is the creator of the universe. To get an idea of the power of God, look at the sky on a clear night. In one of his devotionals, the author and pastor Max Lucado said, “Hold a dime in your fingers and extend it arm's length to the sky...and you will

black out 15 million stars from your view, and God created them all.” Your problems may be too big for you, but they are not too big for God.

Let me suggest that you go to God in prayer to ask for his guidance. Then see what happens. As someone has said, “God does not always come when we call, but he is never late.”

Whatever you may be facing, you never face it alone. God loves you and is with you. Reach out to him. He may speak to you in scripture, prayer, through other people or circumstances, but if we are listening for the gentle whisper of God, we will realize that he is communicating with us. How much he must love us to come when we call.

Prayer

Lord, please forgive me when I take your love for granted. Thank you for creating me, loving me, and preparing a place in heaven for me with you. And I thank you for the life, death and resurrection of Jesus so that I can know all of this is true. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Devotion 2-20-23

Scripture

“Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.”
Proverbs 22:6

Devotion

How much time do you spend with your children and grandchildren? I know that I did not spend enough. Now I rarely have the opportunity to see them.

Recently I read this article: “When I was around thirteen and my brother was ten, Father promised to take us to the circus. But at lunch there was a phone call. Some urgent business required his attention downtown. My brother and I braced ourselves for the disappointment. Then we heard him say, ‘No, I can’t. It will have to wait.’ When he came back to the table, Mother smiled and said, ‘The circus will come back you know.’ ‘I know,’ said my father, ‘but childhood doesn’t.’” I really felt convicted by the story; maybe you do, too.

Your spouse, children, and grandchildren are God’s special gifts to you. I know that sometimes we find ourselves in situations in which not being with them is unavoidable. But when we can spend quality time with the people God has given to us to love, we should. And let’s be good examples to our loved ones by devoting time to worshipping God and serving him in any way that we can.

Isn’t it reassuring to know that we are God’s children? He knows our faults, but he will never stop thinking about us and loving us. Maybe we and our parents did the best we could in the past, but we let each other down. Ask for God’s forgiveness, pray for your loved ones, and enjoy the life God is giving to you now. He will never let you down.

Prayer

Lord, I thank you for giving me people to love and share my life with; they are your gifts to me. Forgive me when I have fallen short of being the spouse, parent, grandparent, friend or neighbor I know that you expect me to be. Help me to draw closer to you and to them. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

Devotion 2-22-23

Scripture

“...let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” Matthew 5:16

Devotion

Today I would like to repeat a story which I have shared before because it emphasizes that as Christians we are to reach out to those in need.

This is a true story of a German church that was bombed in WWII. The only thing left standing was a statue of Jesus in the courtyard, but even the lips, ears, hands and feet of the statue were blown off. The congregation was wealthy, so after the war they built a big, beautiful church, but they decided to let the severely damaged statue of Jesus remain as it was with no lips, ears, hands or feet as a reminder that the only lips Jesus has to speak words of love and compassion in the world are our lips; the only ears he has to hear their cries for help are our ears; the only hands he has to reach out to hurting people are our hands; and the only feet he has to go to lost and lonely people are our feet. As Christians we are to worship, pray, and read scripture regularly, but following the example and direction of Jesus we are also to reach out and help people who are lost, lonely and hurting. We are truly the body of Christ in this world.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, I know that you have told us to share our faith in you with all people and that we are your ambassadors in this world. Give me the words to say as I speak for you, and I pledge to see all people as your children and treat them with the love, respect and understanding that you would show. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Devotion 2-24-23

Scripture

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you...Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” John 14:27

Devotion

After his resurrection Jesus came to his disciples and said, “Do not be afraid.” (Matthew 28:10) And Jesus is saying the same thing to you and me. Even in spite of all the problems in the world, our country, and our lives, we are not to be afraid.

First, we should not be afraid to die. If you have given your life to God by accepting Jesus as your Savior, one day you will close your eyes in death and when you open them you will be looking into the smiling face of God who I believe will say, “Welcome home, come in and inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of time,” and you will see beautiful sights you never saw before, hear beautiful music you’ve never heard before, and experience joy you never imagined before—and it will last forever. The only thing you should be concerned about is putting off until it’s too late your decision to accept Christ as Savior.

Second, we should not be afraid to live. God wants us to love him, love other people, and love ourselves. Don’t be afraid to step out in faith to do what you know God wants you to do. Dream big dreams. There’s nothing that you and God can’t do together. Laugh a lot, cry a little, savor every day, make as many friends as you can, and cultivate their friendship. Find that special person to love, and devote your lives to each other. Consider every day as the blessing of God that it is. Difficult and painful times will come, but you know who has written the book of your life, and it has a happy ending. Do not be afraid. God is always with you.

Prayer

Lord, let me be so confident of your love and your presence in my life that I will be joyful, not afraid. Give me the opportunities and ability to really make a difference for you. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

Devotion 2-27-23

Scripture

“Do not worry about what we will eat or drink and what we will wear....But seek first the kingdom of God and all of these things will be given to you as well.”

Matthew 6:31, 33

Devotion

Someone wrote a little verse that goes:

“Said the robin to the sparrow;
I should really like to know,
Why these anxious human beings
Rush about and worry so.
Said the sparrow to the robin,
Friend, I think that it must be,
That they have no heavenly Father
Such as cares for you and me.”

I have to admit that I have been concerned about my health that prevents me from being able to compose these devotionals. I have always felt that these email devotionals were a ministry that God placed on my heart after I retired from being a full-time minister almost 10 years ago. It has grown from an audience of 150 individuals who asked to be put on our list of “Daily Devotionals” that were sent out 5 days a week, Monday through Friday, to a current list of over 450 individuals, many of whom forward them to others. Over the years, because of health issues, the frequency has diminished from 5 times a week to the present time of occasionally being only twice a week. Obviously, the name changed from “Daily Devotional” to just “Devotional.” Betty and I feel really blessed when we read your responses to the devotionals.

Prayer

Lord, we pray for everyone who receives these devotionals May they and we be drawn closer to you. Thank you for your presence in our lives. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

Devotion 3-02-23

Scripture

“You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all of your heart.” Jeremiah 29:13

Devotion

Betty and I felt really blessed when we read your responses to the last devotional. It was a real blessing to hear from old friends and so many of you whom we haven't had the privilege to meet. Many of you said that you send them to others. I hope that you will continue to do that.

The only thing I want to say today is the most important thing: You are loved by God. He knows you by name and he knows everything about you. He loves you as if you are the only person in the world to love. I hope that you will pass the good news of God's love to others who are also so loved by God that he sent his Son to live, die and be resurrected so that we can be forgiven for our sins and have everlasting life. I particularly want to encourage those of you who are going through difficult times now. If we give our lives to God, our future is bright because we will live in the presence of God where there is no more pain, just the joy and peace of being with our Creator forever.

Please remember these words of scripture:

“If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31)

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” (Philippians 4:13)

“The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?” (Psalm 27:1)

Prayer

Lord, I recommit my life to you. Please help me to grow in my faith in you and my commitment to you. And help me to reach out to others with your love. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Devotion 3-06-23

Scripture

Jesus said, “Come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28

Devotion

In my “quiet time” I came across this statement by the pastor and writer, David Jeremiah. He said, “To think that God—the Ruler of the universe—would do for me whatever I asked....staggered me. Answered prayer is the most wonderful of His gifts.”

Most of us take for granted that when we pray God will answer our prayers. But there are millions of people in this world who are praying. As we read in scripture “What is man that you are mindful of him?” And yet, the incredible truth is that each of us is so important to God that he knew us at birth, he is always with us and he cares enough about us to listen to our prayers, and at times even intervenes in his creation to answer them. Isn't it incredible that sometimes we feel too busy to pray, but we never feel that God is too busy to hear us?

Today I just encourage you to reach out in prayer to God who loves you. Be honest with him. Don't hold anything back. There is no one more important to God than you. What is so hard to believe is not that God hears and answers our prayers, but that we rarely take the time to pray. Have a “quiet time” in prayer with God every day. Why not start now?

Prayer

Lord, thank you for constantly reaching out to me with your love. Every day I want to have a “quiet time” with you when I reach out to you with my joys, sorrows, questions, and concerns. Thank you for loving me enough to hear my prayers. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Devotion 3-10-23

Scripture

“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff comfort me.” Psalm 23:4

Devotion

In church this past Sunday we sang the song, “Lonesome Valley.” The first words of the song were: “You’ve got to walk the lonesome valley by yourself.” But we don’t have to walk it alone because God is with us if we reach out to him in prayer.

If you feel like you are walking the lonesome valley, please be reminded that if you have accepted Christ as Savior, He is with you—even holding you when you are too tired to make it on your own. And God has prepared a place for you in heaven where there will be no more weakness or pain—just the presence, peace, and love of God.

God loves you. We need to be conscious that he is with us whatever we may be going through. But life is full of choices, and we must live with the consequences of these choices. I’m sure that all of us have been hurt by bad choices we have made or because of the actions of others. But God does not give up on us. As a matter of fact, if we reach out to God, the best is yet to come. At times we do have to walk through the valley, and it may seem we are doing it alone. But if we have given our lives to God, he is always with us even if we are not aware of it. And if we are not strong enough, he will carry us to safety if we reach out to him.

Prayer

Lord, I know that if I give my life to you I will never walk alone, because you are with me to guide me and protect me. Please make me conscious of your presence, particularly when I walk through lonesome valleys. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

Devotion 3-13-23

Scripture

John 11:25-26

Devotion

This is a sermon more than a devotional. I won't preach in the next one.

Jesus said these words as recorded in John 11:25-26: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

My question is do you really believe this? Jesus is saying that it's not something we just believe in our head, but that we feel in our heart, and put into practice in our lives.

There is a story about a man who stretched a tightrope across Niagara Falls and a large crowd gathered to watch him walk across it. He then proceeded to push a wheelbarrow across the tight rope, and the crowd cheered. When he asked if they thought he could put a man in the wheelbarrow and push it across the tightrope, they enthusiastically said they believed he could. But when he asked someone to volunteer to get into the wheelbarrow, no one would do it. Their belief in his ability was not demonstrated by their actions.

The implication is clear that if we do not really believe, if we fail to receive Jesus' gift of love and eternal life, we will have to face an eternity separated from Him and the love and life only He can give. I want to know that when I close my eyes in death that I will open them to be looking into the loving face of God who will say, "Well done, good and faithful servant; come in and inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of time." How can we not receive His love and share it with others? It is a decision we must make and a life and love that we must share.

Prayer

Lord, all I can say is "thank you" for creating me, loving me, and sending your Son to live, die, and be resurrected so that I can live with you forever. Please help me to share your love with others. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Devotion 3-18-23

Scripture

“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8

Devotion

Many of you know that for the last 10 years I have had the privilege to give three one-minute devotionals each weekday on a local secular radio station. It's a real privilege for me because I am sure that many of the listeners do not go to church, and some have no relationship to God at all. I'd like to share one of the coming week's devotionals. I hope that it may also speak to you.

“How long has it been since you told someone that God loves them? People are hungry to know that they are loved, and they need to be reminded of it by parents, friends, co-workers and others. Most people don't want to hear a sermon outside of church, but a reminder of God's love is usually welcomed. Think of people who particularly need to be reminded of God's love—who are sick, lonely, or out of work. Let me challenge you to tell others this week that God loves them. Just say, ‘God loves you and He wants you to talk to Him.’ ”

Prayer

Lord, give me the courage to share my faith in you with others. Give me the words to say that will help them realize how special they are to you, and how much you love them. And thank you for loving me. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Devotion 3-21-23

Scripture

“We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” Romans 8:28

Devotional

On many occasions we have explained the question of why bad things happen to good people. We've pointed out some of the reasons we can all understand, but just when we think we have the reasons for pain and suffering all figured out, something really painful happens to us or someone we love, and all of our certainty falls like a house of cards.

We do know that God is with us when we suffer to strengthen us and assure us of his love, and that when this life ends we will be with him forever, where as we read in the Book of Revelation, “there will be no more pain, crying or death.” Recently I read about a missionary who had a little boy who liked to climb. Unfortunately, he constantly fell. One day he tried to climb a tree, but fell and hurt himself. The boy was in real pain and told his mother she should not have let him climb the tree. The mother said, “Yes, it is dangerous, but would you have believed me if you had not fallen and been hurt?” Later she realized that's why we at times suffer. It's not because God wants us to suffer, but allowing us to go through the painful process is the only way we can avoid greater suffering.

Think about lessons you have learned or painful experiences you have had to endure to make you the kind of person God wants you to be. Yes, I know you may be having to endure suffering which seems to have no explanation. If so, please be reminded that God will see you through until the day when you will experience an existence where, to repeat the words of scripture, we will have “no more pain, crying or death.”

Prayer

Lord, I know I will never know the reason why I and many others suffer. You know that my honest prayer is that the suffering will end. But if it continues, I pray that I will learn from it and be drawn closer to you in the process. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Devotion 3-24-23

Scripture

“Jesus declared, ‘I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.’” John 3:3

Devotional

The term that is used for accepting Christ as Savior is being “born again.” I know that there are times when we just wish to be born into different circumstances. We might like to be born into a more loving or wealthy family. We may want to be born again with more beauty, athletic ability, or a keen intellect.

None of us is completely satisfied with the talents or characteristics that we were born with. But the things I have just mentioned are not important to God, because they are only temporary. It is our relationship to God that determines where we will spend eternity, and that is a decision we make. God has prepared a place in heaven for us if we receive the forgiveness and salvation which he offers in Jesus Christ.

What a tragedy if our lives do not have a happy ending, because it will be our choice. A missionary to Latin America was killed by Indians who he was trying to save. He knew the dangers but said, “A man is not a fool to give up what he cannot keep to gain what he can never lose.” Your life may have been a hard one. Maybe you have many regrets. But all of the painful things can be eternally forgotten because your life can have a happy ending with God, and that’s all that really matters.

Prayer

O God, maybe the story of my life has been a difficult or painful one. But I know if I give my life to you, you will give eternal life to me. Thank you that the final chapter of my life has already been written, and because of your love it will have a happy ending. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

Devotion 3-28-23

Devotional

I've written many devotionals on "fear" because most of us are afraid of many things. But we should remember these passages of scripture:

"If God is for us, who can be against us?" Romans 8:31

"For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind."
2nd Timothy 1:7

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13

I have said these verses when I was afraid, and I asked God to help me in some way. To know that God loves me and cares about me is the most wonderful thing in all the world, and at my age I look forward to the time when I will see Him face to face.

I have said before that when I was a little boy, after my father was killed in World War II, at times I would hear my mother sing a song entitled "You'll Never Walk Alone." I knew why she was singing it—she was so lonely. These are some of the words that I can remember so well:

"When you walk through a storm,
Hold your head up high,
And don't be afraid of the dark....
Walk on, walk on
with hope in your heart
and you'll never walk alone...."

Please remember that whatever you are facing, you never walk alone if you reach out to God in faith. And one day we will open our eyes in death and we will see the face of God and hear these words—"Welcome home, my child. Come in and inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of time."

Prayer

Lord, I thank you that you are with me and will always be with me if I continue to reach out to you with love and praise. And I reach out to you now. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Devotion 3-30-23

Scripture

“And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.” 1st Corinthians 13:13

Devotional

This past Tuesday my wife and I celebrated our 53rd wedding anniversary. Next to the day that I committed my life to God in Christ, the day that I committed my life to Betty in marriage was the second most important day of my life. I had prayed for a number of years that God would give to me someone to really love, someone to share my life, and He answered my prayer.

Have you begun to take for granted that God is the giver of all good gifts? The greatest of his gifts are the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus which makes it possible for us to have eternal life. But surely the next greatest gift is someone to love.

After college and two years in the army, I got my first high school teaching and coaching job. I loved my work, but something was missing—someone to love. All teachers were required to have an annual tuberculin test to continue teaching. The day came that the teachers in my high school and another high school stood in a long line together waiting to get our chest x-rays. Betty was right in front of me, but I was too shy to speak to her. But after she got her x-ray, I asked the clerk if I could see her x-ray card because I wanted to contact her. Incredibly, she gave me the information on the card, and a few days later I got the nerve to call her. These are the “romantic” words God gave to me: “Betty, you don’t know me, but I watched you get your chest x-rayed, and I’d like for us to have a date.” Incredibly, she said “yes,” and the rest is history.

How long has it been since you thanked God for all of his blessings, particularly the person you love? I’ve thanked God and her every day for 53 years. I have been very blessed.

Prayer

Lord, I thank you for the many blessings you have bestowed upon me, particularly someone to love. May none of us take this blessing for granted. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

Devotion 4-05-23

Scripture

“But God demonstrates his love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8

Devotional

This is “Holy Week,” when we remember the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus dying on a cross to take upon himself the punishment for our sins, and three days later, on what we call Easter Sunday, being raised from the dead so that we can be forgiven for our sins and receive eternal life with God in heaven. I hope that you will attend church on Friday and Sunday to remember and give thanks for God’s incredible love for us.

The “Good Friday” service is a solemn one because it was on Friday that Jesus was crucified on a cross, with spikes driven through his hands as he slowly suffocated to death. The Son of God allowed himself to be tortured as he endured what has been described as the most painful method of execution ever devised by man. And yet Jesus whispered in agony, “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.” And remember, he died because he wanted to spare you and me from the eternal consequences of our sins.

In the next devotional we will celebrate the resurrection of Jesus on Easter Sunday. He did not suffer and die in vain. He died so that we could be forgiven for our sins and be with him in heaven forever. How much God must love us.

Prayer

Lord God, thank you for loving us so much that your Son would become one of us in order to save us. All we can say is “thank you,” and what we can do is to serve you by loving other people in your name. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

Devotion 4-07-23

Scripture

“Jesus said, ‘Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.’” John 15:13

Devotional

This Sunday we celebrate Easter, the most important day in history. Jesus Christ the Son of God rose from the dead and said that we too will live forever in heaven if we accept him as Lord and Savior. Most people in the world can't or won't accept the Easter miracle because they either don't believe in God, or if there is a God, that He would send His Son to become one of us in order to save us.

In John 20:10-18 we read that Mary Magdalene, who loved Jesus and was told of His resurrection, could not believe that anything so wonderful could be true until He appeared to her and called her by name. And we need to feel that He loves us so much that he is calling each of us by name.

Read the story of the resurrection of Jesus in the Bible, attend church and listen to sermons preached and hymns sung about the resurrection. But most of all, reach out to God in prayer. Talk to God personally and realize that He is calling you by name to assure you that God loves you, and Jesus lived, died and was resurrected so that you could be forgiven for your sins and have everlasting life.

Prayer

Lord God, I thank you for all of the many blessings you bestow upon us. Most of all, I thank you for loving us enough to send your Son into the world to assure us that you love us, and if we accept him as our Savior we will live with you in heaven forever. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Devotion 4-11-23

Scripture

“You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.” Jeremiah 29:11

Devotional

In the 20th chapter of the Gospel of John, we read one of my favorite parts of the Easter story, because I can identify with the disciple Thomas. After the crucifixion the disciples were heartbroken, but Jesus appears to them to reveal He has been resurrected from the dead. For some reason, Thomas was not with them. So his friends go to Thomas with the good news that Jesus is alive. But the story is too much for Thomas to believe. It's too good to be true. Thomas said that unless he touched the nail prints in His hands and put his hands into His side that had been pierced with a spear, he would not believe. Later, Jesus again appears to the disciples and this time Thomas was with them.

What is Jesus' attitude toward Thomas? Does He condemn him for his doubts? No, Jesus invites Thomas to touch His hands and side so that he can stop doubting and believe. Thomas then says, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus then tells him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

Most of us have doubted at one time or another. Notice that Jesus was not angry with Thomas. He was very tender with him. And Jesus is not angry with us when we have honest doubts. It may take a while, perhaps a long while, before God gives us the proof we need. But He will, because He loves us.

Put away your doubts and believe. Let this be the first year the Easter miracle becomes real and personal for you. God understands our doubts, but He will not accept us failing to do all we can to resolve those doubts. Seek Him and you will find Him.

Prayer

Lord, like Thomas I tend to doubt. Actually, you know that I have many questions. But I know that life itself makes no sense unless we were created by you in love. As many have said, “I believe, help my unbelief.” And I pledge to hold onto my faith no matter what happens. I know that you love me and that is good enough. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Devotion 4-17-23

Scripture

Jesus said, “Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28

Devotional

Today I’m feeling under the weather, so rather than trying to write a new devotional I looked at devotionals I had shared with you in the past. This one I shared with you years ago, but I believe that the point I was trying to make is important.

We know that God expects us to share our faith with others, or just mention the name of God when we are talking to others. Remember the words of Jesus who said, “If you will not confess me before other people, I will not confess you before my Father in heaven.” While it is true that the best sermon is one that is lived, not preached, people need to know that the person who lives a life of love and forgiveness is in fact a Christian.

Let me give some examples:

In response to someone talking about problems he or she is having, you might say, “I’ll pray for you,” or “God loves you.”

You might say to someone who is facing a painful situation, “When I dealt with that problem, I don’t know what I would have done if God had not been with me.”

If a person is talking about a song, you might say, “That sounds like a song we sang in church on Sunday.”

These are just seeds that you can plant to let people know that you pray, go to church, or just believe in God. You might be surprised how well people respond. They may ask questions about topics that you didn’t know how to bring up.

Prayer

Lord, help me to bring people closer to you by what I say, and particularly the life I live. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

Devotion 4-19-23

Scripture

Jesus said, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Matthew 22:37, 39

Devotional

Today I want to say a word to those of you who really want to please God. In the Gospel of Matthew 22:37- 40, we read these words of Jesus when asked which is the greatest commandment: “Love God with your whole heart, soul and mind, and love your neighbor as yourself. Everything hangs on these two commandments.”

Honestly, are you really trying to love other people (even the difficult ones) as much as you love yourself? And are we trying to love God completely—to put Him first, to do His will—even when it’s something you don’t want to do?

It’s very hard to love people unconditionally, and it is so very hard to love God with your whole heart, soul and mind—to love Him even when He allows things to happen to you that you just don’t understand.

I believe that all of us who are serious about our faith in God have experienced His love, but also have so many questions—particularly when things are going badly and God is silent. Please know that God is with you and loves you, even when He doesn’t seem to come when we call.

One glorious day we will come into His presence in heaven if we have accepted Christ as Savior. Then all of our questions will be answered, but I believe that we will be so happy that we won’t think to even ask them.

In the meantime, know that God loves you and is with you now and will be with you always, and one day you will feel more loved than you can imagine.

Prayer

Lord, I know that you are with me in the good times and the painful times, and you will pull me through whatever challenges I face. Thank you for loving me so much. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

Devotion 4-24-23

Scripture

“Now the peace of God which passes all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:7

Devotional

Let me ask a question: Are you at peace, do you have peace of mind? It seems that everyone is searching for peace, but unfortunately most don't find it because they are searching in the wrong places. How many of you thought that you would find peace if you had more money than you now have; if you found another job; if you found someone to love; or if you were in better health? Maybe you have been blessed by God with all of these things, but you still feel that something is missing.

Saint Augustine put it very well when he said, “We were made by God and our hearts will be restless until we find our rest in Him.” Let me urge you to concentrate on finding the peace of mind and spirit that only God can give. He loves you. If you really find Him, everything else will fall into place. He created you, He is with you now, and someday you will close your eyes in death and open them to be looking into the loving face of God who may say, “Well done, good and faithful servant, come in and inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of time.”

When we know that is our future, we can enjoy the life He gives to us, because the best is yet to come, and it will never end.

Prayer

Lord, I thank you for all of the blessings that you bestow upon me. Let me see these blessings as opportunities to enjoy the life you have given me and to share your love with others. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Devotion 4-28-23

Scripture

“...the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”
Deuteronomy 31:6

Devotional

I'm sure that many of you are going through difficult times. If you provide some information, I will pray for you. And I ask you to pray for me because I have some health issues. I am reading a little book written by my favorite author, Max Lucado. It is entitled “God Will See You Through.” In the book, Lucado makes reference to Hebrews 12:1—“Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.”

Have you ever considered that those who are in heaven may be cheering you on as you face your challenges? Perhaps they are people you know who loved you, or that you helped in some way. Maybe some of the “crowd of witnesses” who are observing you and cheering you on are great characters from the Bible.

Whatever problems you are facing, you do not face them alone. Reach out to other people who you trust and who care about you. And know that there is a “company of heaven” who are cheering for you. And most of all know that God is with you. He will never leave you nor forsake you.

For all of us who reach out to God, the best is yet to come, either in this world or the next. Put your faith in God.

Prayer

Lord, I thank you for all of your blessings, and I put my life in your hands. Use me to help others know you and love you. I commit to trying to make my life one that will draw others to you. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Devotion 5-01-23

Scripture

[Jesus said] “If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.” John 15:7

Devotional

Two humorous answers to prayers occurred recently that I'd like to share with you. Because of some health issues I hadn't been able to go to the barber shop to get a haircut. The barber shop is in the middle of downtown Fredericksburg and it's hard to find a parking space close to the shop. My hair was so long that my wife said, “I'll drive you to the barber shop and we'll pray there will be a parking space.” We went downtown and prayed, and there was one space right in front of the barber shop door. We walked in and the barber said, “I haven't had any customers all day and I just prayed that God would send someone in that door, and immediately in the door you came. Can you believe God answered my prayer right away?” Then we told him that our prayer had just been answered, too. Now I know how unimportant this story seems. But I think that every once in a while God just smiles at us and causes or allows something to happen that appears totally random to everyone else, but we know that God in his love intervened for us. I've experienced this before, and if you have also, let me know.

Prayer

Lord, I thank you that you remind us of your love in many ways. Some are lifesaving and some are trivial. It gives me great joy to realize you love me enough to intervene in my life. Help me to share your love and your blessings with others. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Devotion 5-05-23

Scripture

“...But rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” Luke 10:20

Devotional

I would like to recommend a book for you to read. It's entitled “God Will Carry You Through” by Max Lucado.

Since I've developed health problems, this book has been a great comfort to me. I would love to share some of the stories with you, but that would violate copyright laws. One of the stories is entitled “Waiting for You in Heaven,” taken from another book, “Heaven is for Real.”

If we know that heaven awaits us, it should change our entire outlook on life. Jesus made many references to the reality of heaven. For example, in Matthew 6:19-21 we read, “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in to steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” The Bible is clear that we will spend eternity somewhere, either with God in heaven or separated from God.

God will see us through the trials and tribulations of life if we put our faith and confidence in Him, particularly if we talk to Him regularly in prayer. Where we spend eternity will be determined by our willingness to accept Jesus as our Savior.

If you have not done so, or if you have questions about it, please contact me or talk to a pastor or Christian friend.

Prayer

O God, I thank you for giving me life and sending your Son to give us eternal life if we put our faith and trust in Him. Please help me to be the person you created me to be. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Devotion 5-08-23

Some of you may remember this devotional from the past. I found it by accident and I think it's worth reading again. I hope that you will agree.

Scripture

“Our Father...forgive us our sins as we forgive those who have sinned against us.”
Matthew 6:12

Devotional

In the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant in Matthew 18:21-25, Jesus tells the story of a servant who owed a huge amount of money to his master. The master was generous and canceled the debt. But this same servant was owed a small amount by another servant who was unable to pay him. The servant who had been forgiven much did not forgive the man who owed him little. Rather than giving him more time to pay, the servant who had been forgiven much threw him in jail. When the master was told what his unmerciful servant had done he had him thrown in jail.

In the Lord's Prayer we read that God will forgive us for our sins “as we forgive those who sin against us.” It seems we expect to be forgiven even though often we do not forgive. Jesus makes it very clear that we can't have one without the other.

Do you need to go to God in prayer and ask him to forgive you, and go to someone who has wronged you and forgive him?

Prayer

Lord, I ask you to forgive me for the sins that I have committed. I pledge that I will have a forgiving spirit for those who have wronged me. Help me to forgive, and to realize the many, many times I need to be forgiven, particularly by you. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Devotion 5-12-23

Scripture

“God said..., ‘Honor your father and your mother...’” Exodus 20:12

Devotional

This devotional is to remind you of Mother’s Day which will be on Sunday, May 14. I’m writing this in advance of the special day so you will have no excuse to forget it.

As I have mentioned before, my father was killed in World War II when I was two years old. I have no memories of him, but I have wonderful memories of my single mother who raised me. I know she had chances to remarry through the years, but I think she didn’t because I might be jealous and not approve. We were very affectionate and I owe her more than I could ever put into words.

But my mother is not the only woman who has blessed me beyond my ability to describe. I thank God for my wife, the mother of our children. On this special occasion, I want to tell her that she is the most wonderful wife a man could ever have.

I say all of this to remind all of you to thank God for your mothers and your wives, and tell them how much you love them and are blessed by them.

God has bestowed many blessings on us, but the greatest of these are the special people who we love and who love us.

Prayer

Lord, I thank you for the special people you bring into our lives who love us, help us, and sacrifice for us. Give us the words and the loving spirit to tell them and demonstrate how much we love them and appreciate them. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Devotion 5-14-23

Scripture

Psalm 27

Devotional

Today I want to call your attention to the 27th Psalm. Please read the entire psalm.

I encourage you to memorize some of the key verses. Most of us are afraid of many things. But we need to remember that if we truly put our trust in God, and reach out to him for help, he will guide us and protect us.

As I have gotten older and weaker I find myself repeating these words frequently. They have been a great comfort to me and I know they are God's promises to us today, tomorrow, and throughout our lives. We will always face difficulties, but if we reach out to God in faith, we know we will not face them alone.

“The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?” (vs.1)

“Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then will I be confident.” (vs.3)

“I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.” (vs.13)

“Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.” (vs.14)

Prayer

Lord, I pledge to read this psalm and lift up my prayers of thanks to you. Please continue to use the words of this psalm to remind me of your love. And I commit my life in service and love for you. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Devotion 5-22-23

Scripture

No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him.” 1st Corinthians 2:9

Devotional

I was looking at my spiritual journal that I kept for many years. I was amused at one of my entries of at least 10 years ago.

“A man was hanging from a precipice. He looked up to heaven and said, “Is anyone up there?” A voice answered, “Yes.” The man said, “Please help.” The voice said, “Do you believe?” The man said, “Yes, I believe.” The voice answered, “Jump.” The man said, “Is there anyone else up there?”

Sometimes we reach out to God and ask that He intervene in our lives, but when He answers our prayer with something that we are afraid to do or don't want to do, we refuse. Of course, we need to pray that it is really God's voice that we are hearing. He will not ask us to do anything that will harm us or others. But don't be afraid to step out in faith if you have sincerely prayed that God's will be done in your life, and you are convinced that He has answered your prayer. You may still want to discuss it with Christian friends, but when you are convinced that it is God's will, step out in faith.

After I finished writing these words I looked at an entry in my journal when I left the field of education after over 20 years, and I became a pastor for over 20 years. The years I spent as a pastor have been the best years of my life.

Prayer

Lord, please reveal to me how I can best serve you and sense the joy of doing your will. Please use me to share your love with others. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Devotion 5-27-23

Scripture

“The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”
Romans 8:16

Devotional

A pastor told a story which I believe I shared many years ago, but it's worth hearing again. A young lady was a terminal cancer patient. The pastor asked the girl's mother if she was a Christian. The mother said that she was a powerful, dedicated Christian. On that basis, the pastor visited her on a number of occasions. One night he only had the time to visit her at 11:30 p.m. She was asleep, so he went to the elevator to leave. The elevator door opened, but for some reason he didn't get in the elevator; he walked back to her room and woke her up. He apologized, but she said, “It's alright; it hurts even when I try to sleep.” The pastor said, “How is it with your faith in God?” The girl replied, “I don't even know if there is a God.” For the next 45 minutes he shared his faith with her and she prayed with him to accept Christ as Savior. The next morning at 8:30 a.m. he came back to share God's word with her. But the bed had been neatly made and the body removed. She had died.

I think there are many lessons in the story. First, don't put off making your commitment to God; don't fail to share your faith in God with someone while you can; and don't assume that you know what someone's relationship to God really is. Talk to the person about God.

Prayer

Lord, please give me the opportunity to share my faith in you with others. Give me the words to say and the spirit with which to say them. Most of all, let me feel your presence and your love. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Devotion 5-29-23

Scripture

“Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart.” Psalm 37:4

Devotional

I was going through my spiritual notebook that I have kept for many years. Let me share some of the words of wisdom that I always want to remember. I hope that you will remember them, too.

Don't go out of your way to witness for God; witness to those who are in your way.

When I can't sleep at night, I say, “Lord, I'm awake. Is there anything that you want to tell me?”

Sin is not just badness, but away-ness from God in our thinking and our actions.

“We have all of eternity to celebrate our spiritual victories, but only one short hour before sunset to win them.”

It's better to try something great for God and fail than to try nothing and succeed.

While others sing their song for Christ, I've been stringing and unstringing my instrument for too long.

We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.

You can't take it with you, but heavenly treasures can be sent ahead, and they will be waiting for you.

When things go wrong, don't go with them.

Don't be afraid that your life will end, be afraid that it will never really begin.

Prayer

Lord, there is so much that I need to know about you and how I should live my life for you. I pledge to reach out to you and learn as much as I can about you, and try to live a life pleasing to you. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Devotion 6-02-23

Scripture

[Jesus said], “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28

Devotional

When I pray, I often ask God to speak to me and through me. I know that God speaks in scripture, prayer, other people, and circumstances. Please be reminded that he also speaks to you in these ways if you reach out to him. I suggest that you spend time reading the Bible, praying, and attending church, where God can speak to you through the sermon, music, and testimonies of others. Make this a regular habit, not an occasional occurrence, and be open to how he may be communicating with you in each and every circumstance.

Trying to maintain a close relationship with God depends on building that relationship with him and with fellow Christians who can support us in our journey. The world often tries to squeeze us so that we fit into its mold rather than what God has intended us to be.

Today, I just want to challenge you to develop a closer relationship with God. If you are really seeking to know God, you will recognize that he is speaking to you through other people, even if they never realize it.

My Prayer

Lord, I pray that you will reach out to all who read these devotionals. Help us to be sensitive to when you are reaching out to us in a special way, and bless us as we try to come to you. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Devotion 6-05-23

Scripture

“Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” 1st Thessalonians 5:16-18

Devotional

It’s been my privilege through the years to pray for many of you who are facing difficult circumstances. Now I am asking that you pray for Betty and me. In the next two weeks I will be having a biopsy and other tests. I already had a PET scan which revealed an area of concern. Now I find it difficult to keep my balance when I walk. I have leukemia which has been in remission for several years. However, a recent blood test indicated that the situation has worsened. The next few weeks should reveal what treatment will be required.

As you know, I believe in the power of prayer. I believe that I will be blessed if you pray for me and for Betty, who constantly has to deal with my problems and her own health issues.

And please continue to contact us so that we can pray for you. I believe that the more we pray for others, the less we will think about our own problems, and the more God will bless us.

My Prayer

Lord, I pray that right now you will reach out with your healing touch to those who need it. Let us feel your presence and be reminded, as scripture says, “If God is for us, who can be against us?” In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Devotion 6-09-23

Scripture

“Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” Hebrews 4:16

Devotional

Let me express my appreciation to many of you who responded to the last devotional, telling me you have enjoyed or benefited from previous devotionals. Some of you even included your prayer on our behalf in your response. It's really encouraging to know that old friends and new friends are thinking about us and praying for us. And don't hesitate to share with us what you are going through. Betty and I will continue to pray for you.

A writer once said that the value of persistent prayer is not that God will hear us, but that we will finally hear Him. We spend most of our time talking to God, but not listening, and most of our prayers are for ourselves, not for others.

Of course, God does want us to talk to him in prayer about everything that is important, blessings to give thanks for, things you want God to do in your life, and asking forgiveness for our sins. But make a point in your prayer time to ask for God's blessings on other people as well. And make your prayer time long enough that you can talk to him and sense what he is communicating to you.

Please remember that God speaks in many ways, and if you are quiet and still in prayer, in time you will sense what he may lay on your heart.

My Prayer

Lord, I thank you for the privilege of coming to you in prayer, and having the confidence that you hear my prayers and will answer them according to your perfect will. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Devotion 6-15-23

Scripture

“I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.”
Psalm 34:4

Devotional

This week my wife found some old devotionals that I had written years ago. As I reread them I realized that I would like to share some of them again with you.

This is a true story of a missionary in Asia. She saw a young woman sitting by a lake and she was crying. She went to the woman and said, “This is a nice day, isn’t it?” The woman answered, “No day is good for me.” The missionary said, “God just sent me to tell you how much He loves you.” The woman stopped crying, stood up and hugged the missionary and said, “That is exactly what I needed to hear today.”

So, today I just want to remind you how much God loves you. And why don’t you do the same thing, find someone who really needs to hear these words and say, “God wants me to remind you how much He loves you.”

Prayer

Lord, it overwhelms me to think how much you love me. Make me sensitive to people to whom I can say these simple words and know that they are true: “God really does love you, and I don’t believe it was an accident that God made our paths cross.” In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Devotion 6-19-23

Scripture

“Honor your father and your mother....” Exodus 20:12

Devotional

We just celebrated Father’s Day—a time to thank God for our fathers. And men—it’s a time to make a recommitment to love your children, the mother of your children, and God who gave you parents who loved you.

The Fifth Commandment is that we should honor our fathers and mothers. Are you really doing that? And men, are we living lives worthy of being honored? There is nothing in the world more important than loving God and those who depend on us and love us.

My father was killed in World War II before I was old enough to remember him. I know that I have shared this with you before. But my mother played the role of being a father. Maybe there is someone special who was like a father to you, and who blessed you and filled the void. Thank God for bringing the person into your life.

Prayer

Lord, there are no greater blessings than loving parents, a spouse, and children. We know that you are the source of all blessings. So I thank you for the people who have brought meaning and love into my life. Help me to be a loving parent, spouse, or child, and give me the words to say so that they will find love and be drawn to you. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Devotion 6-23-23

Scripture

“A friend loves at all times.” Proverbs 17:17

“I thank my God every time I remember you.” Philippians 1:3

Devotion

Around the Corner
Around the corner I have a friend,
In this great city that has no end,
Yet the days go by and weeks rush on,
And before I know it, a year is gone.
I never see my old friend's face,
For life is a swift and terrible race,
He knows I like him just as well,
As in the days when I rang his bell.
And he rang mine but we were younger then,
And now we are busy, tired men.
Tired of playing a foolish game,
Tired of trying to make a name.
'Tomorrow' I say! 'I will call on Jim
Just to show that I'm thinking of him',
But tomorrow comes and tomorrow goes,
And distance between us grows and grows.
Around the corner, yet miles away,
'Here's a telegram sir,' 'Jim died today.'
And that's what we get and deserve in the end.
Around the corner, a vanished friend.

Prayer

Lord, I thank you for the gift of friends. May I never take them for granted, knowing they are your gift to me, and I will not be reluctant to remind them that I thank you every time I think of them. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

I sent this to you in the past, but I was trying to select a devotional for today, and this was much better than anything I could come up with. I hope that you will agree that it's one of the good ones.

Devotion 6-30-23

Scripture

Matthew 7:21

Devotion

In Matthew 7:21, Jesus says, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”

How many of us are really serving God—doing his will? The world is watching to see if we practice what we preach. God wants us to serve him by sharing our faith with other people, helping those who are in need, inviting people to come to church, and being an example to others of how Christians should live lives of love and forgiveness, and reaching out to those who are confused, in pain, and lonely.

Many of us are familiar with the hymn “They Will Know We Are Christians by Our Love.” Most people are drawn to Christ not by what we say, but by the love, kindness and forgiveness that we demonstrate in our daily lives.

The world is watching to see if we really live out our faith by loving and helping other people in the name of Jesus Christ.

Prayer

Lord, I pray that I will draw other people to you by the life I lead and the love I share. Forgive me when I fall short. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

Devotion 7-04-23

Scripture

“Jesus said, ‘My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.’” John 15:12-13

“Jesus said, ‘If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.’” John 8:31-32

Devotional

Today we celebrate Independence Day when, on July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence from England. The document was written by Thomas Jefferson and signed by individuals representing the original 13 colonies. The men who signed the document showed great courage because we would have to win our independence in a war with England which was the strongest nation in the world at that time. Our chances of winning the war seemed very remote. If we lost the war, the signers of the document would be branded as traitors. Even though we won the war, some were killed, others were driven into bankruptcy, lost all of their property, and were separated from their wives and children who died before they could be reunited.

Freedom is not cheap. Men and women have died in many of our wars to keep our nation free. I am particularly sensitive to this because my father was killed in WWII. I believe he did not die in vain because God has used our nation to stop the spread of Nazism and Communism, and to send large numbers of missionaries around the world to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

But as Christians we must make a Declaration of Dependence on God. At times serving God and remaining true to him will require sacrifice. We won't lose our lives as the signers of the Declaration of Independence did, but we will pay a price. Much of society is going in one direction and we Christians should be going in another.

Let's stand up and be counted at the appropriate time and let others know who we are and whose we are.

I wrote this devotional five years ago, but I believe that it's worth reading again.

Prayer

Lord, we thank you that you have allowed us to live in the richest, freest, and most powerful nation in the history of the world. We will not take you or your blessings for granted. We commit to living for you and telling others about you and your love. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Devotion 7-11-23

Scripture

“Let us not forsake the assembling of ourselves together.” Hebrews 10:25

Devotion

I know that many of you who receive these devotionals are connected with Fairview Baptist Church in Fredericksburg, Virginia. I was the pastor of Fairview for 20 years, and they were the most rewarding years of my life. I hope that many of you will return to Fairview on July 16 to remember and celebrate 100 years of the ministry of this fine church. If you are able to come, it will be a blessing to greet old friends.

I hope that you are attending worship services on a regular basis. As scripture says, “Let us not forsake the assembling of ourselves together.” Set a good example for your children, grandchildren, neighbors, friends and co-workers. Invite people you care about to attend church with you.

My mother set a good example for me by attending church with me when I was a little boy, a teenager, and when I would come home from college and the army. Let me encourage you to be a good influence on the people you care about by worshiping God at church with them.

Church attendance went down during the COVID pandemic, and for good reasons. My wife and I watched services on television at times during part of the pandemic. Now that the crisis is over, the problem is that so many people have not returned to church.

Going to church does not make someone a Christian. Accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior does, but I hope that you will attend worship services and be a good example for others to follow. I invite you to send a return email if you worshiped God at church this Sunday.

Prayer

Lord, what a blessing it is to worship you with other believers in church. I realize that something is missing when I don't. I want to reach out to you in worship and join others in fellowship as we worship you together. Help me to be a good example for others. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Devotion 7-14-23

Scripture

“Be merciful to me, O God, and hear my prayer.” Psalm 4:1

Devotion

Today I want to talk about prayer, because praying to God is the most important thing we can do in life.

First, let me share my definition of prayer. It is a conversation between two people who love each other, you and God. God loves us, and He wants us to reach out to him in love.

God speaks to us in a number of ways. He speaks through circumstances and other people. But most of all, he speaks to us in scripture and when we reach out to him in prayer.

The great evangelist, Billy Graham, said “Heaven is full of answers to prayers for which no one bothered to ask.” William Evans said, “Prayer does not need proof, it needs practice.”

In the Bible we read, “We don’t have because we don’t ask.” So if we don’t have it, but need it, maybe we need to try asking God for it.

These words were written by an unknown author and reflect what I have been trying to say.

“I believe God answers prayer.
Answers always, everywhere.
I may cast my anxious prayer,
Burdens I could never bear,
On the God who answers prayer.”

Prayer

Lord, I believe that you love me so much that you do answer my prayers, but because you know what is best, the answer may be yes, no, or wait a while in which case you are silent. I put my faith and trust in you, and I’ll strive to do what you want me to do, say what you want me to say, and be the person you want me to be. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

Devotion 7-19-23

Scripture

“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him.” 1st Corinthians 2:9

Devotion

I write these words primarily for senior adults, but all of us should consider them. Recently I read a book written by the evangelist, Billy Graham, whose ministry has meant a great deal to me through the years. He was the most famous minister and evangelist who attracted crowds of thousands to his crusades throughout American and in many other countries. Betty and I attended one of his crusades at the Coliseum in Hampton, Virginia.

The title of the book is “Nearing Home.” Graham reflects on his ministry and his life in what I believe may have been his last book. I have read the book many times, but now it causes me as a senior adult to reflect on my own life. Now that I am nearing home, what is it that God wants me to do? I’d like for my last years to be my best years—the time that I can encourage people to give their lives to God and serve Him by helping and loving others.

For that to happen, I know that I must reach out to others in love. What does God want you and me to do with the special talents and gifts that He has given us so that we can be obedient to His will for our lives? As the song goes, “They Will Know We Are Christians by Our Love.”

Use the gifts, talents, abilities and opportunities God has given you to help people know and love Him.

Prayer

Lord, I thank you that you have prepared for me a place in heaven. Please give me the opportunities to help others know you and have a special place with you forever. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

Devotion 7-24-23

Scripture

“What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?” Mark 8:36

Devotion

Today I want to emphasize something that I believe is so important that I’m going to repeat some things that I’ve said in the past.

Someone has said that success does not make people happy, but happy people are usually successful. Jesus said, “What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?” Things don’t really make us happy. We should be pleased that we have been successful and accumulated nice things, but it is love that makes us happy. As I have gotten older, I realize this more and more. The ultimate happiness comes by being loved by the God of all creation. Cherish your relationships with God and other people if you truly want to be happy.

Do you feel as close to God as you once did? As the old saying goes—“if not, guess who moved?” God is always reaching out to us in love. He wants us to feel surrounded by His love and protection. We feel God’s love to a greater extent when we share His love with others, particularly those who are in need. What a privilege to know that God is speaking to other people through us. Let’s make sure that we are good spokesmen for Him.

Prayer

Lord, I pray that I will live a life that attracts people to you. Forgive me when I fall short. I want to be the person you want me to be—thinking more of you and other people than myself. I thank you for your blessings. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

Devotion 7-28-23

Scripture

“Jesus said, ‘I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.’” John 3:3

Devotional

I am still having trouble writing new devotions because of health problems. Years ago, I shared one of my favorite stories of a man who read his name in the obituary column in the morning newspaper, indicating that he had just died. People began to call his home and express their sympathy. So he called the editor of the newspaper to tell him that even though he had been announced as dead, he was very much alive. The embarrassed newspaper editor said, “Don’t worry; tomorrow we’ll put your name in the birth column.”

A prominent pastor told this story and said it’s really a spiritual parable. Not until we give our lives to Christ can our new selves be born. Jesus said you must be born again. By that it is meant that we accept Christ as Savior, and we not only live the kind of life he wants us to live, but the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, actually becomes a part of us—helping us know what Christ would have us do, and giving us the wisdom and strength to do it.

Billy Graham used the illustration of a pig. You can give it a bath and clean it up completely. But as soon as it sees a mud puddle he’ll jump in it, because his nature has not changed. Society says we should be better people, and of course we should. But unless our nature is changed, unless we are born again, we’ll go back to our old way of thinking and acting.

God wants to change our nature by giving us a spiritual rebirth. Jesus died and was resurrected for us to make it possible. Will we still fall short? Yes, but because our nature has changed we will feel guilty and know how we should live.

So it starts with an act of our will to be born again as a child of God. Then comes the life-long challenge to live like we really have been changed by God to become a new person.

Prayer

Lord, we’ve all wanted to start over, and you make that possible by letting us be born again by accepting you as our Savior and forgiving us for our sins when we wander away from you. Thank you for giving me a new start in your strength. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Devotion 8-01-23

Scripture

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.” Jeremiah 29:11-13

Devotional

In the Old Testament book of Jeremiah, we read these words from God that are our scripture text for today. (Jeremiah 29:11-13) This is one of my favorite passages of scripture. Many times I have read it when I was facing tough times. I repeated it over and over—night and day—and God brought me through some scary circumstances.

Are you going through tough times now? Let me encourage you to take them to God in prayer. And pray in faith that God will reach out to you. Make a commitment to do what He leads you to do. It may take some time for the answered prayer to come. But don't give up—continue to pray and do God's will.

God loves you. That's the most incredible and wonderful fact in all of the world. Reach out to Him constantly and do what He wants you to do and be the person He created you to be. And if you would like for us to pray for you, just send a return email.

Prayer

Lord, at times I become particularly aware of how much I need you. Now is one of those times. Please wrap your arms of protection around me and those that I love. And give me opportunities to serve you. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Devotion 8-07-23

Scripture

1st Peter 3:15

Devotional

How long has it been since you talked to anyone about God? In 1st Peter 3:15 we read, “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.”

If we truly believe in God, we should not be reluctant to mention His name when we are talking to others. But when it comes to our Christian faith, we have one of two problems. First, we don’t talk about God at all; or second, when we do talk about God, we often do so in ways that drive people away from Him.

All people need to be loved, so we should find opportunities to tell people that the God who created the universe knows them by name and loves them. He created all of us to receive His love and to return our love to Him, and to treat other people with a loving attitude.

Above all, God wants us to love Him and demonstrate His love by sharing the good news of His love with others, and living lives that will draw people to Him. As the old song puts it, “they will know we are Christians by our love.”

Prayer

Lord, please help me to have the courage to tell people that I love you and that you love us. Wrap your arms of protection around us. Help others to realize that you love us so much that you sent your Son to live, die, and be resurrected so that we could have eternal life. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Devotion 8-12-23

As I was going through my files, I found a devotional that I had sent and it meant a lot to me. I would like to share it again, and if you remember it, please let me know if it was meaningful to you.

Scripture

“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him.” 1st Corinthians 2:9

Devotional

Years ago a member of our church passed away who lived right behind our church. I met her son who asked if I would conduct the funeral, and we became friends. He founded Riverside Dinner Theater in Fredericksburg and also wrote a Christian musical. He composed a beautiful song with the words I want to share with you now. I wish you could hear the beautiful melody that goes with them. Read the words aloud slowly and be reminded of how much they reveal that God loves you.

“The Heart of God”

Come with me to a place of peace, Cast all your fear aside.
Walk with me down a path called faith, Into the heart of God.
Look with me through unclouded eyes; Know that my word is true.
You are mine; I have called you by name, Known by the heart of God.
And I will be holding your hand, little one, And I will be lifting you up.
And wherever you go you shall not be alone, For you are my child, my beloved.
Follow me, I will show you the fruits Of Love’s enduring song
Life through love is a gift from above, Sent from the heart of God.
And I will be holding your hand, little one, And I will be lifting you up.
And wherever you go you shall not be alone, For you are my child, my beloved.
Hold my hand as we journey ahead, Sheltered and unafraid.
I am the light which illumines the way, Into the heart of God.

By Rollin Wehman

Prayer

Lord, I thank you for the musical genius of the man who composed this song. Most of all, I thank you for these words that give us a glimpse into the heart of God. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Devotion 8-16-23

Scripture

Psalm 63:1

Devotion

In Psalm 63:1 we read these words:

“O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.”

Let me ask if you feel close to God? If not, these words of Psalm 63 should have meaning. Are we really seeking God? If not, our soul will thirst for God and our body will long for Him. So many people are well aware that something is missing in their lives. Maybe you feel that way now. Of course there may be many reasons for these feelings, but I recommend that you go to God in prayer, and ask that He intervene in your life and give you a new touch of His Spirit.

One way to feel God’s presence is to talk to him in a “quiet time” which you set aside each day to share your joys and sorrows, your questions and concerns. Ask God to reveal to you who He wants you to talk to about Him, and that He gives you the words to say and the spirit in which to say them.

A pastor named Bill Hybels wrote a book entitled “Just Walk Across the Room.” In other words, don’t go out of your way to witness, just reach out to the people who are in your way, the people that you see and talk to.

Let people know that you really care about them enough to listen to them and tell them that God loves them.

Prayer

Lord, I do earnestly seek you. I want to know you—really know that you hear me when I reach out to you in prayer, and that you love me enough to respond to my prayer, not necessarily what I want, but what you want. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Devotion 8-21-23

Scripture

“If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” Romans 10:9

Devotion

I’ve put off writing these words, but I can’t put off writing them any longer. I know that the quality of these devotionals has gone down. It’s partially because I have leukemia. Hopefully, I will be able to continue to share my thoughts with you for a long time.

As I was writing these words I had the radio on and Christian music was being played. One of my favorite songs is “I Can Only Imagine,” and it came on the radio. The words to the song are about all of the wonderful things we can imagine for all of eternity if we really have accepted Christ as Savior. The truth is that we can’t even imagine how wonderful it will be, and how tragic it will be if we refuse to accept God’s gift of salvation and eternal life with Him in heaven.

So today I want to give the same invitation as I did to conclude every sermon I preached for many years in many churches. Accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior, and encourage people you love and care about to do the same. If you do, there will be rejoicing in heaven, and your eternal future will be more wonderful than you can imagine.

I promise not to preach a sermon in the next devotionals, but I will emphasize how much God loves you and how much we should love Him and other people.

My Prayer

Lord, thank you for loving us so much that for a short time you became one of us, to die on a cross to take the punishment we deserve. I know that the most important decision that I will ever make is to accept you as my Lord and Savior. I renew my commitment to you now. Please forgive me when I take your love for me for granted, and help me to share the good news of your love with others. Amen.

Devotion 8-27-23

Scripture

“Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.” Ephesians 6:10

Devotion

C. S Lewis said, “God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks to us in our conscience, but shouts to us in our pain.” Recently, has God been whispering to you, speaking to you, or shouting at you?

The important thing is that God is reaching out to you, and he is reaching out to you in love—whatever form it may take. He is always with you. As Max Lucado said in his book entitled “God Will Carry You Through” “Be strong and brave. Don’t be afraid or frightened because the Lord your God will go with you. He will not leave you or forget you. He is not far from any of us.” He goes on to say, “God is at work in each of us whether we know it or not, whether we want it or not.”

That last sentence is very important. God loves us, so he is always at work in us, and for us. But often what we want and what God wants are two different things. So what is it that we are seeking—God’s will or our will be done? Let me suggest that in prayer you ask God what His will is for your life, and that you will thank Him for loving you enough to reach out to you, whatever His will is. And then, try as hard as you can to be open to where He will take you. Later you will learn that His will for your life is what is best for you, and you will thank Him.

Prayer

Lord, I thank that you care enough about me to intervene in my life. Thank you for loving me so much that you would send your Son to live, die, and be resurrected so that I could live with you forever. Forgive me when I don’t appreciate or understand your love for me. I again give my life to you. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen

Devotion 9-06-23

Scripture

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.” Jeremiah 29:11-13

Devotion

In my last devotional I shared the news that I have leukemia, which makes it difficult to write anything, including devotionals. But I intend to try, just not as often. I have considered it a blessing to share my thoughts with you, and in my retirement I want to continue to do so whenever I can. Please know that I continue to pray for you and think about you. If you have a special prayer request, please let me know. One thing I can do is to pray for you and I will have plenty of time to do it.

Today I want to call your attention to three passages of scripture. Let me suggest that you memorize them.

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge...” Proverbs 1:7

“Seek the Lord while He may be found. Call on Him while He is near.” Isaiah 55:6

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest.”

Matthew 11:28 (the words of Jesus)

Prayer

Lord, I thank you that you love me, enough to endure death on the cross to wipe away my sins. I will live every day knowing that I have a future with you in heaven when I die, not because of what I have done, but because of what you have done for me. In your name, I pray and give thanks. Amen

Devotion 9-13-23

Scripture

“I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength.” Philippians 4:13

Devotion

Today I want to call your attention to a book written by Max Lucado. It is entitled “God Will Carry You Through.” It’s a very short book in which he makes reference to 15 short stories. Lucado begins the book with these words: “You’ll get through this. It won’t be painless, it won’t be quick, but God will use this mess for good. Don’t be foolish or naive, but don’t despair either. With God’s help you will get through this.” I encourage you to read this book. I must admit that I am reading it because it is so encouraging. It includes 15 very short stories of only a couple of pages. Let me share five of the titles with you:

God Carries Us Through
One Thing Troubles Can’t Touch
Don’t Despair, God is Near
Jesus Takes Care of Us
Trust God to Triumph

Before each short story he quotes scripture. Some of the verses which really speak to me are as follows:

“Whatever we may have to go through now is less than nothing compared with the magnificent future God has planned for us.” Romans 8:18

God said, “I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go...” Genesis 28:15

“Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” Philippians 1:6

Prayer

Lord, I thank you for all of your blessings. Help me to reach out to others with love in your name. Pick me up when I fall, and help me to appreciate your blessings in the good days and the difficult days. I put my life in your hands. In Jesus’ name I pray.
Amen.

Devotion 9-19-23

Scripture

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

Devotional

I hope that you have memorized this verse of scripture, and that you have really accepted Jesus as your Savior. If so, it reveals that no matter how difficult your life is, it will have a happy ending. You will spend eternity with God in heaven, experiencing joy and peace that you never imagined before, and it will never end. I hope that your life has been a happy one, but the best is yet to come.

Another scripture I hope that you will memorize is “No eye has seen nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man what God has prepared for those who love him.” (1st Corinthians 2:9)

Both of these scripture passages assure us that we will spend eternity with God in heaven. It will be more wonderful than we can even imagine. But it is a gift of God, and we must be willing to accept it by accepting Christ as Savior and living the kind of life that He expects us to live.

So today I ask you to commit or recommit your life to God. He created us to love, and for us to return his love.

If you have any questions, please send a return email.

Prayer

Lord, I know that you are offering to me an eternity of joy with you. I want to receive your gift and try to live a life pleasing to you. Please forgive me when I fall short, and help me to be the person you want me to be. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Devotion 9-25-23

Scripture

“....let your light shine before men, that they will see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” Matthew 5:16

Devotional

In the past I have encouraged you to keep a spiritual notebook in which you can be reminded of words of wisdom about God and your relationship to him.

I have been dealing with a health issue that has prevented me from writing devotionals that I could share with you. So I decided to look back at a spiritual notebook in which I compiled words of wisdom for many years. I would like to share some of them with you today, and suggest that you pray about them and ask God what you might learn from them.

It is not important what people think about you, but what God knows about you.

If all is right between you and God, what can the world do to you?

I climbed the ladder of success, only to find it was leaning against the wrong building.

The person in God's will is in the safest place in the world.

What do you want to say with your life? It's terrible to live a lifetime and leave no statement behind.

Faith is not really faith until it's all you have left.

Prayer

Lord, I give my life to you. Please love me and help me to be the person you created me to be, and I will serve you and help others in your name. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Devotion 9-28-23

Scripture

“Cast all of your anxiety on him [God] because he cares for you.” 1st Peter 5:7

Devotional

Again today I would like to share statements and stories about spiritual matters that I have kept in my spiritual notebook for many years. I hope that you think they are worthwhile to remember also, and that you will keep your own spiritual notebook to refer to regularly.

Billy Graham told the story of a little girl who was running towards a cemetery when the darkness of evening began to fall. She passed a friend who said, “Aren’t you afraid to go through a cemetery at night?”

The girl replied, “Oh no, I’m not afraid. My home is just on the other side of the cemetery.” We Christians believe that we should not be afraid of even the night of death, because our heavenly home is just on the other side of the cemetery.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, I thank you that you have given us the certainty of eternal life with you if we accept you as our Lord and Savior. Again today we commit all that we have and are to you, and look forward to an eternity with you. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Devotion 10-06-23

Scripture

“Jesus said, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the law and the prophets hang on these two commandments.’” Matthew 22:37-40

Devotional

As I said in a previous devotional, I have leukemia. So my health problems make it more difficult to write these devotionals, but I want to continue. I hope that you will bear with me if I am late.

Sending fewer devotionals will make me concentrate on what are the most important things I want to share with you. The words of Jesus in Matthew 22:37-40 sum up what God wants and expects us to do. And they are not easy. It’s all about love, loving God and other people. Sometimes people are hard to love, and let’s face it, we must make a real effort at times to not only love other people, but to even feel love for a God we cannot see or touch.

But loving God and other people is God’s command. We need to do whatever we can to set aside time to reach out to God and other people with his love. And we should live our lives in such a way that others will be drawn to the God we worship.

I challenge you to love God and other people, and particularly to share your faith in God with others. And as the old song put it, “They will know we are Christians by our love” [for God and the people He brings across our path].

Prayer

Lord, I thank you for loving me so much that you would give me life, and send your Son to die on a cross to make it possible for me to have eternal life. Help me to be the person you created me to be, and more than anything, I want to love you and serve you by reaching out to others with your love. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Devotion 10-13-23

Scripture

Psalm 23

Devotional

This week I have continued to deal with health problems so I have been unable to share a devotional with you. But I can share words of comfort found in The 23rd Psalm. They were written long ago, but they can be our words of praise and comfort. If you haven't memorized them, this would be a good time. They are God's words of love to you.

The Lord is my shepherd
I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside still waters,
he restores my soul.
He guides me in paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the valley of the
shadow of death,
I will fear no evil, for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Prayer

Lord, I thank you for these words of comfort. I thank you for the assurance that you love me, and I will share your love and these words with others. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Devotion 10-19-23

Scripture

Jesus said, “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” John 13:34

Devotional

Today I want to ask you to be in prayer for events in the Middle East. I’m sure that you are aware of the attacks by Palestinians and the counter-attacks by Israel. It seems that the fighting will continue, and I’m afraid that it will spread. Already we should be aware of the tensions in our country as a result of the fighting.

In 1st John 4:19-21 we read, “We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ yet hates his brother he is a liar. Whoever loves God must also love his brother.”

I want to challenge you to try to love all people because they are children of God. Of course, we are to protect ourselves against those who would do us harm, but we can attempt to reach out to all people in love and understanding.

Today, tell someone that you really care for him or her, and that God cares about all of us.

Prayer

Lord, I thank you for loving me in spite of my sins and weaknesses. Help me to reach out to others with your love. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Devotion 11-05-23

Scripture

John 3:16

Devotional

Jesus, the Son of God, came into the world to die for our sins—to take upon himself the sins of the whole world. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life.” It seems too good to be true, but God does love us that much. Now the question is, how much do we really love God—enough to worship Him regularly, to talk to Him often in prayer, to share our faith in God with other people, and to be a part of a local church?

God did not send his Son to condemn the world, but to save the world, and to reveal to the people He created how much He loves us. What is it that God wants us to do in His service? There are many answers to that question, but the simple answer is that He wants us to love Him and share His love with other people.

If we are too busy to love and be loved by our Creator, we are just too busy, and we need to make some changes in our lives.

Prayer

Thank you, Lord, for creating me, loving me, and saving me. I pledge to love you, to serve you, and to share your love with others. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Devotion 11-13-23

Scripture

“Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart.” Psalm 37:4

Devotional

I was having difficulty selecting what to say in the devotional this week when my phone rang, and it was a man who had attended our church years ago. He said that he was now attending another church, but he is still on our mailing list, and he reads and enjoys the devotionals and has been sending them to other people.

Some of you have told me that you share some of the devotionals with friends and family members. Let me encourage you to do that. As I have gotten older and in bad health, it has gotten more difficult to write devotionals that I believe will be a blessing to you. It certainly brightens my day when you send an email telling me that the devotional has been meaningful to you, enough to share it with others.

Let me share some scripture verses which might be helpful to you and others:

“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in times of trouble.” Psalm 46:1

“Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him.” Psalm 37:7

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.” Proverbs 3:5-6

Prayer

Lord, it is a privilege to read your words from the Bible and to share them with others, to memorize them, and to apply them to our lives. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Devotion 11-23-23

Scripture

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

Devotional

I am sorry that I have taken so long to send my next devotional, but unfortunately my health continues to be a problem. But I have been praying for all of you, and I have a lot to be thankful for this Thanksgiving.

Our younger daughter and her two young children came from their home in Atlanta. They stayed at our house. I thanked God for the time we had together. It had been a year since we had seen them in person and we enjoyed our tradition of them putting up our Christmas tree and decorating it. Each year the finished product seems better than ever before.

We are also thankful that our daughter and her husband are good and loving parents to their children. Many of you probably feel the same about your children, and are thankful for your family and friends.

One of my favorite passages of scripture is Philippians 4:6-7:

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

In the weeks leading up to Christmas, I hope that you will read and reread the Christmas story of the birth of Jesus, the Son of God and Savior of us all. Let’s thank Him every day and recommit our lives to Him.

Prayer

Lord, we thank you for the blessings of this year and we look forward to serving you in all the days to come. Every day I realize how much I need you. Please help us to be the people you created us to be. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Devotion 11-29-23

Scripture

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.” Matthew 7:7

Devotional

Let me say “thank you” to all of you who responded to the last devotional and asked about my health.

Unfortunately, it is slowly deteriorating. As I’ve said before, I do want to continue to share with you my thoughts about God and our relationship to Him.

There simply is nothing as important as our relationship to God. Take time to talk to Him in prayer during the day. Thank Him for his blessings, ask Him to forgive you for your sins, and ask for his guidance in the future.

Don’t be reluctant to ask others to pray for you, and pray for other people. There is nothing more important than prayer. If you’d like for me to pray for you, just contact me.

I have begun to think more about the future, and I hope that you will also. Of course, the important thing to consider is where we will spend eternity. It will depend on our relationship to God and our willingness to serve Him in this life that He has given to us.

I have been reading again the book, “Nearing Home,” by the evangelist Billy Graham. Are we nearing home? Have we prepared for it?

Prayer

Lord, we thank you for all of the blessings you bestow upon us. I especially pray for everyone who is reading this devotional. May we be drawn closer to you and experience your love. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Devotion 12-13-23

Scripture

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

Devotional

I regret that my bad health has made it increasingly difficult to write these devotionals, but I’m going to write one today that I hope will encourage you to speak to God in prayer. It has been said that “to pray does not only mean to seek help, but to seek God.” In other words, when we reach out to God in prayer it should mean far more than just asking God for what we want, but attempting to strengthen our personal relationship with Him.

So how close are we to God, how often do we speak to Him in prayer, and how much do we talk to others about Him? In other words, when we pray, is it more than just asking God for what we want? We should be asking for what God wants, because He knows what is best for us and those we love.

Aren’t you glad that God loves you? How often do you tell God what He means in your life? And how often do you tell others what God means to your life?

Let me encourage you this week to share with someone what God means to you, and how much He loves you and them.

Prayer

Thank you, Lord, for giving me life, and forgiving me when I do not return your love. But I do love you. Thank you for your blessings, and help me to live the life you want me to live. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Devotion 12-23-23

Scripture

“But the angel said to the shepherds [and to us], ‘Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.’” Luke 2:10-11

Devotional

Let me begin this devotional by wishing you a very merry Christmas. I hope that you will have the opportunity to spend time with family and friends sharing the “reason for the season.” God loves all of us enough to send His Son—Jesus—to live, die and be resurrected so that if we accept him as Lord and Savior, we will spend eternity with Him in heaven. Christmas is a time to be joyful and spread our joy to others.

This is the time to remember how much God loves us. No matter how difficult our lives may be, they will have a happy ending with God in heaven if we accept His Christmas gift.

So let me wish you a Merry Christmas, and share the joy of the Son of God loving us enough to die on a cross for us.

The story seems too good to be true, but it is true. God loves us that much, and nothing can separate us from His love.

Prayer

O God, we thank you for demonstrating how much you love us. Forgive us when we take your love for granted. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Devotion 12-27-23

Scripture

“The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? Psalm 27:1

Devotional

I appreciate the responses of many of you to the last devotional. We received a very large number of responses. Please continue to pray for me and I will continue to pray for you.

Before I say anything else I want to thank many of you for your return emails. I continue to deal with leukemia, but I can say that it is no worse. Actually I feel it's a little better. So please continue to pray that God will reach out to me and others with His healing touch.

Let's pray for each other and remind ourselves that God created us, loves us, and wants the best for us. He is always with us and will never leave us.

Do you feel close to God? Please remember that God loves you so much that He sent his Son, Jesus, to die on a cross so that we can be forgiven for our sins and spend eternity with God in heaven.

Prayer

Lord, it is a privilege to reach out to you in love and faith. I pray that you will forgive us for our sins and give us opportunities to serve you. In Jesus' name I pray.
Amen

Epilogue

I hope you have been blessed by this collection of devotionals by Dr. Bob Sizemore. Bob was a good friend of mine. We first crossed paths in 1974, when I was 14 in Newport News, Va. I was in Jr. High and Bob was my assistant principal. We later found ourselves in the same Baptist church and mentored by the same pastor who had an instrumental role in our calls to ministry. At Fairview, Bob was one of my dearest encouragers. He called me his Pastor, and I was honored to walk him into the retirement years of his life. Many of you have been touched as I have in your lives by the Christian walk and biblical teachings of Dr. Bob. I pray these devotions will be strength for your journey.

I would like to thank Mrs. Betty Sizemore for serving as Bob's scribe, editor, and encourager as he wrote and sent these devotionals out on a regular basis.

I would also like to thank Russell Wiss. After discussing his vision for this devotional with Dr. Bob, he had the commitment to collect these devotionals and arrange them as you have read them today.

Fairview Baptist Church historical archives are managed by Mrs. Myrtle Campbell who assisted with the Remembrance section.

Dr. Bob Sizemore's life of preaching and teaching reminds us that the world will pass away but the Word of the Lord and salvation through Jesus lasts forever.

The best is yet to come,

Dr. Jim George

Senior Pastor
Fairview Baptist Church