



NO SERMON NOTES THIS WEEK

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ASBURY DAILY STUDY GUIDE *August 5-10, 2024*

These devotionals were originally used in February 2022 as part of the "Closing the Spiritual Gap" sermon series.

INTRODUCTION

When his disciples were jockeying with one another for power, Jesus tells them that "even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). As Jesus followers, we are to live with a different paradigm, not a life of selfish individualism, but a life of service. The Apostle Paul said, we are to be a "living sacrifice" (Romans 12:1). God has uniquely designed each one of us to bring about more justice, more mercy, and more loving compassion into the world.

Monday: Matthew 25:31-40

In this important teaching, Jesus said those who helped those in need, in the end, were surprised! They ask, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?" They did not see an opportunity for reward, but a fellow human in need—and were moved to action. Pray for God to open your eyes and heart today to see the faces of people who need an act of kindness from you.

Tuesday: 1 Peter 4:8-11

The author of 1 Peter says, "each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others." Sometimes we may feel we don't have the skills, gifts or even energy to serve, but there are as many unique ways to serve as there are people. God has made you uniquely. All you need to do is see a need, and bring whatever gifts you have. Pray that God would open your eyes to stop comparing yourself to others, and give you courage to serve with your uniqueness.

Wednesday: Galatians 5:13-15

Here, Paul writes to the church in Galatia where false teachers have been convincing Christ followers that they needed follow rules and laws for God to accept them. He acknowledges that often we fall into following our selfish desires, and he reminds them that there really is one central command, "love your neighbor as yourself." In our polarized culture today, are you finding those you disagree with hard to love? Pray today for the empowering Spirit of Christ to equip you to love someone who is difficult to love.

Thursday: Isaiah 58:5-8

God's people have often fasted from food or other activities to grow in their faith. The prophet Isaiah, however, says that the Israelites' motive for fasting is self-serving. They were fasting, while abusing their workers and mistreating people. Here, the prophet says that God wants a fast that will bring about justice. Consider in prayer today how your actions could bring more mercy and more justice into the world.

Friday: Psalm 82:1-4

The central principle of God's rule is to ensure justice and rescue for "the poor and the oppressed." With no legal or social status, and no male relative to care for them, widows and orphans in this society simply had no means to help themselves. And yet, God is passionate about helping those most at the margins. Have you ever felt powerless or in need of justice? As you consider an unjust situation, pray for guidance. Is there a letter or email you could write, a phone call you could make, or an action you could take to make life better for someone?

MOVING FORWARD

The Book of Ephesians reminds us that we have been "created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life" (Ephesians 2:10 NRSV). As you consider how to close the gap between where you are and where God longs for you to be, what might be different about your life if you were more intentional in your practice of kindness toward others? If Asbury Church works closely together in service, what impact might we have on the community? What does it mean to you that God has "prepared beforehand" unique ways for you to serve with your passions and gifts? Pray that God would give you, and our faith community, courage to grow through acts of service.