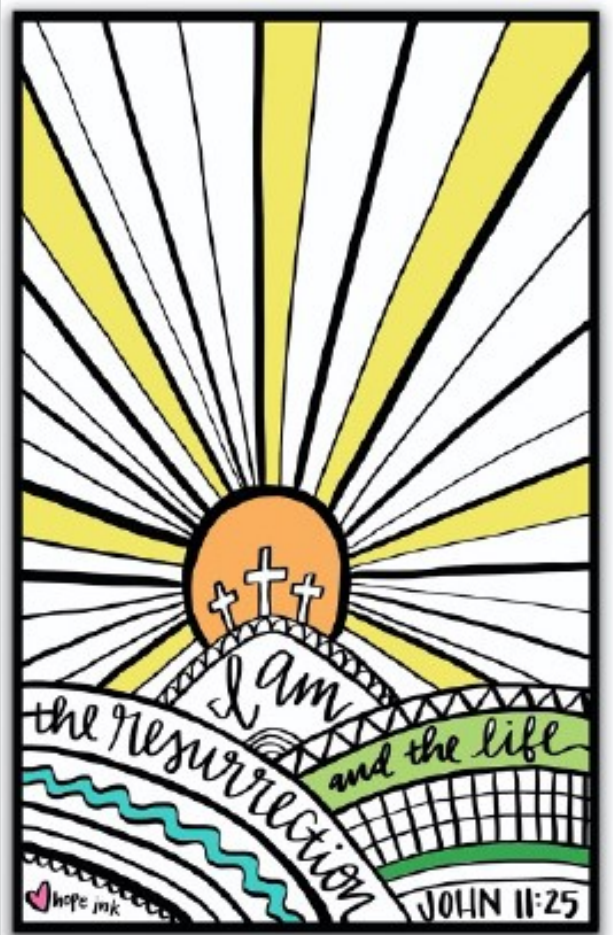


**Pastor Nathan Johnson
is inviting you to join the
Tabernacle MBC Family
in a
2021 Lenten Devotion
“Arising Son”**



“Arising Son”
2021 Lenten Devotional



Jesus said to her,
“I am the resurrection and the life. Those
who believe in me, even though they die,
will live...”

~ John 11:25

Week Seven: Prince Of Peace



March 28 - April 3

Monday, March 29, 2021

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 9:6

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; And the government will be upon his shoulders; and his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

REFLECTION: If you have ever listened to Handel's Messiah, this verse is familiar to you. I can hardly read it without hearing the chorus in my mind. It is a powerful statement of who this child, this Jesus, is; and how he will be perceived. Jesus was not, and is not always recognized as "owning" these names. When we accept Jesus we accept that He is indeed all of these things and more. But what does Prince of Peace mean? Does it have to do with wars and conflicts? We pray for peace in our world and especially recently for peace in our country. Or, does it really mean peace within ourselves? By trusting in God we can have peace in our hearts and minds and then we can follow the Prince of Peace to spread peace in the world.

Years ago we had bracelets from our Youth Group that said WWJD, or What would Jesus Do? It's not as catchy but how about WWPPD, What would the Prince of Peace do? That would surely help us in all of our interactions and would help to bring about the peace we are praying for. Let the Prince of Peace bring peace to your own heart so that you can spread that peace throughout the world in every interaction you have. If we all would think of how the Prince of Peace would deal with those we disagree with, with those who are different from us, with those who treat us badly, we could change our behavior and find peace. Jesus gave us the way to spread peace... love your neighbors as yourselves... so simple, but so hard. Jesus came to show us the way to

achieve peace. He is the Prince of Peace; we just need to follow his example.

PRAYER: *Prince of Peace help me to be a peacemaker, to do what you would have me do in all of my interactions. Amen.*

Tuesday, March 30, 2021

SCRIPTURE: John 14:27

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

REFLECTION: This has been a difficult, challenging, stressful year for everyone. As we adapt to losses of loved ones, jobs, remote learning, health issues, food shortages etc., one thing we didn't lose was Jesus Peace. His peace has sustained me throughout this pandemic. Financially it has been the hardest year I can remember. Yet as I looked upon the pile of bills I wasn't filled with anxiety, Jesus' peace was very present, I knew in time they would get paid, and slowly they are now.

My daughter is a nurse and works on the COVID Unit often 12-16 hour shifts. Many of her coworkers have gotten COVID. Although I am very concerned for her and my granddaughter, I have peace inside, Jesus peace, that gets me through everyday without becoming short with others or anxious. Oddly I can feel his peace and if i do start feeling upset I repeat Jesus words, "My peace I give to you my peace I leave with you." There really is power in his word, I can feel inside a calmness taking over. Jesus gives us parts of himself, his peace, joy-a subtle joy, love and his

righteousness, priceless gifts. Our hearts need not be troubled for God takes all our worries upon himself and we need not be afraid because God is with us and we can trust in our God for he will help us to endure whatever we have to go through.

PRAYER: *Thank your Heavenly Father for Jesus, our Prince of Peace and for his gifts to us. For never leaving us or forsaking us and for taking our worries upon yourself so our hearts need not be troubled and we need not be afraid. In Jesus name, I pray. Amen.*

Wednesday, March 31, 2021

SCRIPTURE: Philippians 4:6-7^b

Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

REFLECTION: We live in scary times. There is always something to worry about; sometimes trivial, sometimes serious, but worry is often a part of life. Three years ago, I faced a serious health concern. A tumor growing in me presented a life changing, if not life ending scenario. A couple of surgeons told me that surgery was too risky and they would not do it. A third surgeon suggested removal. Was I worried? Of course. Worry was an under-statement, terrified was more like it. But what could I do about it? The surgeon was highly rated. The hospital was excellent. Doing nothing was not an option. I faced the reality of the situation knowing that I had no control over what was to happen.

Realizing that prayer was the best and frankly, the only option for me, a great weight was lifted from my mind. When I turned the problem over to the Prince of Peace, it was as if the old catchphrase took over, "let go, let God". The "peace that passes all understanding" was now helping to carry the burden.

There is incredible power and potential in prayer. Through prayer, we invite the God of the Universe into a situation and into our lives. Prayer changes things, but even more, prayer changes us. When we name our worries, our fears, in prayer, we rest them in God's hands. Someone has said, "When you get to your wit's end, you'll find that God lives there." And to this kind of dependency comes real strength, real peace, the peace that passes all understanding.

PRAYER: *Gracious God, thank you for being with me at all times, but especially when I am feeling anxious. Your presence in my life is my rock and my strength enabling me to endure whatever the world throws at me, and allows me to live my life in peace. Amen.*

Maundy Thursday, April 1, 2021

SCRIPTURE: Romans 5:1-2

"Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God."

REFLECTION: We all experience the need for God's closeness in our lives. We crave His attention to our problems that so often seem unsurmountable. We need that

undeniable connection in a more tactile way, though that is not possible. But is it?

This past year has been tough, for me, my family, for everyone on this earth. After months of dealing with the pandemic (personally), the political unrest, the unsettled feeling of it all, I find myself not despairing, but optimistic.

At the center of this is "the grace in which we stand". I see it everywhere. In the concerned calls from friends, the donated dinners, the unexpected holiday treats, and the general calmness among my "people". I am especially awed by my good friend who lost her husband in a tragic accident away from home during this COVID time. Unable to be with him as he died within hours of his emergency surgery, she finds peace and comfort from many, many family members and friends who have stepped up. She has put her faith in Jesus to carry her through this. Her large group of supporters obviously have the love of God in their hearts and share it freely and joyfully. She gets calls and texts all day, every day. She welcomes them and in return, feels blessed and on the road to healing.

Open your hearts to this faith that we have at our disposal. Feel it, absorb it, and share it 'tactically' with those around us that need it so desperately.

PRAYER: *Dear Lord, Please help us remember that all we have to do is ask. Help us to feel the peace in our hearts and souls that is ours if we want it. As you gave your son to us, give us the strength to share whatever gifts we may have to lighten the load for others in need as you have for us. Amen.*

Good Friday, April 2, 2021

SCRIPTURE: John 16:33

"I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!"

REFLECTION: In John's gospel, these are the last words Jesus says to his disciples before he is left utterly alone to face the horrors he knew were before him. Yet, in his heart and soul, he knew he was not alone. "...the Father is with me." (vs 32) Consider: His best friends were about to fail him. Every conceivable humiliation and agony were about to be heaped upon him. Who among us could blame Jesus if he were to question God; to wonder if his ministry had meant anything! On a scale hardly worth mentioning in comparison, we have just come through a very trying, burdensome, scary year. And who knows what the days ahead will bring? More chaos? Another variant of the virus? More businesses going under? More grieving? More social and political unrest? It's a time of anxiety!

Friends, hear these words of Jesus: "Yes, in the world you face persecution (stress, anxiety, threats, chaos, etc.) But take courage; I have conquered (overcome) the world!" He uttered these words to his companions who were about to abandon him and face their own fearful days. He speaks these words to you and me, too, as we face our fears and worries. Why? Because he wants us to know the peace we can have ... peace in Him!! "The Father is with me (and you) ... courage ... I have overcome the world ... be at peace."

PRAYER: *Jesus, you faced your crucifixion with faith, courage and peace. Help us to face our fearful unknown with the faith, courage and peace that only you can give. Amen.*

Saturday, April 3, 2021

SCRIPTURE: 2 Corinthians 13:11

[Final Greetings and Benediction]

Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

REFLECTION: Siblings in Christ: In today's climate and culture this verse though relatively short in length holds great weight and is quite deep. So let's break it down:

"Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell."

I know usually my goodbyes are different for each situation. The intention of my earnest I love you's and I can't wait to see you vary on the situation. Life lately has taught me to never take for granted the time frame of when we see each other again. In March when I said goodbye to my students and co-workers, I had no idea it would be 6 months until I saw them again because of the COVID pandemic that shut down schools. I have learned that each goodbye hug should last as long as you need and each goodbye "I love you" said with depth and honesty. Life is so unpredictable and uncertain. Each farewell should be a vehicle of your true intentions!

“Put things in order” This reminds me of back in my pre-school teaching years when things were getting too loud or out of control in the classroom I called for “Clean-up time”. We all need to reset and focus. It’s so important to get things in order to be able to move on.

“Listen to my appeal” The word listen is so misunderstood in today’s world. We often listen to respond instead of listening to understand, especially when someone is “appealing” to us. In today’s world that usually means arguing and trying to get you to see their side! If only we would take time to listen to really hear the other person, the world would be a much better place!

“Agree with each other” That is difficult to do during the best of times. The world is full of strife. People disagree about most everything, from ranch vs. blue cheese to which sports team is tops. Healthy disagreement

“Live in Peace” I must admit this is the part of this passage I’m struggling with. There has not been a lot of peace in our world, both globally and for my family personally. There are days I have trouble finding even a moment of peace much less be able to Live in it.

“ And the God of love and peace will be with you.” And... And?? So are you telling me I have to put things in order, listen to others, agree with them, live in peace AND then God will be with you...oh that AND...hmmmm this does not sit well in my very human, there for willful spirit. But upon retrospect I realized Jesus is the AND!!! He is the one who will put things in order for you, will help you listen to others with your heart, will help you agree on the issues that matter and will of course be the one who will Live in Peace with you. It’s Jesus, he’s our AND!

PRAYER: *Dear Jesus, thank you for being our AND! For bringing us peace and love! May we be a vehicle of your love to others. Amen.*

