



Holy Week Guide 2020

Palm Sunday, April 5, 2020

“Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.” -James 4:8

Believing in God is the most important thing I have ever done in my life. His presence is overwhelming, and he guides me daily to see only the beauty in the world he created. The birds sing to me every morning, and the sun says hello in the beautifully painted sky. I watch his new day begin from the front porch, and it gives me motivation to accomplish all the things I need to do. I love communicating with God, because he has no judgement towards me, and he shows unconditional love while I am trying to climb another mountain in my life's journey on earth.

During this season of Lent, I remind myself the world didn't change when I gave myself completely to God... I allowed myself to see it through his eyes, and I changed. I see things differently, and the world is gentle and peaceful. Even in times of chaos, my world maintains a calmness of peace and serenity because of never doubting him and his love. I love my places of meditation and serenity around my home. I visit them daily, and it builds my character with unconditional love for his people. It has been baby steps through 60 years, and after each step, I never looked back. God is real and God is LOVE. I give him genuine admiration and absolutely love him enough that I want to be a Godly person. I want to learn and live according to his greatness and generosity. I love this world and honestly don't want to leave anytime soon. I love the sky as it changes colors, the wind as it blows across my face, the sound of the ocean waves, laughter from happy children, singing from a pure heart, the joy of a happy home, and the sound of a gentle rainfall.

I like my simple life, and I love our amazing, powerful, awesome and loving God. He has given me a soulmate who loves me as much as I adore him, a handsome son and his beautiful wife, my awesome daughter who is my best friend, two beautiful granddaughters, a wonderful grandson, wonderful friends and family members. I thank God for everything he has given me and never take it for granted. Thanks be to God.

Donna Cranford

Monday, April 6, 2020

"For we live by faith, not by sight." -2 Corinthians 5:7

Life is hard, not only for adults but for all of God's children. As a child, just making it to adulthood can be a challenge when faced with certain situations. As adults, we struggle daily to make ends meet, to be good people and to follow the words and will of Christ. We struggle to manage everyday life, and this has never been more evident than in our present time. We see so many obstacles in our paths. We see so much suffering and evil in this world of ours. It is hard for some to just get out of bed in the morning and trudge through a day at work. Many times, we are our own worst enemy when trying to muddle through. Life is hard.

I remember shortly after being married, struggling financially as many young couples do. Going into work one morning, my husband's car suddenly just stopped working. He was on the beltway to downtown when this happened and fortunately managed to make it over to the shoulder. He called me to let me know what happened and to discuss what we could do about getting him to work and getting the car fixed. We were at our wits end. At that point, I knew of no other recourse than to get on my knees and give it to God. I recalled a familiar scripture as I was praying.

"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze." Isaiah 43:2

"Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this." Psalm 37:5

"For we live by faith, not by sight." 2 Corinthians 5:7

I am a firm believer that prayer works, especially when you remain faithful in the Lord during good and bad times. After praying, I looked through our file on the car and noticed that the car's insurance included towing. Problem one solved. We had the car towed to the shop and asked the mechanic to let us know what was going on. Praying all the while, I told God that we just did not have the resources to pay for repairs right now. God listened, and God answered. We received a call back from the mechanic. The reason the car stopped working was because of a bad sensor. It turned out that the bad sensor was a problem for that model, and that the manufacturer had issued a

recall. We knew nothing of the recall but were told by the mechanic that the repairs to fix the car would be covered by the manufacturer, and that we would not have to pay anything out of pocket. Problem two solved.

See, by remaining faithful in God and giving over our problem, He made a way. We trusted and He was with us. We felt like we were drowning, but He kept us above the water. We lived on faith and did not need to see where we were going, because He already knew. I urge everyone to remain faithful. In good times, in great times, in bad times and in sorrow. Give your struggle and your suffering over to God and He will remain steadfast in His promise.

Loren Chavis-Waldrop

Tuesday, April 7, 2020

"The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my rock in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold."

Psalm 18:2

God is very much alive in my life. Throughout the years, I have been through many trials and tribulations. At my lowest point, even though I knew he was always with me, it was hard to understand why these things were happening to me. But he was by my side even when I didn't understand.

This year is my senior year in high school, and because of the coronavirus, I am missing out on what should be some of the greatest memories. God has led me in my walk of life, even though I may miss out on many memories. There is so much more ahead of me to let the past and the present hold me back. I am looking forward to strengthening my bond with God and continuing to let him work in my life as I go off to college. With the journey that lies ahead, my faith will be very important for me. I had to weigh many options for my schooling and future life choices. I prayed for God to guide me down the right path, and I have felt that going to Norwich University in Vermont will be my best option. Although I will be over 700 miles away from my family, I know God will be with me on this new journey just as he was previously.

The trials and tribulations of the past and unexpected circumstances of today will give me strength and guidance for the future. This same is true for all of you. God has been my rock through it all, and he will always be by my side in this walk of life. God is here for all of us, whether we notice in the given moment or later down the road.

Hannah Stewart

Wednesday, April 8, 2020

"The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."

-Deuteronomy 31:8

I've always considered myself "directionally challenged". When I was 16 and starting to drive, I quickly learned to read maps because I knew I was going to need them. I can't count the number of times I circled the beltway in Raleigh when I was young because I kept missing the exit ramp to come back home. I finally stopped at a service station and a truck driver heard me asking the man at the counter. He very nicely said, "Follow me! I'm headed in that direction and I will point when you need to exit."

Needless to say, when GPS machines came out, I was quick to order mine and now my smart phone serves that role. That GPS app is my best friend. She (mine's a girl) helps me out of some real fixes, gives me great advice and if I'm not sure I like her plan, she gives me alternates. She even knows when roads ahead are closed and helps me navigate around. Because of this problem, I second-guess myself a lot. I may be driving somewhere without my GPS on and question myself. Am I on the right road? Did I make a wrong turn? I turn on my GPS and she either reassures me... or says, "Turn around you big dummy!" (Well, she doesn't say that last part.) On the rare occasion I'm driving without my phone, I feel lost and unsure of myself.

Life sometimes takes us down paths where we feel lost and alone. How blessed we are to have a GPS with us. God's word is a map to our hearts and leads us if we use it wisely. In the Bible we find a Savior who loves us and says, "Follow me! I will lead you on the right roads." And when we second guess ourselves, God's word is there to reassure and correct. Thank you, Jesus for being my GPS!

Ruth Ann Harris

Maundy Thursday, April 9, 2020

“The person who doesn’t love doesn’t know God, because God is love. God has shown us his love by sending his only Son into the world so that we could have life through him. This is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the payment for our sins.”

-1 John 4:8-10

Some of you can relate to my spiritual journey. Sadly, in today’s world many cannot. Very early in life, I was brought to church by my parents and sometimes my grandparents. Growing up, I had many people take interest in my life and my well-being. These people helped shape my life and guided me to make good decisions. I enjoyed church with friends and my church family and found myself spending many hours in church during the early years of my life. All of this was very influential for me.

Unfortunately, many young people did not have this type of upbringing. They didn’t have people in their lives to love them and guide them in a positive way. Not only did they not get involved in church, but they had absent or abusive parents. These are people that we as Christians should pray for daily. I encourage us all to seek these lost souls out and be that positivity that they are lacking in their lives. Imagine what this type of agape love could do to help brighten the lives of these people. God would want us to share his stories with this world. Tell someone the Easter story, the story of the Christmas miracle, David and Goliath, John the Baptist, Jonah and the whale. These stories may bring someone to Jesus, someone that has no idea what real love is, the love our Savior has for us as believers and those who have never even heard his name.

Jack Carroll III

Good Friday, April 10, 2020

"Now this eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." -John 17:3

Years ago, when my children were young, and the hospital was only three blocks away, we chased the life flight helicopters. I could hear one coming towards my house (they sound different than an army helicopter), and I would load the children in the car and head towards the landing pad. I was so excited to go watch it land. We would always make it in time to see it gently sit down on the pad behind the hospital. Sometimes we would wait until the patient was loaded, and we watched it take off. The sound of the blades whirling and the wind blowing all around us was an exciting experience.

On one occasion, it was at night, and I heard one coming. I got ready to go, but the kids didn't want to participate, so I went alone. I arrived before the helicopter did, parked, rolled down the windows and waited. The pilot kept circling over and over again, and then at the right moment, it landed. I watched the two attendants go in, and I sat and waited for their return, so that I could watch it take off. During the longer than normal wait time, it dawned on me that maybe something went wrong with the patient. I'm not sure what happened, but it was in that moment that I felt a strong urge to pray.

You could say my "ministry" to pray for the unknowns was born then. There are people on this planet who do not have a single prayer ever said for them. So, I have been praying for the unknowns ever since that night over 40 years ago.

I don't get to go to the landing pad anymore, but even now when I hear a life flight helicopter up in the sky, I pray. Every time I hear sirens, I pray. Every time!

Lord, my prayer is that if this person doesn't know you as their Lord and Savior, may they come to you right now and ask to be forgiven for their sins, so that they may have eternal life. Amen

"Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." - John 17:3

Who will be the unknown who you pray for today? Especially today.

Bobbie Huff

Saturday, April 11, 2020

The Presence of God

Sometimes when burdens seem too much to bear
And God seems so far away,
It's then that He is closest to us
Walking beside us every day.

When darkness seems to cover the world
And we can see no light,
It's then that we should look towards Heaven
To see His love shining bright.

When life seems to be full of despair;
When we wonder if there is hope,
It's then that God answers prayers
And gives us strength to cope.

Whenever we search and can find no peace
In worldly things that we treasure,
It's then that God pours blessings upon us
And gives His peace beyond measure.

Whenever friends seem to desert us;
When we ask, "Is anyone there?"
It's then that we hear that still, small voice
Saying, "It's me, my child, I care."

And when everything seems right with our world;
When in our heart there is a song.
It's then that we feel the presence of God.
He's been with us all along.

Carol Ann Smith

Easter Sunday, April 12, 2020

"Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness."- Psalm 30:4

It was the week before Easter, and I was in the hospital hoping I would get home for Easter. On Monday, my doctor came and told us I had lung cancer, and there was no treatment or medicine could give me, because earlier in my life I had tuberculosis. She would, however, like to do lung surgery later in the week. That night I began praying, "Lord, if it is your will..." I heard a voice. "Get on your knees." I continued praying, "Please, Lord, if you will let me live."

Again, I heard a voice saying, "Get on your knees." Was I dreaming? I continued, "Lord, if only I could live until Regina is married." I heard once again, "Get on your knees." I answered, "Lord I am listening."

I got out of bed and got on my knees, praying that Jesus would give me peace for whatever my family and I would have to face. I began singing, "Because He lives, I can face tomorrow." I picked up my Bible and it opened to Psalm 30. I began reading the first few verses: "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Why was God giving me these verses?

They did my surgery and found no cancer but a serious lung infection. I remained in the hospital for over three months. I called my church and asked them if they could please sing, *Because He Lives*, for Easter. I knew I would not be there, but what joy I found in knowing they were singing to our Lord.

Yes, that was about 25 years ago, and I still thank God for my favorite Bible verses and my favorite hymn. This Easter I still know my Jesus is ALIVE and I am, too.

Lord, you tell us in your word (Psalm 30:4) to give thanks at the remembrance of your Holy name. Jesus, I thank you for the healing you have given to your people in the past, so today I come praying for a greater healing for your people in your Holy name, Jesus. Amen.

Is Jesus alive in your heart this Easter?

Pat Peele

Happy Easter
from all of us here
at
First Baptist Church
Hamlet.