*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

June 27 – July 2

*Walking with Abraham*

**Monday, June 27 Genesis 15:1-3**

*“But Abram replied…”*

 In verse 1, God says to Abram, “Do not be afraid.” These are words of comfort. They are an assurance to Abram that God is with him, and he has nothing to fear. Such words ought to be met with a response of gratitude. We might expect Abram to fall to his knees, shouting to the Lord, “Thank you! Thank you for all your good gifts.” However, this is not Abram’s response. Abram responds as we often do when encouraged by the Lord to put away our fears: he doubts. He doubts whether God will fulfill his promises, and in doing so, he allows his fear to run rampant.

 Each one of us has fears that we carry with us every day. Each time we engage these fears, we do so in stark opposition to what God has said to us: Do not be afraid. Though fear is a natural emotion, living in constant fear is not God’s desire for our lives. His will is that we live in the freedom of his loving providence. Instead of doubt, we ought to choose to hold to his words of assurance spoken through Jesus Christ and fulfilled through the power of his Spirit. Through faith in him, we find our comfort.

*Lord, when faced with my fears, let find my comfort in you. Amen.*

**Tuesday, June 28 Genesis 15:4-6**

*“You are the salt of the earth”*

 God has called you on a mission to witness – a mission to proclaim his love and mercy to the world. This calling is no small thing. Jesus came to this world for the purpose of redeeming you and equipping you for this task. Yet, we often live our lives as if this mission doesn’t matter. It’s as if we know that we’ve been called, but we have a hard time accepting and living into that call.

 In Matthew 5, Jesus says that we are the “salt of the earth.” As far as I’m concerned salt is the most important of all spices. Without it, you might as well pack up and go home. Steak, popcorn, avocado- all foods are improved by salt. The world is the same. When we live into the call God has given us, we flavor the world with our lives. We spice it with hope, joy, love, peace, patience, kindness- all the marks of God’s kingdom. There are many who live their lives without tasting this flavor. It is God’s will that they are given the opportunity to experience his salt in ways that change their lives. As his follower, Christ has called you to be that opportunity. Question: How are you going to be salt in someone’s life today?

*Lord, help me to bring the flavor of your Kingdom to the world. Amen.*

**Wednesday, June 29 Genesis 15:7-11**

*“…use your freedom to serve one another in love”*

 We live in a culture that values freedom. As Americans, we are always talking about our “freedom.” From our perspective, freedom is the right to do the things that we want unencumbered by the expectations or boundaries of others. We are free *from something*.

 While this definition of freedom may work as citizens of America, it isn’t the definition of the freedom we have in God. From a follower of Christ’s perspective, freedom is always a freedom *for something*. We are truly free when we commit ourselves to serving and loving others. Christian freedom is a joyful giving of ourselves to God and to the people he loves.

 I have often spoken with people who feel like they are trapped. As hard as they try, they just can’t escape the feeling that the world is collapsing in on them. Perhaps you do too. If so, the first step toward freedom is through service to God and neighbor. God has called you on this mission; he wants you to be free! Celebrate this freedom *for God and others*. Question: How will you celebrate your freedom for others today?

*Lord, set me free to live for you and others. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

June 27 – July 2

*Walking with Abraham*

**Thursday, June 30 Luke 22:14-20**

*“For when I am weak, then I am strong.”*

 Are you tired today? Working to build God’s kingdom, like building a house, is not easy work. When we’re tired, we often portray to others a sense of strength and endurance. We say to ourselves, “I’m going to show everyone that I can do this. I’m not weak.” When others ask if we need help, we tell them, “No, I can do this myself.”

 For many of us, we believe that acknowledging our weakness is not an option. We believe that if others see that we’re tired or hurting, they’ll use that against us. So, we work as hard as we can to demonstrate that we are strong and capable. We do everything in our power to exude strength.

 Jesus shows us a different way. As he hangs from the cross, Jesus is at his weakest. He is beaten and bruised, barely hanging on to life. Yet, in this moment is found the fulness of God’s strength. God’s victory over sin and death is accomplished through a moment of total weakness. Weakness is now strength. As Christ’s followers, this is now true of us as well. Question: When you are weak, where do you see God’s strength?

*Lord, when I am weak, I am strong in you. Amen.*

**Friday, July 1 Genesis 15:12-21**

*“…it won’t collapse because it is built on bedrock”*

 This spring, Yellowstone National Park is experiencing record floods. As of today, the park is shut down to visitors, and many roads and bridges have been severely damaged. Looking at the pictures of the devastation, one gains a better appreciation for the power and strength of water. When flooding of that magnitude occurs, only structures with firm foundations stand. Anything built on shaky ground will fall. When building a home, you do so with the expectations that it will be exposed to harsh conditions. You want a strong foundation, straight walls, and a sturdy roof.

 The same is true of our hearts. In our lives, their will be moments when we face extreme conditions. We will lose someone we love, experience physical and emotional trauma, and make decisions we regret. When our hearts are built on the firm foundation of God’s love and mercy, we will hold fast; the home of our lives will stand. Question: What are you doing to build your heart on a firm foundation?

*Lord, help me to build my life on the foundation of your love and mercy. Amen.*

**Saturday, July 2 Hebrews 13:20-21**

*“I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit”*

 God has chosen each of us to participate in his mission. This mission is not temporary. It is not confined to a week in Mexico or a Sunday morning service. We are called to live out this mission every day of our lives. As followers of Jesus Christ, this mission belongs to our very being. It’s who we are.

 In John 15, Jesus reminds us that this mission will “produce lasting fruit” in our lives. As we seek to be members of God’s Kingdom, we are shaped and transformed until our lives reflect the love of God for the world. This is the fruit of his work in our hearts. As we draw closer to him, he instills in our hearts the character of his.

 Whether returning home from Mexico or living our lives in the LC valley, God has called each of us to follow him each day. The “lasting fruit” that results from his presence in our lives is a witness to the world. Question: What is the “lasting fruit” that God has produced in your life?

*Lord, I give you the glory and honor for the blessings in my life. Amen.*