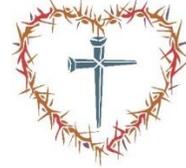


# Personal DailyWalk

From Stacie Dichsen

March 9-15, 2020



**Monday: John 13:34-35** This passage gives us our ultimate commandment, the one that changes everything; the one that can be a gift when received, and also at times, a challenge to keep. How is it that we are to keep this command? How are we to live this out every day? If we look at Jesus, and how He lived this commandment when He was here on this earth, He points the way for us. He walked among the people; not just those in His inner circle, but along the margins/the edges/the outside. He not only offered them food and healing, but the greater gift, the gift of His presence – eye contact, touch, time, conversation. These things are the way He has called us to love this world. How is Jesus challenging you to step out of your inner circle and love another?

**Tuesday: Luke 5:15-16** Jesus sets an example for us in this passage, one that we often find difficult to follow. The demands of our worldly everyday lives on us can be nonstop, loud, and at times, overwhelming. Jesus experienced this too. He was often surrounded by great crowds, pressing in with needs that were great. In His humanness, He knows what it feels like; to have many depending on you and responsibilities that seem never ending. Yet He broke away, and made a space for silence with God. In our human need to define and regulate, we can make this practice one that is difficult and often impossible to embrace. When we begin to create small spaces for silence in our day, we offer an opportunity to connect with God. Where in your day can you make a space for this silence? It may not be the same everyday/or maybe it is....in the car; in the morning; while folding laundry; in the parking lot before you head in....as you look at your day, assign a place for this space, even if the time is brief....savor the opportunity and awareness that God's Presence is with you.

**Wednesday: John 14: 25-31** This passage reminds us of the gift of the Holy Spirit, given to us by God as a Helper, Teacher, and Companion on our earthly journey. When we read this passage and we don't feel the Peace that is promised in these Words, we might think we do not have the Presence of the *Pneuma*, the living breath that is the Holy Spirit, the Incarnate Christ in all of us. This peace is not defined as our English definition would say: absence of conflict or war. This is *Shalom*, שלום, an inner peace, or wholeness that comes from knowing and receiving in our deepest place the love that God has for us. This contentment from embracing His love is the Peace that then wells up and flows out and enables us to follow His commandment to show and share His love in this world.

**Thursday: Genesis 1:1-3** Incarnation, Jesus made flesh and dwelling among us. Something we remember and celebrate every Christmas season. When we look closely at this passage in Genesis, we are reminded that God came to dwell among us and among all the things of this world long before that silent and holy night. What if we took this message in Genesis and began to see the Presence of God in all of His creation: in not only the sunrise and sunsets, the mountains and oceans, but also in the dark and broken places where we most often found Jesus when we follow His earthly journey? What if we let this Incarnate Light that entered this world from the very beginning illuminate the hardest spaces and places; our betrayals, and fears, and the darkest of places that threaten our inner peace, the *Shalom* that can seem hidden in the dark? Science has taught us that what our human eye sees as darkness is actually filled with neutrinos, subatomic particles that are tiny slivers of light. Since the very beginning, Light has been present in the darkness. Ask God to help you see His presence in all of creation, look for Him in the dark places;

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savor the gift of His incarnation in this world from the very beginning and in Light made flesh in our Jesus Christ.

**Friday: Matthew 21:28-32** How do you see yourself in this parable? I can find myself in each of them at some point in my life. And if I am honest, I also find myself looking at others and thinking to myself which category they fall in. This is the fallen nature that gets in the way of embracing the true nature of Christ. Where do you have a tendency to sift and sort the worthy and unworthy? Where is God calling you to see His radical grace that He offers to all? Ask God to show you the work He is calling you to do. Ask Him to help you resist the tendency to sift and sort so no opportunities are missed to show His love to others.

**Saturday: Ephesians 4:1-7** What is the grace that is referred to in this passage? In the Hebrew we would find the word grace as *χάρις* or *Charis*, the heart and center of our *Eucharist*, the unmerited love and favor of God which is the source of our strength. When we recognize this Grace, this love within us, it changes everything. It frees us to begin seeing ourselves and others through Jesus' eyes; it sweetens our call to love all as Christ loves us.

**Sunday: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21** In this scripture, we are reminded that in His commandment for us to love all people we are named as His ambassadors. Knowing that our humanness, as well as the evil that is in this world, can make it hard for us to see His Light, may we pray this prayer and challenge ourselves to move into the margin spaces and see Him in all creation:

*Loving God, you have set us in families and clans, in cities and neighborhoods.*

**Our common life began in a garden, but our destiny lies in the city.**

*You have placed us here in O'Fallon. This is our home.*

**Your creativity is on display here through the work of human hearts and hands.**

*We pray for our community today, for all of the metro-east communities from which we come.*

**We pray for our poorest neighbors and for people in positions of power and leadership in our community.**

**We pray for people from low income neighborhoods and people that live in affluent neighborhoods.**

**We pray for Belleville, and Swansea, Fairview Heights and Caseyville, Collinsville and Edwardsville, East St. Louis and Granite City, New Baden and Breese, and all the other cities connected to our own.**

*In all our neighborhoods this day there will be crime and callous moneymaking; there will be people in positions of power and plenty that are unable or unwilling to see the vulnerable who are their neighbors.*

**There will also be beautiful acts of compassion and creativity in all these places – forgiveness and generosity; neighbors working together for a more just community.**

*Help us to see this world as something other than a battleground between us and them.*

**Show us a deeper reality God; let us see you in all the people we pass by, all the neighborhoods we avoid and the places that seem to be without Your Light.**

**May we remember that You are the God of these cities, this nation, and we are called to gather together with others and shine Your light beyond the border of our comfort zone.**

**May we open our arms, extend our table and break bread without inhibitions or boundaries.  
Amen**

*Adapted from *Beyond Our Efforts: A Celebration of Denver Peacemaking* (Mile High Ministries: 2019), 251; and Walter Brueggemann, "This City . . . of God," *Prayers for a Privileged People* (Abingdon Press: 2010), 157.*

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