

## LIVING AS LIGHT IN COMMUNITY

**Monday 6.6.2016** Read Exodus 34, II Corinthians 1:17, 2:17, 4:1-5. The “super apostles” are accusing Paul of doing things secretly, with guile and cunning, that Paul’s gospel is “hidden and veiled (see Exodus 34 towards the end),” and that Paul proclaims himself. Look through II Corinthians 4:1-5 and see how Paul responds to each accusation. (Hint: Paul is methodical so they will follow in order to the accusations I listed.) *Do you think Paul’s response is accurate? How should he respond to this group of critics?*

**Tuesday 6.7.2016** Read Genesis 1:26-27, 1 John 2:16, II Corinthians 4:4-6. Ancient Mediterraneans believed that every effect that counted was caused by a person, when those things were so bad that the individuals cannot respond, they would attribute the occurrences to invisible gods, spirits, and demons. Paul just dumps them all into the “gods of this world” category and doesn’t waste time talking about it. Paul wants to talk about Jesus, not the evil of this world. That same Jesus is the image of God (which is visible in Christ but we forget is part of our created identity, see Genesis) and the light in the darkness. *Do we spend too much time being concerned with what “kind” of evil is in this world instead of focusing on Jesus? Does it really matter if it is twisted human hearts or demons if the solution for all of it is the light of God through Jesus Christ? Christ is the image of God, the light reminding us we all can shine. Where can you shine?*

**Wednesday 6.8.2016** Read II Corinthians 4:7-12. In Paul’s day, the philosophers would list the trials they had overcome as proof of the excellence of their teaching. Paul does the same as proof of the excellence of the Gospel. The bad fortune experienced by Paul is proof of his ultimate good fortune and favor from God. Paul agrees with the practice of listing the trials but he celebrates the suffering and he says that it has absolutely nothing to do with his goodness but everything to do with the power of God in Christ. *Do any of Paul’s afflictions resonate with you? Which one jumps out that you might be going through today? Can you join Paul in the celebration of each affliction, can faith gently stand with you to help proclaim joy in God’s presence? How can we help one another through these times?*

**Thursday 6.9.2016** Read II Corinthians 4:12-13, Psalm 116:10. Paul is suffering and feels his life is coming to an end while life is emerging from among the Jesus-followers in Corinth as they accept Paul’s teachings about Christ. Paul can say or claim what he does because he trusts God. Psalm 116 connects his faith with proclamations. *Where are you on your life journey, which chapter? Have you thought about your faith legacy? How are you helping others draw closer to Christ? Are you in a place in your faith that regardless of your life chapter, you are confident that God will take care of you?*

**Friday 6.10.2016** Read Genesis 1:3, Acts 9:3, 22:6, 26:13. Paul connects the God of Creation to the same God who raised Christ from the dead and who redeems humanity as the light of Creation. How does the light described in Acts compare with the light of creation? *How might this discussion of light help you see your role in being a light-bearer? What if we aren’t meant to be like Jesus but simply to hold up mirrors and reflect his light on others? How relieved would we be if we stopped trying to be perfect and just held the mirror? (For my GOT fans, instead of holding the door, we hold the mirror)*

**Saturday 6.11.2016** Read Romans 8:17, Colossians 1:24, Philippians 3:10-11. The close connection of Paul to Jesus is not only for each of us to strive for, but for the here and now, not just eternity. It is always in community and daily in the midst of suffering and service. [In fact the term Paul uses in this week’s passage translated “conscience” literally means “knowledge held in common.”] On a surface reading, it seems that glory only comes to those who suffer but Biblical scholars suggest that the “dying” for Paul is probably a series of escapes and deliverances. The message is meant to encourage the suffering Christians in Corinth who are trying to break into the Greco-Roman pagan culture. He is also speaking to those afraid to share their faith. *If Paul had said, “Just do your best,” would it be as challenging as, “if you are not suffering, you are not serving Christ?” We live in that balance of tension between doing nothing and never doing enough for faith. What motivates you to live out your faith? Is it the challenge? Is it the compelling story that touches your heart? What inspires you? How can you inspire others?*

**Love:** How do these devotions teach about the love of God and the love for one another?

**Learn:** What have you learned about where Jesus walked that helps you with where you walk?

**Share:** What key insights have you learned this week on how to share your faith with others?

**Serve:** Look at the prayer list. Who can you pray for? Who needs a little extra help in an area where you can make a difference?

**Healing Strength:** Diane Beasley’s Daughter (Singles Group), Mary Schmidt, Rex Townsend, Stan Ensich, Chris Osborn (Ken and Sandy Grubb’s daughter), Janet Coons (Donna’s daughter)

**Homebound Members:** Mary Hicks, Mary Schmidt, Joann Young, Jeanne Carman

**Military Personnel:** Adam Walters, Joseph Roberts, Lucas Lamkin, Adam Clark