

The Summer Devotional Series is written by a variety of different Jacob's Well staff members, overseers and leaders, based on their real-world experiences. May the broad perspective and style minister to you throughout these summer months! You can also find the Summer Devotionals on our website jacobswellchurch.church.

Monday, July 15th (Contributed by Jordan Hurlburt)

Read Jeremiah 18:1-10

God is letting Jeremiah know that ultimately, He is in control. Sometimes, rough edges need to be smoothed out and pieces need to be removed and replaced with pieces that fit and function better. As you read this poem today, take time to reflect on the seasons that God has used in your life, maybe the times of struggle and turmoil to refine your character and redefine your life to make you into a beautiful work of art. Remember, as believers, we hold the living water of Jesus inside our jars of clay!

Refined and Redefined

The slow, whirring sound of the spinning wheel
As the potter begins His creation with zeal
A dirty, unshaped mass of clay
The artist's pride and joy today

You see, He has a vision unknown to me
A vision that only He can see
This piece He loves with all His heart
He will call it His own, great work of art

The mass of clay begins to take form
The once cold clay begins to warm
As the hands of the potter pull and press
What becomes of this clay, I can only guess

A base takes shape and begins to define
As the potter's skillful hands start to refine
Once rough edges begin to smooth
As the voice of the potter speaks over to soothe

The once useless form shaped into a jar
So many uses for this there are
But a soft clay jar does not inspire
For it will have to be refined by fire

With care the potter stokes the flame
This jar is about to get a new name
A beautiful glaze is applied with care
This creation will be both unique and rare

Into the kiln the jar it goes
How long it will be, the potter only knows
The potter stands near to watch and wait
For He knows its purpose and designed its fate

Carefully, the potter pulls from the fire
The jar is ready, it's the potter's desire
For in this jar a treasure it will hold
Worth more than all the silver and gold

From a mass of clay to a beautiful jar
Who knew that it would come this far
For in it will be held the living water
For we have become both son and daughter

You see, we are just like the clay
Both dirty and lifeless until the day
We trust the potter to work and refine
Our eternal destiny He chose to define

Tuesday, July 16th (Contributed by Laura Garry)

Community is crucial for spiritual growth. It provides a place for relationships to grow in trust, love and acceptance. It nurtures forgiveness as well as confession as its members mature together. God works in community to bring healing and love to the people involved who are willing to let God transform them to be more like Christ. But how can this be true when Christians are in conflict with one another?

When we are in conflict as followers of Christ, we can find ourselves stuck and unable to move forward in the reconciliation process. We may find it hard to join mercy and truth. It may seem disagreement is the last place in which we will find an opportunity to grow spiritually but healthy community fosters an environment of growth and transformation.

Engaging in conflict, stepping into the mess, allows Christ to do a deeper work in us. It is essential we have the opportunity to speak the truth in love, naming how we have been hurt or have hurt others in a relationship. Spiritual growth is hindered when we completely ignore the conflict, or become hyper focused on the offense.

Psalm 85: 10-11 *"Steadfast love and faithfulness meet; righteousness and peace kiss each other. Faithfulness springs up from the ground, and righteousness looks down from the sky."*

Thankfully, God can bring truth and mercy together in the reconciliation process. As verse 10 and 11 in Psalm 85 show, God is where love and faithfulness meet. He is where righteousness and peace embrace each other. Faithfulness springs up from the ground and righteousness looks down from the sky.

Reconciliation is rare in our world. People hunger for love and restoration. When we let the Holy Spirit work to bring resolution in our conflict, we grow and change. As our character moves toward the character of Christ, others see God's miraculous work. When we remain in conflict as Christians, it disconnects our relationships with one another and with God. Conflict is not easy. It is incredibly difficult to step into the mess and trust the deeper work God is doing in us, but He is the light the world needs. He will shine brightly when we do the hard work of reconciliation.

Where might you need to pursue reconciliation?

Wednesday, July 17th (Contributed by Jeff Henson)

Psalm 51:10 *"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."*

As new shoots break through the frozen ground, buds begin to form on trees and flowers awake from their winters rest, we are reminded that spring brings forth a sense of renewal. The barrenness of winter becomes more of a memory than a present reality. As we transition from one season to the next, we experience firsthand God's goodness, His mercy and His grace. Similarly, God has called us from the dark and barren place to be gathered among the light and warmth of His precious son, Jesus. Resting in Him, we find renewal. Renewal from the past mistakes, heartaches, fears or doubts. Renewal from troubled relationships or failure. We all have lingered in a season where we feel like the nights will never find the morning. As we enter in to spring, let's ask God to create within us a clean heart. A new heart. To shed the weight or the burden that has bound us to this world. To finally free ourselves from guilt or the belief that our performance gains access to His throne. Let's ask that His Spirit abide in us to form a renewal from the inside out. A right spirit within us. One that trusts that the blood of Jesus, and His empty grave, is enough to renew our hearts and welcome us as adopted sons and daughters within His eternal home.

Thursday, July 18th (Contributed by Sean Kaiser)

Read Philippians 2:1-4

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. ³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

What is Paul encouraging the Philippians to do in this passage?

What does it mean to “do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit?”

Coming back to the beginning of the passage, why do you think it would make Paul so joyful to know that the Philippian church was following this example of humility?

Since Paul is encouraging the Philippians to action, spend some time thinking about some practical ways you can value the needs of others who are close to you (your family, your co-workers, your friends) before your own needs this week, and list them out.

Do at least one of these things this week, and then reflect on what that experience was like. What did you learn? What did you realize about yourself, if anything?

Friday, July 19th (Contributed by Kristi Irvin)

Have you ever just wanted to get away? To regroup, to mend, to get your bearings, to heal, to get a new perspective? Perhaps you were in a situation that no human could solve. Or you may have felt used up, with no strength left. Psalm 27:14 is my get-away place, especially when I want to be alone with God. Times when I've been too tired, or frustrated, or numb to voice my thoughts to God, I read this verse.

“Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart. Wait, I say, on the Lord!”

Oh, how soothing! God's not in a hurry. He wants me to tarry with Him. The word “wait” means to look patiently, expect. Sometimes I don't know what to expect, but perhaps it includes peace in my soul. The word “courage” means fortify, conquer, mend, be established, withstand. There have been times when I've needed ALL that! And the word “strengthen” means to be alert physically or mentally, to prevail, establish. Boy, there's so much truth and encouragement to grab on to, packed away in this little verse! I love the way it repeats, “Wait, I say, on the Lord!”...just in case I didn't get it the first time.

When you need to be alone with God to recharge, be fortified, prevail, get courage and strength, I encourage you to sit down with Him and slowly walk through this verse together. He's waiting to give you peace and mend your soul!



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