

LIFE WITH GOD IN RECOVERY

Daily Meditations



February 2019



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*Partners in Hope Recovery Society
is a Christian community
outreach organization
offering hope, support, and healing
through Jesus Christ
to victims of
harmful circumstances and dependencies,
as they reclaim the gift of their life.*

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Daily Meditations

FEBRUARY 2019

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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VOLUME 04, NUMBER 02

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2019

THE BEAUTY OF A QUIET AND GENTLE SPIRIT

JUST FOR TODAY

Just for today I will try to live in conscious contact with God praying only for knowledge of His will and the power to carry it out.

Just for today I will strengthen my mind. I will take a few minutes to read and meditate on God's word, seeking God's perspective for my life today. I will take note of one helpful thing God is saying to me and seek to behave accordingly.

Just for today I will be joyful, optimistic, and grateful. I will take time to notice the gifts in me, in others, and in my surroundings and let the rest go.

Just for today I will adjust myself to what is and not try to adjust everything else to my desires. I will trust that God is working all things for good in my life.

Just for today I will be agreeable. I will not criticize, not find fault, and not try to improve or control anybody except myself. I will pray blessing on one person with whom I struggle to relate.

Just for today I will have a quiet half hour all by myself to relax and enjoy all that God is giving me.

Just for today I will be unafraid, believing that as I trust in God with all my heart and lean not on my own understanding, He will lead me along a good path.

Just for today I will seek to serve others with kindness, doing what is right, and walking humbly with God.

For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. Ephesians 2:10 NLT

God invites us to a life of gentleness where we honour truth, respect the dignity of everyone – including ourselves, and delight in the joy and wonder of each new day.

Surround me with your tender mercies so I may live, for your instructions are my delight. (Psalm 119:77 NLT)

To be gentle with others and ourselves doesn't mean that we look for "easy ways" to avoid dealing with issues, while allowing ourselves to continue in whatever is comfortable but harmful. Gentleness means we approach life with quiet honesty, admitting the truth when we are struggling to cope and need help.

We make space for gentleness in our lives by setting safe boundaries in relationships. We experience gentleness of spirit when we take the time to slow down and notice the good things around us – a baby in a stroller; the aroma of food; the beautiful colours in the sky as the sun goes down.

Lord, don't hold back your tender mercies from me. Let your unfailing love and faithfulness always protect me. (Psalm 40:11 NLT)

Gentleness will flow and grow in us as we sit quietly and have a conversation with God. Just reading the Bible often brings peace and gentleness to our soul. When we speak to God in response to what He is teaching us a gentle spirit seems to wrap itself around our hearts and our souls feel comforted.

Let my teaching fall on you like rain; let my speech settle like dew. Let my words fall like rain on tender grass, like gentle showers on young plants. (Deuteronomy 32:2 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to live in the beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit which is precious in Your sight. Amen

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SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2019

SORTING OUT SOFT ADDICTIONS

Soft addictions are habits or behaviors we use to control distressing moods or thought patterns. They satisfy a shallow want but ignore or block a deeper need. They numb us to feelings we don't like or are unfamiliar with. They substitute a superficial high for genuine feelings of accomplishment. God does not want us to lean on these temporary supports. He wants us to acknowledge the truth about our real needs. When we are willing to deal with reality and seek God, He promises to strengthen us and hold us steady.

***Are we
engaging in
an activity to
improve our
life and our
relationships
or are we
simply trying
to numb our
feelings and
let the world
go by?***

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10 NIV)

Soft addictions are formed through the misuse of ordinary things in life such as, our phones, sleeping, eating, shopping, work, or exercise. We have to be radically honest about the underlying root of our behaviours – all of them – not just those that are easily labeled “addictions and dependencies”. Asking ourselves some simple questions can help us recognize if something has become a soft addiction for us.

Are we engaging in an activity to improve our life and our relationships or are we simply trying to numb our feelings and let the world go by? Are we conscious of God's presence in us and around us as we participate in the activity or, are we seeking satisfaction in it, rather than from living in the truth? Do we believe we are serving God's purposes in what we are doing or are we using the activity to comfort and distract us from feelings of

discontent, loneliness or anger? These are some of the issues we need to consider as we determine whether the activity is healthy or a soft addiction.

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. (Romans 12:2 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to recognize any way I am misusing good things to avoid dealing with negative feelings. I ask you to mend those places in me that cause pain. I want to follow You in all my ways. Amen

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2019

SUNDAY PSALM – FREEDOM TO BE FREE

How To Enjoy New Life With God In Recovery

God created us to have a wonderful life. In love, God planned for us and carefully put us together. God has always been calling out to us to enter into a relationship of love with Him. He doesn't force us but He invites us. Many of us have learned what a painful and confusing wreck our lives become when we try to live independently from God. Today is a good day to begin to live the full and rich life God intended for us. Nothing in our past can keep us from this life, if we want it and choose for it.

The 12-Steps remind us that our lives are unmanageable without the loving care of God and that we can get to know and come to believe that He is a power greater than ourselves. As we turn our will and our lives over to God's care, we find a solid foundation upon which to build a new life.

When we confess our sin and brokenness to God, repent and turn towards God, He gives us new life. When we invite God to come into our lives we find that He is ready and waiting for us. A simple prayer like the following, offered sincerely, establishes this new relationship with God that will last forever.

God, my life is unmanageable without you. You created me to live in relationship with you. There really is no good way to live on my own. Forgive me for not including you. I turn from my independent ways and surrender my will and my life to you. Thank you Jesus for dying on the cross for my sins and making a way for me to have new life and be filled up with Your Holy Spirit. Come into my heart and wash me clean. Teach me to do your will. Transform my way of thinking. Strengthen me to obey You in all I do. Amen

If you prayed that prayer sincerely from your heart, God forgives you and receives you. God makes you His son or daughter. God wants to show you how to live well and give you strength to do that every day. We would love to provide you with some information to support you as you move forward in your journey with God. Please contact us. You'll find our contact information on the front cover of this booklet.

Before we came into recovery, we admitted that our lives were unmanageable, and we needed a power greater than ourselves to restore us to sanity. We may have been unsure about God and what to expect from Him, but we were open to receive all the help we could get. We no longer wanted to be a slave to our addictive practices and longed to be free to choose what was right and good.

He gives justice to the oppressed and food to the hungry. The Lord frees the prisoners. The Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are weighed down. The Lord loves the godly. The Lord protects the foreigners among us. He cares for the orphans and widows, but he frustrates the plans of the wicked. The Lord will reign forever. He will be your God, O Jerusalem, throughout the generations. Praise the Lord! (Psalm 146:7-10 NLT)

We may not have thought of our lifestyle as being oppressive and ourselves as prisoners, but that is exactly where we were in our addiction. The destructive powers that had control of our lives restricted how we moved about each day. In our desperation for our drug of choice we often felt compelled to lie, cheat, or steal. There was no time to enjoy anything else around us, we just focused on what we needed.

In recovery, God has opened our blind eyes to reveal the mess we were in and through the redeeming work of Jesus, has unshackled us from those things that restricted our freedom. Through the tender love of God, we have been freed from the power of sin and it no longer has authority over us. We are blessed and have favor with God as we continue to turn our will and our life over to His care. God gives us the desire and the power to do what pleases Him. It is for our freedom that Jesus has set us free.

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for freeing me from the bondage of my former lifestyle. Please help me to remain free and never again be oppressed by being a slave to sin. Amen

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MONDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2019

NOTES

COMING CLEAN ABOUT IT ALL

God created us to live in loving relationship with Him. All destructive and addictive behaviour is rooted in the breakdown of that relationship. Instead of turning to God for help in our time of need, we try to fix problems ourselves and end up in a worse condition than before. Our rebellion against God and His ways is at the root of all our wrongs.

All of us wrestle with our conscience in relationships where we struggle. We use lots of different strategies to rationalize our poor behaviour towards others. We may lie to ourselves and pretend that what we have done is not so bad in comparison to what others have done. We minimize how our conduct negatively impacted others. We hope that working hard at being good will offset the wrongs we have done.

When we expose the exact nature of our wrongs, we think God will be surprised by our admission of what we have done.

To be at peace with ourselves, we must stop rationalizing our past behaviour, acknowledge the error of our ways, realize the hurt we've caused, and turn away from our destructive lifestyle.

Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.
(Proverbs 28:13 NIV)

When we expose the exact nature of our wrongs, we think God will be surprised by our admission of what we have done, forgetting that He already knows every detail of our history and the true nature of our issues.

For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight—That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge. (Psalm 51:3-4 NKJV)

When we bring our issues before God, He hears our cries for help and rescues us from all our troubles. He has forgiveness for our wrong doing, healing for our brokenness, and good guidance for building healthy relationships.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I confess the foundation of all my wrong doing is my unwillingness to trust You and surrender to Your ways. You alone know what is best for me. Today I choose to trust Your plan for my life and thank You for giving me hope and a future. Amen

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2019

HOW DOES SNOW ENCOURAGE ME IN MY RECOVERY?

While winter is often connected to darkness, sadness, and feeling bleak, snow is one of God's bright reminders to us that when we confess and turn away from our sin, we can live clean and face life in sobriety with dignity.

“Come. Let us settle this matter,” says the Lord. “Even though your sins are bright red, they will be as white as snow. Even though they are deep red, they will be white like wool.” (Isaiah 1:18 NIRV)

***Remove
my sin
and make
me pure.
Wash me
until I am
whiter
than
snow!
Psalm 51:7***

When these words were written, red stains were considered impossible to remove. The kinds of solvents we have now had not yet been invented. When the actions of others bring dirt and shame into the deep levels of our soul, God can and will heal us if we turn to Him. God will restore our hearts and minds to a condition of peace which is beyond our imagination. If our own actions and destructive behaviour added to our shame, God's promise is there for that too.

Jesus died on the cross to pay the price for our sin. If we put our trust in the finished work of Jesus, confess our sins, and receive His forgiveness, we are freed from **ALL** guilt and shame. No matter how we got stained, Jesus can clean us up and make us new people.

You were washed clean, you were made holy, and you were made right with God in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (Psalm 51:7, 1 Corinthians 6:11 ERV)

God not only gives us a clean new life, but He will use us to help and refresh others who have been stained by sin. God will transform us into people who bring encouragement and hope to those who are in recovery and to those who are still being beaten down in their addiction.

Like the cold of snow in the time of harvest are faithful messengers to those who send them; they refresh the spirit of their masters. Proverbs 25:13 NRSV

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you for Jesus who suffered and died on the cross so that my suffering and sin could be removed. Wash me clean from my sin and from the shameful deeds others committed against me. Thank You for creating a clean heart within me. Amen

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2019

DEVELOPING CHARACTER – LOYALTY

What is loyalty? Someone who is loyal is dependable and will do what they have committed to. When we think about loyalty, do we see it as something to be desired or does it bring a negative emotional response

In our addiction, loyalty and keeping our commitments was not something we had time for. Our loyalty was to meet the demands of whatever our dependency was. Nothing else mattered to us. In contrast, our dependency was never loyal to us for it did not fulfill its promise of a lasting feeling of well-being. As we faithfully fulfilled our dependency's demands, it was never satisfied and only wanted more. It made us sick in body, mind, and spirit.

Your father is the devil, and you do exactly what he wants. He has always been a murderer and a liar. There is nothing truthful about him. He speaks on his own, and everything he says is a lie. Not only is he a liar himself, but he is also the father of all lies. (John 8:44 CEV)

When we give our will and life over to the care of God, we make a commitment to God and He makes a commitment to us. God is loyal to fulfill all the promises He makes to us. Do our actions show loyalty in following the ways of God? Are we willing to give the same kind of loyalty in our commitment to God as we were to the demands of our dependency?

Today we have a fresh opportunity to not just “talk the talk” but to “walk the walk”. If we remain in God's love and care and follow His principles in all our affairs, we will develop the character quality of being loyal to God and to others. We will then have the fullness of life we are seeking.

Your love reaches higher than the heavens, and your loyalty extends beyond the clouds. (Psalm 108:4 CEV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for loving and caring for me. Your loyalty never fails for You work everything together for my good. Help me to be unyielding in my loyalty to You and Your ways in all I do and say. Amen

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2019

WILLINGNESS IS THE KEY

To become willing to live each day in a new way is a challenge for those of us who are used to running our own lives. The practice of having a willing heart and mind to follow the ways of God is a necessary key to successful life in recovery.

We have to be willing to admit we can't do life on our own. We have to become willing to believe that a power greater than ourselves exists and has our best interests at heart. We have to become willing to admit our shortcomings and to have God remove them. We have to be willing to review each day in an ongoing inventory with God and make any necessary changes.

The practice of having a willing heart and mind to follow the ways of God is a necessary key to successful life in recovery.

For change to take place and the serenity of life with God in recovery to become our lived reality we have to wholeheartedly turn our will and our lives over to the direction and care of God. God is the one who gets to decide what is best for us, what is best in our relationships, what is best for our well-being today, and for the long haul. What God says needs changing gets worked on until it changes. What God says needs removing gets removed. When God says to bear with something patiently, we hang in and tolerantly bear with it.

God has chosen you and made you his holy people. He loves you. So, your new life should be like this: Show mercy to others. Be kind, humble, gentle, and patient. Don't be angry with each other but forgive each other. If you feel someone has wronged you, forgive them. Forgive others because the Lord forgave you. Together with these things, the most important part of your new life is to love each other. Love is what holds everything together in perfect unity. (Colossians 3:12-14 ERV)

We must be willing to have God, through His word in the Bible, guide us along new pathways of discerning in our minds and in our hearts. We must be willing to ask ourselves, "God, what do I need to change so Your kingdom will come, and your will done in my life here on earth as it is in heaven?"

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Help me to be willing each day to submit to your ways in all my affairs, in all my relationships, and particularly help me grow in my relationship with You. Amen

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2019

GIVING THANKS IN IMPOSSIBLE SITUATIONS

One day Jesus and His friends faced a huge problem. Thousands of people were before him and they were tired and hungry. The only resources available were five small loaves (probably bun sized pita bread) and a couple of small fish. Jesus' friends did not see a way to provide for the crowd and thought the way to deal with the problem was to send them away, so they could meet their own needs. What was Jesus response to this impossible situation?

Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to distribute to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. (Luke 9:16-17 NIV)

Why give thanks when facing needs that seem impossible to fill? God knows who we are, what resources are available, and the true nature of the need before us. God has promised to supply all our needs, so we can share generously with others.

And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19 NIV)

Giving thanks is one way to acknowledge the truth about God's presence with us and His promise to provide for us. Remembering how God took care of us in the past is an important way to build our trust in His care for us today. As we focus on our loving God and how He works on our behalf, we will experience more joy and satisfaction in life than we ever thought possible. Giving thanks opens the generous hand of God.

Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:18 NLT)

Prayer: Loving God, Thank You for Your promise to provide for my needs. Help me to continue to trust You when circumstances seem to block my vision of what You can do. Help me to see You as the awesome God You are. Amen

Giving thanks is one way to acknowledge the truth about God's presence with us and His promise to provide for us.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2019

AN ACCURATE VIEW OF OUR RELATIONSHIPS

An important part of recovery is coming to an accurate view of what went wrong in our relationships. Regardless of the excuses we may make for our behaviour, we need to admit that at times we caused harm to others. We need to understand the underlying causes of our actions. We need to take responsibility for our part in the breakdown of relationships. As we go forward, we need to learn how to behave differently in order to begin to build healthy interactions and caring relationships.

An important part of recovery is coming to an accurate view of what went wrong in our relationships.

Speaking in anger or using silence or distance has the impact of wounding others. While outright cheating and stealing may not be part of our life now, it's still too easy for us to lie and deceive and manipulate things for our own advantage. Have we learned to let complaining and blaming go or are we still using them to excuse our poor attitude?

Do to others as you would like them to do to you. Continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins. (Luke 6:31, 1 Peter 4:8 NLT)

Forgiving those who have harmed us and releasing them, and their actions, into God's care is an important part of rebuilding relationships. Forgiveness turns our attention to God and away from the person who harmed us. Forgiveness establishes God as the source of our healing and restoration knowing that He will work all things together for our good.

Don't be angry with each other, but forgive each other. If you feel someone has wronged you, forgive them. Forgive others because the Lord forgave you. (Colossians 3:13 ERV)

Admitting our part and receiving healing from God, living respectfully, forgiving offenders, making amends for any part we may have played in difficult circumstances; – this is how we go forward in building caring and healthy relationships.

Gracious God, You created me to live in loving relationship with You and with others. Help me to do what is within my power to restore my broken relationships and to build strong and caring relationships in the future. Amen

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2019

ACCEPTANCE THAT BRINGS SERENITY

Life has its ups and downs and doesn't always treat us fairly. Some problem situations seem to work out and others don't. In difficult times, when we are powerless to change the situation, what we really need is the serenity that comes from acceptance. How do we find that? We reach out to God and steady ourselves in the truth that God is with us, God cares for us, and God will make a way where there seems to be no way forward.

Give your burdens to the LORD, and he will take care of you. The Lord gives his people strength. The Lord blesses them with peace. (Psalm 55:22, 29:11 NLT)

The acceptance that fills us with peace is found when we stop living in denial. It comes when we no longer hide from pain by trying to live under buried anger or behind the sadness of "that's just how it is." Acceptance sees reality for what it is, focuses on what can be done, and leaves the rest in God's hands.

Acceptance keeps this day and this moment in focus and leaves tomorrow's uncertainties in the hands of God. Acceptance causes us to pray and tell God what is going on, particularly speaking to Him of those things we don't understand and wish we could change. Acceptance seeks God's direction and strength to cope, trusting that God has a plan. If we don't know the next right thing to do, we ask a trusted companion in recovery and then take the appropriate action. In this way we position ourselves for blessing and support.

For even if the mountains walk away and the hills fall to pieces, My love won't walk away from you, my covenant commitment of peace won't fall apart." The God who has compassion on you says so. (Isaiah 54:10 MSG)

God has more strength to give than what our current situation requires. God is ready to compassionately comfort us while the going is tough. Circumstances may come and go, but we can be sure that God will always show us the way through, if we acknowledge Him in all our ways and allow Him to direct our path.

Prayer: Loving God, when I face challenging circumstances, help me to reach out to You for comfort and strength. Help me to do the next right thing and trust You to make all things right as I surrender to Your will. Amen

Acceptance sees reality for what it is, focuses on what can be done, and leaves the rest in God's hands.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2019

ATTENTION SEEKING

Attention seeking takes various forms, but the underlying root is that we feel the need to be noticed and cared for. We feel insecure, lack self-esteem, and wonder if our lives really matter to anyone. In the past, to lessen our feelings of insecurity, some of us began using addictive substances. For a time, this worked but eventually we became dependent and this only added to our inability to cope with life.

The Lord is close to those who have suffered disappointment. He saves those who are discouraged. (Psalm 34:18 ERV)

We can live securely in God's love and not need to pursue attention in a negative way.

Without a substance to hide behind, some of us feel vulnerable when we are in a group and often turn to some form of attention seeking to hide our feelings. We may talk too loudly or too much. To impress others, we tell stories that are untrue or exaggerated. We gossip about another person to make it appear we know something of importance that others don't.

Seeking attention is not life giving. When our behaviour is the result of our focus being stuck on ourselves we can easily miss out on a God-given encounter with someone who could become a loving friend or a knowledgeable mentor.

We wait in hope for the Lord; he is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. May your unfailing love be with us, Lord, even as we put our hope in you. (Psalm 33:20-22 NIV)

The good news is that by turning our will and life over to the care of God, we can be healed and restored to the unique person God created us to be. We can live securely in God's love and not need to pursue attention in a negative way. We can respect ourselves and others and share common interests and gifts in an enjoyable way. Which way will we choose to live today?

Let me hear of your unfailing love each morning, for I am trusting you. Show me where to walk, for I give myself to you. (Psalm 143:8 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for Your unfailing love for me. I bring all my emotional needs to You and ask for healing. I desire to let go of all my selfish ways. Please help me to notice and look out for others who may feel invisible and to love and care for them as You have loved and cared for me. Amen

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2019

DON'T BE A PHONY

There is no more tiring way of life than being a phony. Giving false impressions and lying to cover up attitudes or behaviours drains us of energy and joy. A person who shoves "their particular truth" in our faces in a less than respectful way is more irritating than helpful. How can we make sure we are not the ones who are being fake? Where's the balance in being kind and being honest?

With most people our first responsibility is to simply be truthful, kind, and respectful. We are to love God with all our heart and love our neighbour as ourselves. There will be those close trusted friends with whom we share our burdens and our frustrations, but for most people, positive, uplifting and respectful talk should be our norm. There are always things to be grateful for no matter how challenged we feel.

God gave us this command: If we love God, we must also love each other as brothers and sisters. (1 John 4:21 ERV)

There is a time to be vulnerable and share our hurts and frustrations. We need friends with whom we can share our sorrows and burdens. We need to welcome honest feedback even when it makes us uncomfortable. We all have blind spots. We need honest support from sponsors and trusted friends. We don't need someone who is just going to smile and be nice to us while we wallow in self-pity or slide into harmful patterns of living.

You can trust what your friend says, even when it hurts. But your enemies want to hurt you, even when they act nice. (Proverbs 27:6 ERV)

The more we live as respectful and authentic persons who befriend others, the more we will experience God's blessing of caring and supportive friends.

So speak encouraging words to one another. Build up hope so you'll all be together in this, no one left out, no one left behind. I know you're already doing this; just keep on doing it. (1 Thessalonians 5:11 MSG)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please help me to live as a genuine and positive person. Help me to always speak the truth in love and to listen to wise feedback from caring people who take the time to encourage me. Amen

How can we make sure we are not the ones who are being fake?

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2019

SUNDAY PSALM – TRUST IN GOD

When we are troubled and looking for help, who or what first enters our mind? Do we look first to ourselves, another person, the court, or some other agency to solve whatever we are dealing with? When we have exhausted all other options, do we then look to God for a solution? The Bible tells us that the person who first looks to God and trusts God for a solution is the one who will be blessed. That should be reason enough to seek Him first when we are in any trouble.

The person who looks to God and trusts God for a solution is the one who will be blessed.

The Lord is with me; he is my helper. I look in triumph on my enemies. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in humans. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes. All the nations surrounded me, but in the name of the Lord I cut them down. They surrounded me on every side, but in the name of the Lord I cut them down. They swarmed around me like bees, but they were consumed as quickly as burning thorns; in the name of the Lord I cut them down. (Psalm 118:7-12 NIV)

When problems surround us on every side like a swarm of bees, we need God's wisdom and understanding to guide us. Jesus told us that in this world we would have trouble, so we should assume that at some point, even while living a stable life in recovery, trouble will come our way.

In numerous places in the Bible we are told to call on the name of the Lord for help. When we are children of God, we are assured that our Heavenly Father cares for us and will meet our needs. In faith, we are to stand firm in the assurance that what God has promised, He will do.

Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, who does not look to the proud, to those who turn aside to false gods. (Psalm 40:4 NIV)

Prayer: Loving God, When I am overwhelmed by troubles, help me to trust in You for help. You alone have the wisdom and power to relieve my troubled heart and free me from my anguish. I am forever grateful that You care for me. Amen

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2019

STOPPING GOSSIP IN ITS TRACKS

Almost everyone says they hate gossip and yet many of us are easily drawn into conversations that are unkind. How can we be a person who stops gossip rather than one who contributes to its spread? We agree with God that the time to deal with gossip is now. We decide that we won't participate in a conversation about another person when the words that are being said would be painful for that person to hear if they were present.

But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. (Colossians 3:8 NLT)

If the conversation around us moves towards gossip, we can change the subject and talk about something else – anything else that is positive. We can encourage a gossip to speak with the person they are gossiping about. Sometimes if we simply suggest, "I don't feel comfortable talking about this person this way" may help the gossip to consider what they are saying. We end gossip by simply not passing on any of the negative words and rumors we have heard.

Without wood, a fire goes out. Without gossip, arguments stop. (Proverbs 26:20 ERV)

If a person persists in gossiping, then we are commanded by God to step away from them because it is not good for us to keep company with them.

Drive out the mocker, and out goes strife; quarrels and insults are ended. (Proverbs 22:10 NIV)

It's helpful to remember that those who gossip to you will definitely gossip about you. Let's stop gossip today!

The words of the godly encourage many, but fools are destroyed by their lack of common sense. (Proverbs 10:21 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to put positive practices into my life that will stop the cycle of gossip. Amen

How can we be a person who stops gossip rather than one who contributes to its spread?

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2019

SUNDAY PSALM – DOORWAY OUT OF DARKNESS

What a refreshing feeling it is to be free from the guilt of our addiction and dependencies. Before we came into recovery we could hardly look up because we were afraid to meet the gaze of someone who cared for us. At other times, we were arrogant and in defiance against anyone who brought attention to our dysfunction. To us it is a mystery how we were ever brought to the place of asking God for help.

***In His
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It's possible that even as we sunk deeper into our chaotic lifestyle, someone was praying for us and asking God to draw us to Himself. Now in recovery, we can give thanks to God for His enduring love for us. In His amazing grace, God brought us out of the darkness of hopelessness into the light of His glorious presence.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever. Let Israel say: "His love endures forever." Let the house of Aaron say: "His love endures forever." Let those who fear the Lord say: "His love endures forever." When hard pressed, I cried to the Lord; he brought me into a spacious place. The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me? (Psalm 118:1-6 NIV)

We can let go of those events and words that caused us to walk through doors of pain and despair. When God tenderly brought us up from the pit we had dug for ourselves, doors that we had closed were opened to us. Now we are free to go through the doors of healing and restoration. The Lord is always with us so we do not need to be afraid of what is ahead.

This is the message from the one who is holy and true ...What he opens, no one can close; and what he closes, no one can open: "I know all the things you do, and I have opened a door for you that no one can close. You have little strength, yet you obeyed my word and did not deny me." (Revelation 3:7-8 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for Your enduring love for me. Truly Your love, is love at its best. Amen

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2019

GETTING IT RIGHT IN THE END

In life there often seems to be two groups of people, those who speak well and look good and those who always seem to get things wrong. For many of us who fell into addiction, we thought we fit into the second group. Jesus offers hope for us today in a story he told some people who thought they were better than everyone else.

Jesus said: ***"A man had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.' " "I will not," the son answered. But later he changed his mind and went. "Then the father went to the other son. He said the same thing. The son answered, 'I will, sir.' But he did not go. "Which of the two sons did what his father wanted?" "The first," they answered. (Matthew 21:28-31 NIRV)***

One of the ongoing challenges of recovery is living with humility and integrity every day. Recovery is a journey and we won't always get it right the first time. Taking new steps and doing the hard work of recovery is just that - hard. Jesus' story shows us how to get back on track when we stumble.

If we come into recovery as approval seekers, we might too easily give our word to do what is required but not do the promised work. Others of us show our self-will by reacting negatively when we are challenged to do something and refuse to do it. Whatever our initial response, what really matters is what we do next.

Those who simply try to look good without following through will not find the good life they seek. The son who didn't look so good in the beginning is actually the one Jesus puts forward as the positive example. We may not get it right in the beginning but if we persevere and admit our defects of character, become willing to have God remove them, and then humbly walk in a new way, we will live in the joy and dignity of God's approval.

Jesus's story reminds us once again, "don't just talk the talk but walk the walk."

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please give me the courage to admit when I don't do the right thing and help me take the steps necessary to move back into Your will for my life. Help me to live with honesty and humility. Help me to not just talk the talk, but to walk the walk. Amen

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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2019

LIVING WITH JOY TODAY

We live in a beautiful world created by God. Because God desired it, He made humans in His own image. By doing this, God could communicate with us and we could have a relationship with Him. Whether we take time to notice it or not, God is pouring out blessings for us every day. God's plan for us is that we live close to Him, in the joy of His presence with us.

God's kingdom is not about eating or drinking. It is about doing what is right and having peace and joy. All this comes through the Holy Spirit. (Romans 14:17 NIRV)

***True joy is
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Too often we don't recognize the goodness of God to us, especially His love for us that brought Jesus into the world to be our Saviour. We blame God when things do not go right but fail to thank Him when good things happen. We can increase joy in our lives today by receiving God's forgiveness and walking in gratitude for God's help and protection in troubled times in our imperfect world.

If you do not serve the Lord your God with joy and enthusiasm for the abundant benefits you have received ... you will be left hungry, thirsty, naked, and lacking in everything. (Deuteronomy 28:47-48 NLT)

True joy will be our experience when we live in the purposes God planned for us when He made us. Today may be a great day to learn more about that.

Wisdom will lead you to a life of joy and peace. Even though I have troubles and hard times, your commands give me joy. (Proverbs 3:17, Psalm 119:143 ERV)

Even at this point in our recovery, when some of the consequences of our unwise choices of the past are causing us concern, God wants to bless us. As we learn to obey His principles and choose to follow God's ways, we will experience joy and peace beyond all we could ask for or imagine.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank you that I can live joyfully in Your presence and enjoy the peace of a good life, even in circumstances that are less than perfect. Help me to always seek Your wisdom and do what is right, so I may experience the joy of receiving all the blessings You pour out on me. Amen

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2019

DESIRING CHANGE

We will experience freedom and fulfillment in life only when God's desires become our desires, God's way becomes our way, and God's word becomes our action plan.

Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you your heart's desires. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. (Psalm 37:4, Matthew 16:25, Matthew 6:33 NLT)

Each of us has long established patterns of behaviour that remain a challenge for us. We have harmful patterns that we hang on to because they seem to meet a need in our lives or help us avoid pain. Those who have a positive recovery experience are those who surrender their faulty beliefs and behaviours to God with the desire that God remove the underlying patterns of sin and woundedness from their soul.

God says: ***"My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.*** (2 Corinthians 12:9 NLT)

We have all observed the devastating results of individuals who choose to live self-centered lives. Jesus taught and demonstrated that the key to a life that is truly happy, joyous and free is the choosing of God's will over our own. When our goal is simply to be happy we will fall into destructive self-centered life patterns. When our goal is to love God, and have a relationship with Him, joy will be a natural outflowing of that relationship. A willingness to let God's priorities re-shape our thinking and behaving provides a healthy foundation for a joyful, purposeful life.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I need You. Every day, every hour I need you. My request and desire is that You help me recognize my brokenness and come to You for healing. I want to be free from the bondage that holds me captive to my past. I want to live for You and honour You in all my ways. Amen

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TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2019

EASY DOES IT

"Easy Does It" is one of the most well-known slogans in recovery circles. It's a name some 12-step groups choose. This slogan can be found numerous times in the Big Book of A.A. and elsewhere in recovery literature. Its main thought is to help us slow down and relax and take a measured approach to recovery, to problem solving, or to whatever situation seems large and complicated to us.

Jesus also taught us that "easy does it" when he told us: ***Don't worry about tomorrow. Each day has enough trouble of its own. Tomorrow will have its own worries.*** (Matthew 6:34 ERV) Jesus used the example of a little child to remind us that we need to keep things simple and take it easy.

When we trust that God is good and that our will and our lives are safely settled in God's care, we don't have to fix everybody and everything.

You must change your thinking and become like little children. If you don't do this, you will never enter God's kingdom. The greatest person in God's kingdom is the one who makes himself humble like this child. (Matthew 18:2-4 ERV)

Letting tension get the best of us and becoming stressed out never puts us in a good problem-solving frame of mind. When we trust that God is good and that our will and our lives are safely settled in God's care, we don't have to fix everybody and everything.

When things are too fearful for a little child, they simply run to their loving parent for protection and support. As the parent holds them close, they quiet down because they know their parent will do what is necessary to sort out the problem situation. When things are difficult for us, we need to bring our problems to God and remember that "easy does it." As our hearts are quieted in His love we will hear His guidance and know the next right step to take.

God says: ***Only in returning to me and resting in me will you be saved. In quietness and confidence is your strength.*** (Isaiah 30:15 NLT)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to slow down today and remember that "easy does it." You are bigger than my biggest problem and You have good plans for my day. Help me to quiet my heart and trust You. Amen

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2019

GOD IN MY PAIN

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:3 NIV)

How many of us are poor in spirit? If being poor in spirit is being financially poor where we do not have enough money to meet all our needs, how can Jesus encourage us to become that way and promise us that "the kingdom of heaven is ours?" If we are blessed because we are "poor in spirit" it must be something good that we should desire.

To be "poor in spirit" means that we come to an honest understanding of who we are without God in our life. We recognize that we are powerless to do life on our own. We no longer deny what we have done in the past, but humbly admit the exact nature of our wrongs to God and ask for His forgiveness. We choose to turn our will and life over to the care of God and wholeheartedly follow Him, trusting that He will provide the strength we need to seek Him in all our ways.

Don't love the world's ways. Don't love the world's goods. Love of the world squeezes out love for the Father. Practically everything that goes on in the world—wanting your own way, wanting everything for yourself, wanting to appear important—has nothing to do with the Father. It just isolates you from him. The world and all its wanting, wanting, wanting is on the way out—but whoever does what God wants is set for eternity. (1 John 2:15-17 MSG)

When we are "poor in spirit" we will humbly live in the grace and favour of God. We will be thankful for all that God has done for us. When we fail, we will not be fearful, but will come to Him, knowing that God is slow to anger and rich in love. If we are truly sorry for the wrongs we have done and confess our sin, we will receive forgiveness not condemnation. We are truly "poor in spirit" when we admit that if any weakness existed in God it would still be stronger than our human strength. We are "poor in spirit" when we remember that every breath comes from our awesome God and live gratefully in each moment. We know we are "poor in spirit" when every moment of every day we rely on the goodness of God.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I acknowledge that without You I can do nothing. I desire to be poor in spirit so that I can be rich in Your unfailing love for me. May my life represent my birthright as a child of the Kingdom of Heaven. Amen

When we are "poor in spirit" we will humbly live in the grace and favour of God

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2019

JUST FOR TODAY – I WILL TRY TO LIVE IN CONSCIOUS CONTACT WITH GOD

Just for today I will try to live in conscious contact with God praying only for knowledge of His will and the power to carry it out.

Our lives matter to God. The details of our day are important to him. He wants to give us direction. He wants to support us and protect us. God enjoys spending time with us and He is pleased when we spend time with him. God enjoys it when we “chat it up” with him. Until we realize how much God loves us and cares about the details of our lives, we won’t want to pray to him. Until we sincerely believe that he has completely forgiven us, we will be ashamed to face him.

Pray diligently. Stay alert, with your eyes wide open in gratitude. Don’t forget to pray for us.

(Colossians 4:2-3 MSG)

Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always. This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. (1 Chronicles 16:11, 1 John 5:14 NIV)

What might it look like to have a chat with God today?

- ☞ Find a place where you can be undisturbed and free from distractions.
- ☞ Tell God your thoughts and feelings.
- ☞ Share your day with God as you would with a friend. What was your experience of this day?
- ☞ Review your day with God. What went wrong? What went right? Ask for forgiveness and make amends as necessary.
- ☞ Ask for any healing needed.
- ☞ Listen carefully. God has messages for you.
- ☞ Ask God for knowledge of his will for you and the power to carry it out.

I call on you, my God, for you will answer me; turn your ear to me and hear my prayer. (Psalm 17:6 NIV)

No one understands and cares for us more than God. Only God has the wisdom to give us reliable direction as to how today will fit together with the past, the present, and the future He has for us.

Prayer: Loving God, I am so grateful that you care for me and are interested in the details of my life. Thank you for the strength and courage to walk in Your will as You reveal it to me. Amen

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2019

GOD’S FAITHFUL LOVE AND MY RECOVERY

The *Jesus Culture* band sings a song called “He Is Faithful.” The words offer great hope to those of us who are recovering our lives and coming to believe in a power greater than ourselves who can restore us to sanity. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EmNLgQr-OwM>)

Some of the lyrics are: *“I have heard a sound coming on the winds, changing hearts and minds, healing brokenness. I feel a generation breaking through despair. I hear a generation full of faith declare, ...: He is faithful, He is glorious, He is Jesus, all my hope is in Him. He is freedom, He is healing right now. He is hope and joy, love and peace and life. ... He has paid the highest price. He has proven His great love for us. We will praise Him with our lives and proclaim our love for Him.”*

The truth, and theme of the song is, we come out of our darkness into light only because God is faithful. We find healing for our brokenness only because God fills us with hope and joy and love and peace and life.

Jesus Christ has proven God’s unfailing love for us by dying on the cross and overcoming death on our behalf. His resurrection life is our solid hope for today. Jesus Christ living in us gives us the power to overcome any difficulty past, present, or future. The life we are recovering is this power-filled relationship with God that Jesus has made available to us.

To all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God. So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father’s one and only Son. (John 1:12-14 NLT)

When we turn our will and our life over to the care of God, He promises to fill us with new life. God always keeps His promises.

Prayer: Into my heart, into my heart, come into my heart Lord Jesus. Come in today. Come in to stay. Come into my heart, Lord Jesus. Amen

We come out of our darkness into light only because God is faithful.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2019

VALENTINES AND HEARTS

Will you be my Valentine? This day is meant to remind us of love and hearts joined together in friendship and commitment. Our life in recovery also has something to do with a new heart, union with another, friendship and commitment. God desires to have a deep and satisfying personal relationship with us. God has shared His heart with us, invited us to share our hearts with Him, and generously expressed tenderness and kindness towards us. We've often been too busy with our own agenda to give much attention to God's offer

God is offering to us a beautiful heart -- a healed and forgiven heart, a heart we desperately need to replace our broken and wounded heart.

of friendship. We've been too focused on wrongs done to us, hurts suffered by us, and painful memories that give us an excuse to continue in the destructive habits of our addiction.

Many cards and gifts with hearts on them are exchanged with friends and loved ones on Valentine's Day. As we celebrate Valentine's Day, it's a wonderful opportunity to think about, and respond to God's offer of love and friendship. God is offering to us a beautiful heart – a healed and forgiven heart, a heart we desperately need to replace our broken and wounded heart.

"I'll pour pure water over you and scrub you clean. I'll give you a new heart, put a new spirit in you. I'll remove the stone heart from your body and replace it with a heart that's God-willed, not self-willed. I'll put my Spirit in you and make it possible for you to do what I tell you and live by my commands." (Ezekiel 36:25-27 MSG)

Without God, our heart truly is as hard as stone. It's filled with revenge, with hateful anger, with resentment, with bitterness and self-righteous judging. It's been scarred for too long by broken tapes of hatred and condemnation. There's no "fixing" that stuff. We actually have to hand over that dead and dried up heart and exchange it for one that is living and soft and real.

Prayer: Lord I give You my heart today. Remove my heart of stone that is filled with resentment and bitterness. Give me a new heart that is gentle and forgiving. Amen

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2019

PEACEFUL RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH HUMILITY

If we want to experience healthy and joyful relationships with God and with others each day of our lives, we will have to be willing to change our former ways. We know we cannot fix ourselves. Our confidence in the ability to change is based on the truth that, when we humbly come to God and ask Him to remove our character defects, He will do so.

God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up in honor. (James 4:6-8, 10 NLT)

A problem many of us experience is – we are willing to have God remove some of our defects of character but are not willing to admit to or give up others. We assume we are finished with our restoration, but, as long as we have difficulties in our relationships with others, there remains a work that God wants to do in us, if we will allow Him.

Be joyful. Grow to maturity. Encourage each other. Live in harmony and peace. Then the God of love and peace will be with you. (2 Corinthians 13:11 NLT)

A life of joy and peace is more evident in those who are humble because they are willing to have blind spots revealed to them. They seek God's help, and the help of sponsors or others, to work through the tougher issues of their hearts. Humble people are peaceful thankful people because they recognize the journey is progress not perfection. They leave their stubborn pride behind and come close to God who alone can save and restore them. They are willing to have God reveal to them what the root of their problems is and deal with it in God's way.

God forgives. God heals. God encourages. God makes a way of peace and blessing available to those who are willing to have Him cleanse and heal their hearts as He reveals that a character defect is visible.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Create in me a clean heart and renew a right Spirit within me. Amen

When we humbly come to God and ask Him to remove our character defects, He will do so.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2019

DEVELOPING CHARACTER: BEING AGREEABLE

If asked, how many people around us would say we have the quality of being agreeable? That would include being humble, patient, and kind even when faced with the irritating character defects in others. Being agreeable naturally flows from a heart that is at peace with the world.

Finally, all of you should agree and have concern and love for each other. You should also be kind and humble. (1 Peter 3:8 CEV)

To be agreeable, we need to be willing to evaluate what is going on in a challenging situation and determine how best to handle it. When we are disagreeable, we usually don't want to bother with finding a solution. We form our own opinion. We're not willing to discuss things with anyone. In other words, our minds are made up and we are not willing to cooperate in any way with anyone.

Being agreeable naturally flows from a heart that is at peace with the world.

Stop being bitter and angry and mad at others. Don't yell at one another or curse each other or ever be rude. (Ephesians 4:31 CEV)

In addition we didn't care what we said or did or how it affected others. Now in recovery, it's time to grow up and consider others and be willing to both listen to and express an opinion with respect, no matter how emotionally challenging we find the topic at hand. We can be agreeable without compromising our integrity.

The Law came, so that the full power of sin could be seen. Yet where sin was powerful, God's kindness was even more powerful. (Romans 5:20 CEV)

Living in community is sometimes challenging. We need to find out what the Bible says about how to treat one another and then put that into effect. Jesus suffered the indignity of dying on a cross for us that we might be made right with God. Are we willing to adjust our ways in order to make things right with one another? If we choose to be agreeable and do kind deeds, maybe others will follow our example and together we will bring about a more agreeable atmosphere for all.

Prayer: Gracious God, Thank You for bringing me out of darkness into the light of Your truth. I ask You to remove any shortcomings in me. Teach me to be an agreeable person that others might be drawn to You. Amen

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2019

WISDOM – TIME

There is a right time for everything, and everything on earth will happen at the right time. (Ecclesiastes 3:1 ERV)

When God created the earth and everything in it, He did so in a sequence that made provision for the life and pleasure of humans that He created. At just the right time everything was in place for human survival including a garden for humans to live in. When we were made in the secret place of our mother's womb God also had a plan for each of us. He planned where we would be born and the place where we would live in the hope that we would search for Him and find Him.

God began by making one man, and from him he made all the different people who live everywhere in the world. He decided exactly when and where they would live. God wanted people to look for him, and perhaps in searching all around for him, they would find him. But he is not far from any of us. (Acts 17:26-27 ERV)

Because we live in a sinful world, we might have a hard time believing that God is good and that He truly desires that we live a pleasing and purposeful life. Perhaps we drifted into addiction because the circumstances and place of our birth were not favorable to us.

God is aware of who we are and of our circumstances. Maybe He has brought us to this place at this time to seek Him and ask Him for wisdom to follow the path He has prepared for us. There is a right time for everything on earth. Maybe this is the right time for us to give our will and life over to the care of God who is not too far from us.

In the Scriptures God says, ***"When the time came, I listened to you, and when you needed help, I came to save you." That time has come. This is the day for you to be saved.*** (2 Corinthians 6:2 CEV)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, Your wisdom is infinite and You say that this is the day for me to be saved. Today, I choose to give my will and my life over to Your care believing that You will lead me to the pleasing and purposeful life You have planned for me. Amen

Maybe this is the right time for us to give our will and life over to the care of God.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2019

THIRST PROBLEMS

It's inconvenient to be without water for even a short time. In the Bible we can read the story of how Jesus met a woman who was dealing with a water problem. In the middle of a hot day, when it was unlikely that others would be around, she went with her jar to draw water from the community well. Jesus was there, and she was amazed that He even spoke to her and asked for a drink of water.

Jesus answered, "Those who drink this water will get thirsty again, but those who drink the water that I will give them will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give them will become in them a spring which will provide them with life-giving water and give them eternal life." "Sir," the woman said, "give me that water!" (John 4:13-15 CEV)

Jesus has everything we need to sort out the issues that are causing problems in our life.

She had another kind of water problem too. She was thirsty. Like so many of us, she was thirsty for love and to try to satisfy this thirst on her own terms, she had created a troubled life for herself. Now she was thirsty for acceptance and friendship, for dignity and respect. She was thirsty for help that would ease her sad heart and lift her out of loneliness, guilt, and shame. Jesus met her and promised her water that would satisfy all the things her heart was longing for. He makes the same offer to us.

Jesus stood and shouted to the crowds, "Anyone who is thirsty may come to me! Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, 'Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.' (John 7:37-38 NLT)

Living with the problems of loneliness, sin, guilt and resentment is miserable. We may try unhealthy relationships or various substances to help us deal with the pain we are feeling but satisfaction is not found in people or in substances. Jesus has everything we need to sort out the issues that are causing problems in our life. This woman received what Jesus was offering and her life was dramatically changed. Jesus is ready to do the same for us today. Will we receive the freedom from guilt and shame He is offering or just stay thirsty one more day?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Please satisfy my thirst for Your life-giving water that I may live a life that is pleasing to You. Amen

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2019

SUNDAY PSALM – THE GOOD SHEPHERD

In the Bible, sheep and shepherds are often used to teach us important spiritual lessons. Jesus Himself said He was the "Good Shepherd." Sheep are helpless animals and have no defense features against predators. If one sheep wanders aimlessly, the others will follow. That is why sheep need a shepherd to guide them and provide for their needs. Without the guidance and care of God in our lives, we are defenseless against the attacks of the devil and of the crowd mentality of doing as others do – good or bad.

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. (Psalm 23 NIV)

In rocky terrain, a sheep may fall over and land on its back. This is called a "cast down" position and is serious for the sheep as it is unable, by itself, to get back on its feet. It will flail around, and its stomach will begin to fill up with gas. As its stomach hardens the air passages get blocked and eventually the sheep will suffocate. When the shepherd finds a "cast down" sheep, he first rubs its legs to restore circulation, then gently turns it over and comforts and holds onto the sheep until its equilibrium is restored. When the sheep is restored, the shepherd returns it to the flock.

When we came into recovery, we were much like a "cast down" sheep, unable to help ourselves get back on our feet. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, wants to take care of us when we are in a helpless state.

Prayer: Loving God, I confess that I am prone to wander from Your guidance and care. Help me to follow You only, in all my ways. Amen

Without the guidance and care of God in our lives, we are defenseless against the attacks of the devil and of the crowd mentality of doing as others do.