



DEVOTIONS FOR LIFE

Aldersgate Church ~ St. Louis Park, MN

Week of March 19, 2023 (Matthew 25:14-30)

Prayer for Groups & Personal Devotion:

May we be ready, O God, in our prayers for others, to turn them from words into acts of the kingdom.

As we pray for places of conflict, may we be ready to live lives of peace. So, hear us as we pray for _____. May we be light in the world.

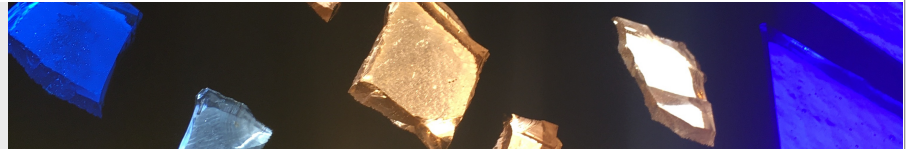
As we pray for places of hunger, may we be prepared to live lives that share justice with each other. So, hear us as we pray for _____. May we be light in the world.

As we pray for places of fear, may we be ready to live generously, affirming diversity and loving the stranger. So, hear us as we pray for _____. May we be light in the world.

As we pray for places of hurt, may we be prepared to live lives that bring healing to each other.

So, hear us as we pray for _____. May we be light in the world.

As we pray for our families...



Devotions for Life

Context: Since last we met, a LOT has happened. First, it's important to remember that we skipped over the Palm Sunday scene. More on that episode when we move back to it on Palm Sunday in a couple weeks, but it's important to note because it means that the tension between Jesus and political and religious powers is hitting a fever pitch.

Since last week, Jesus gets into a little debate with the Sadducees (a similar but not the same religious elite group as the Pharisees) and he essentially silences them. At this the Pharisees get interested, and one of them asks Jesus which "commandment in the law is the greatest". It is here that we get Matthew's version of "The Greatest Commandment", which, remember is not his own, but is a recitation of the ancient Hebrew prayer called "The Shema".

In Matthew 23 we get one of those texts that dispels the myth of "gentle Jesus". For the better part of 20 verses he goes through a list of "woe to you" statements toward the religious establishment. Things are getting tense, and this is important to note, because while some atonement theologies speak of Jesus needing to go to



...and friends, may we be ready to live lives that live lovingly to each of those with whom we share life.

So, hear us as we pray for _____. May we be light in the world. Amen.

*(Prayer for Groups and Personal Devotion
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Compassion & Justice

Minnesota FoodShare Month:

March is Minnesota FoodShare Month, a 40+ year statewide effort to fill local food shelves. As usual we will be collecting food for STEP, and we're excited to do so in partnership with Spirit of Christ Lutheran. Specifically, this year we are **collecting cereal**. If you have the means pick up a bag or two of various cereals and drop them off at the entrance to the sanctuary. Also, STEP seems to have an on going need for paper grocery bags. If you have a stash to spare, consider donating those as well.



the cross to die for a sins, it didn't just happen because it had to. It also happened simply because of the threat to power that Jesus was in his work and message of radical, fearless, non-discriminating love.

In Chapter 24, Jesus' disciples start asking Jesus about the "end times" when all that is right and good will come to fruition. There is, of course, a lot more to this, but essentially this sets the context for today's passage which is one in a series of parables about the end times.

End time parables can be tricky. It's important to be careful not to take them too literally, particularly as it pertains God's anger and wrath. We can't dismiss that, but we must keep God's unending, steadfast love in mind as well.

Questions for Reflection & Discussion:

1. What stood out to you? What was hard to hear?
2. What do you think this parable is about?
3. Where is God's love and grace in this story?
4. Is this parable about economics? Why or why not?
5. Why do you think the parable begins with a man "going on a journey"? What might have to do with Christian doctrine and theology?
6. Parable uses a word translated as "talent", which isn't the same as our word "talent". A "talent" was a massive sum of money, roughly 16 years' wages. But if we were to understand this parable in terms of the English definition of "talent", what might it be communicating?
7. What do you think "enter the joy of your master" means?
8. What do we make of verses 29 and 30? Does this sound like Jesus to you?
9. Putting the afterlife aside, what might this parable say about our lives here and now?