

Kaleidoscope

2012 Lenten Devotionals



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Ash Wednesday, February 22

Genesis 9:13-15 I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life.

Whenever I look into the sky and see a beautiful rainbow, I can say that you, Lord God, has made this kaleidoscope-looking rainbow as a covenant between you and me and all other living beings and creatures that roam the earth.

Prayer: God, thank you for your wonderful creation. You made the earth and the waters, the land and the sky and everything else in it to perfection. You are an awesome God. Amen.

Thursday, February 23

Psalm 23:6 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.

My favorite Bible passage is Psalm 23. As a kid, I always thought of Psalm 23 as dark and ominous. It wasn't until I came to prison that I was really able to understand the passage as that of great comfort; the comfort that can be had by walking with the Lord. The 4th verse that I found so ominous as a child, "Walking through the valley of the shadow of death," I now as a prisoner find to be very true. Prison can be a dark and shadow-filled place but, that's no reason to fear the darkness, as the rest of the verse clearly says, "I should fear no evil as God is with me." As I read all six verses, I am told of the comfort I am given because I walk with the Lord. If I had to pick one verse as a favorite, it would be verse 6, as it says it all, for this life and the next.

Prayer: Dear Lord, thank you for keeping us and protecting us like a loving shepherd. Amen.

February 2012

Dear Friends,

Have you ever played with a kaleidoscope - those beautiful optical inventions in a tube that, when held to the light and turned, create changing colors and shapes? Kaleidoscopes remind us of God's people. We are so different in background, socio-economic status, physical attribute, personality and theology, yet together, like the colored glass in the kaleidoscope, we can be something of great beauty.

You'll see that beauty born of diversity as you read this year's meditations. The writers were simply asked to consider the kaleidoscope and then to share their favorite verse(s). If you take your time with this kaleidoscope they created, you'll see the colored glass of pain and joy and various Bible translations and understandings, and even a made-up word or two, and then you'll see this: Testimony that God is God of the whole world and God is always there.

May these meditations make your Lenten walk more beautiful and meaningful, for that is what our writers wish for you. As always, you may reproduce these meditations for use as you see fit. We simply ask that you please give the writers and PCA credit for the works.

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Friday, February 24

Jeremiah 1:5-8 Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child. But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord.

Growing up, I was always told “you have a big mouth, use it.” Yet when it came to telling others about God, I would clam up and I was unsure, insecure, and, frankly, embarrassed. It’s funny, coming to prison has taught me to stand up for myself and speak my truth. I have a strong relationship with Jesus today and know that he is with me and speaks through me. He has given me a sureness, a security so I am never embarrassed to tell people about God.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for my voice. Please use me in any way you see fit and let the words that come out of my mouth glorify you. Amen.

Saturday, February 25

Proverbs 4:23 Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.

Do not give your heart to someone if you’re not sure they will treat it right. Because, if your heart is hurt and is on the ground, it is very hard to pick it up. If you give your heart to someone, it’s not easy to get it back. When you’re heartbroken, your whole body is affected, it breaks you down. You need to be smart and guard your heart because it is what gives you life. Don’t be so open but then again, don’t be so closed. Be smart and protect yourself or you’ll get hurt.

Prayer: Creator, guide me, guide my heart. Help me to not be foolish. Teach me to have a wise heart. Amen

Monday, February 27

Romans 1:6 And you also are among those Gentiles who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

I’m still in the struggle of finding where I belong, a place, a faith and hands to guide me. This poem is about my struggle:

Shattered windows, broken glass, forgotten memories that never last,
Endless dreams that fade away through the passing of every lost day,
Unforgiving souls searching for love when will they rise to fly above,
You hear the calling of misery and pain but can you cope with the
hidden shame?

So fix your windows, heal the glass, find your soul to forgive your past.

I do not know a prayer, but here is my favorite quote: Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.

Tuesday, February 28

Jeremiah 17:7 Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord.

I want and desire to be blessed and would imagine most people want to also be and to want that blessing to be from our Lord God, Jesus Christ. In the same sense, to trust someone usually means to accept their wisdom, their knowledge, their advice, their experience, their lead, etc. The Lord’s vision, victory for my/our lives - is there a greater blessing?

Prayer: Daily may we choose the greatest blessing to be present in our lives. Amen.

Wednesday, February 29

2 Corinthians 1: 3-4 All praise to the God and Father of our Master, Jesus the Messiah! Father of all mercy! God of all healing counsel! He comes alongside us when we go through hard times, and before you know it, he brings us alongside someone else who is going through hard times so that we can be there for that person just as God was there for us. We have plenty of hard times that come from following the Messiah, but no more so than the good times of his healing comfort—we get a full measure of that, too.

Like a kaleidoscope with many different colors and shapes, so God has created each one of us different. As each of us is different, we go through hard times in different ways but, our loving heavenly father gives us people who come alongside us to help us through them. In the same way, we can help others who are down and need a helping hand to hold and comfort them. God does not want to see us suffer but he will always use it to his glory and to comfort others.

Prayer: Heavenly Father and Comforter, thank you for being there and comforting me through hard times so that I may comfort others through your word. In your holy, loving and wonderful name, Amen.

Thursday, March 1

Proverbs 3:5-8 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones.

I go to these verses when I feel like I want to give up. I've battled God and our relationship, not trusting him or the path he has set for me. But, 11 months ago, God found me; he picked me up and my life will never be the same. It's very easy in prison to just give up, but during these times, I pour my heart out to the Lord, in poetry and prayer. I wrote this poem for him and it represents my battle: "God and I": I've been angry and full of rage. My heart in pieces so I disengage the battle of why God and I fell out of line. Tempted words with my obsession with pain, dark, ugly secrets that scar my brain. There is nothing left to fight for claim his child he gave me life yet God and I have had words, spoken truths of deadly thoughts I try to shock him with my desire of letting myself fall from grace. But God, he sees this image before it's clear and how he saves me it seems unreal. His angel

sings with self-righteous disgust, dulling the razor before the touch. Her wings are battered because of me. She's God's soldier fighting to keep me free.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for your words, your light, and for loving me. Amen.

Friday, March 2

Matthew 6:6 But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father secretly. Then your Father, who knows all secrets, will reward you.

It's just between me and God, honesty is already there because God knows everything about me. He already knows what I need before I even pray about it. God wants my time and he wants me to also want his time. Just the two of us, one on one. This kind of praying to God secretly, I believe, will form a relationship. The prayers are for me and God to become closer and nothing more than wanting to spend time with each other. Rewards come with sensitivity and a commitment to prayer.

Prayer: God, please remind me to always make time for just you and me every day of my life. Amen.

Saturday, March 3

Luke 7:47 Therefore, I tell you, her sins have been forgiven — for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little.

For those who have been "forgiven much" this verse often generates an understanding and application of "But he who has been forgiven much loves much." Unfortunately, some people never understand the equal gravity of their "little" sins. Consequently, their ability to "love much" is diminished. Many faithful servants of God who visit us in prison, often comment on the mighty presence of God's spirit that they experience while performing their ministry behind the walls. I believe this "extra measure" of the Holy Spirit is the result of not only their obedience to the scriptures (Matthew 25:43), but also our understanding of how great God's forgiveness really is. This, of course, results in opportunities for God to perform some of his best work.

Prayer: Father, may all your children experience the joy of "loving much." Amen.

Monday, March 5

Philippians 4:6-7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

2 Corinthians 1:5 For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.

We have all faced walls, obstacles, and problems in our lives, looking up and around wondering how we were going to climb, avoid or fix it this time. When I couldn't "fix", I worried. It was so counterproductive. My anxiety actually became a force, a disease, that worked against me. Through some of the trying times in my life, I have developed faith in God and learned that I don't need to have all the answers or be the "fixer." I have a Father that loves me, protects me, comforts me and through the Lord, I can do anything even if that just means being okay.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, may your love flow through us and allow us to become vessels that live faithfully and lead wisely. Amen.

Tuesday, March 6

Psalms 19:14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.

Sometimes one's words flow often too freely and they may even cause someone to stumble or be hurt. So we need to watch our tongue and keep it free from all malice and deceitful words. In so doing, speak only the words that will proclaim the praises and the glory and the honor of the Lord.

Prayer: Dear Lord, help me to be able to control my tongue so that the words I say will proclaim your praises and be stored deep within my heart. Amen.

Wednesday, March 7

Philippians 4:13 I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

I feel that this verse helps me with my daily walk. I have been in prison for 38 years and I know that Jesus helps me with my daily walk. I would like to say, " Keep God in your heart and He will help you through your days."

Prayer: I thank you, God, for every day I'm in prison and I know that you are the best friend for me. Amen.

Thursday, March 8

Nehemiah 8:10 ...for the joy of the Lord is your strength.

Without the joy of the Lord, I lose my strength. Without my strength, I lose my hope. Without hope, I lose faith. Without faith, I want to die, yet what is the joy? It isn't happiness. It's a sense of belonging, a sense that I'm part of something bigger than me. I find my joy of the Lord in the voice of a sister, the laughter of a brother, the working of the bride for her Christ. Prison is not a place of joy and yet each and every day, come rain or shine, God gives me an amazing gift. A sunrise, a smile, a word. It's my job to pursue the gifts, to look for them within my journey right here and right now. Today and each day, I choose joy. That joy is my strength to be all Christ has asked me to be for his body.

Prayer: Lord open our eyes to see and ears to hear your joy resonate through our darkness, our sunshine, our laughter and tears. Show our hearts the gifts in each other and in you every single day. Amen.

Friday, March 9

Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

Jeremiah 29:11 “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

For a lot of years, I've always done things my way or under my own understanding, not giving anyone a chance to guide or show me a better way, not even God. Now after coming in and out of this place I've finally realized I need to surrender my will and do God's will. It is very reassuring to know God has a purpose and a plan for my life and to give me a future and a hope. He can do the same for you if you just let him into your heart and life!

Prayer: Dear Lord, I ask that throughout this day you help me to not lean on my own understanding but to call on you. I thank you for the plan you have in place for my life. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Saturday, March 10

Matthew 7:7-8 Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

This verse is one of my favorites because it was one of the first verses I ever remembered as a child. It always meant to me, even as a child, all I had to do was knock on the door to heaven and he would open the door and let me in and I would sit and think how it would feel. Inside I always got this warm safe feeling. I know that feeling was always love like no other, like a mother's love of her child. I love you, God.

Prayer: Dear Lord, I pray that all who read this verse feel your love as I did as a child and shall you light their way also to that door to your love. Amen.

Monday, March 12

Psalm 139: 1-10

Your Maker

I am who is your maker, I formed your heart.
Before your time began, I held you in my hands.
I know your name, I know all your thoughts.
I see all your tears, And I feel all your fears.
I know you believe in me, You call for me on your own.
I will never leave you, No matter where you go I am there.
You know my name too, You know my word to be true.
And you witness all my miracles, Now you know who I am God.

Prayer: Thank you, God, for knowing me and still loving me. Amen.

Tuesday, March 13

1 Peter 5:7-11 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Even though things aren't going as well as I may hope for, I know that with God on my side, I will overcome the odds. I will always remember that I am not the only one facing trials and tribulations. There are others that have it worse than I do. I just thank God for all that I have and pray for all who are suffering around the world. We all are of one God and shall remember that if one of our Christian brothers and sisters are suffering, then we all are suffering. May all of them be in our thoughts and prayers.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I thank you for the love you give me although I am sinner and not worthy of all you give me. Thank you Lord. Amen.

Wednesday, March 14

1 John 4:7-9 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

I choose this scripture because I think you should know that God is love. I have done many things I am not proud of and I feel deep regret, however, I am forgiven through Jesus Christ. God loved me so much that he gave his son to save me from myself. I condemn myself through my evil ways and God still loves me. I walk away from him and he's still there. I curse him and he sings to my soul. I push him away and he cradles me. I am never alone. We must love each other the way he loves us. Please understand that no matter what we have done, God is love.

Prayer: God, please give me strength when I am weak and faith when he tries to grab me. Amen.

Thursday, March 15

Psalm 118:22 The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone

Regardless of who has rejected you or how many times you've been rejected, you have an inherent worth as a creation of God and a citizen of the kingdom. You can use your given talents to become a cornerstone of the Father's work. God will find a place for each of us.

Prayer: Lord, let me be a cornerstone in the work you will accomplish today. Amen.

Friday, March 16

2 Chronicles 20:15-17 He said: "Listen, King Jehoshaphat and all who live in Judah and Jerusalem! This is what the Lord says to you: 'Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's. Tomorrow march down against them. They will be climbing up by the Pass of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the gorge in the Desert of Jeruel. You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you, Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the Lord will be with you.'"

When I read this, I put my name in there where King Jehoshaphat, Judah and Jerusalem are. To me, this goes for everyday life. There are always battles going on in our lives where we need our Lord and Savior and God, to fight the battles and wars. Don't be afraid or discouraged to trust in him and know, always know, that our battles and wars are his. So give it to him. He will keep you safe. He wants to show you the deliverance that he gives us all so, "Go out and face them tomorrow and the Lord will be with you." He is setting us free and fighting our battles. How great is our God who has, is and continues to protect, save, fight, die and rise again for us!

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, I give honor, glory and praise for defeating the vast army we face tomorrow. Praise you, Lord, that the battles are yours and not ours. Put me in your loving embrace, Jesus Christ, and keep me safe. Deliver me from my gorge in the Desert of Jeruel. Guide me, be my King, Strength Redeemer, Father, Savior, Friend and Loving Companion. Thank you, Jesus. In your risen name I pray, Amen.

Saturday, March 17

Psalm 18:1 For the director of music. Of David the servant of the Lord. He sang to the Lord the words of this song when the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. He said: I love you, Lord, my strength.

These are affirmations my father and I had done together. Today I feel the power and the energy of God's light flood through every cell of my being and today I walk in the light of the oneness of all things. I now am free from the consciousness of fear and limitation. I have all that I need to do all that is good and right in my life. I am free of old negative feelings; my past no longer owns me. I now support myself and all life around me with the light of acceptance and the joy of upliftment. My shield of light protects me always. I now create new daily routines, which strengthen and expand the light within me. I give thanks for the healing I know is taking place now. Wonderful are the works of a power greater than myself, the God of creative intelligence within me.

Prayer: Father God, thank you for all the wonderful blessings you have given me. Thank you for helping me build a healthy strong foundation with you. I pray for continuing healing and faithfulness in your works. Amen.

Monday, March 19

Psalm 141:1-2 I call upon you, O Lord; come quickly to me, give ear to my voice when I call you. Let my prayer be counted as incense before you and the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice.

I remember a time when I came before the Lord very broken. I had just found out my father had died and I was here in prison. I had none of my family with me so I threw myself to the arms of the Lord and he did come quickly to comfort me. Also, for the second verse, we sing a song very close that verse during our Friday evening service. The amount of blessings I receive and beautiful fellowship from church services are amazing. Praise to you O Christ; God is good!!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please cleanse my heart so I can be closer to you and guide my walk so I can be of service. My Lord, I love you. Amen.

Tuesday, March 20

2 Timothy 2:3 Endure suffering as a good soldier of Christ.

When I arrived at SDWP, I was feeling pretty sorry for myself and more than three times when I went to the Lord with the question “Why?”, this verse came to me. To me, this means that as long as I suffer, I can rely on him and he will prevail. Just as a seed is planted, watered and grows, it may take some time for my “spiritual heart” to grow beyond the capacity of my “worldly heart,” but with him, all things are possible. Praise the Lord!

Prayer: Lord, please help me to endure suffering as a good soldier of Christ — in you, with you, and for you. Amen.

Wednesday, March 21

John 8:32 And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

Only you know deep down what is the truth. If you can accept the truth and realize what is the truth, only then will you be set free. God knows all and he will help you with anything. It took me forever to realize the truth was right in front of my face. The truth is God’s word. Only then was I able to accept things for how they were instead of always worrying about things. I felt trapped like nothing could help me but when I accepted him, my life turned around, not completely but it is still a work in progress.

Prayer: I pray that you continue to give me the strength to keep on keeping on and to know that you’re always here for me no matter what. Amen.

Thursday, March 22

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Because the Bible tells you that you will have everlasting life, believe in and have faith in Jesus. Even though I got caught up in worldly possessions and ended up in prison, this verse brings me comfort. Today I know spiritually where I’m going no matter where I am physically.

Prayer: May all prayers be answered in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Friday, March 23

Malachi 3:16-17a Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, And the LORD listened and heard them; So a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who meditate on His name. “ They shall be Mine,” says the LORD of hosts, “ On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him.”

When we all gather, whether it is church or to just fellowship and we talk of the Lord, he bends himself to us. The Lord leaves the angels to listen and has a recorder to write what we say. I believe he is smiling when we are joyous and I believe he is saddened when we are sad, but yet the recorder writes. He declares in all the heavens that we are his with pride and joy in those of us who love him. Do we “sparkle” and “shine” in his eyes, for we are his “segullah,” his priceless jewels.

Prayer: May we speak about our Lord continually in prayer and praise no matter who we are with. Praise his holy name. Amen.

Saturday, March 24

Psalm 44: 20-21 If we had forgotten the name of our God or spread out our hands to a foreign god, would not God have discovered it, since he knows the secrets of the heart?

I have strayed from God so many times in my life and have forgotten the ways of his guiding heart; I've looked places I know not to find him, even when I knew it was only my heart that was wrong. I've blamed him for my wrong paths and was ashamed to ask for his forgiveness, so instead of simply asking and knowing that no matter what, he loves me for all my faults and my mistakes, I pushed him away. In the end, he knows my heart and that keeps me strong in my faith to him. I know he understands why I do what I do, and that my heart is his.

Prayer: I pray for my family that they keep their faith and stay strong through all their struggles. I pray that those whom I hold close to my heart find peace and love and good through anything and all stay true to themselves. Amen.

Monday, March 26

Matthew 6:9b-13 — The Lord's Prayer

I have prayed a million prayers about my seemingly impossible situation. I've fasted and "done all the right things." I've seen opened or closed doors as "God's will," yet when none of those "answers to my prayers" ever "came through," I became hopeless and I had no idea how to pray anymore without feeling like I was setting myself up for another disappointment. There is nothing in the Bible that suggests I am a victim to this unyielding circumstance in my life. Nothing is beyond redemption. I needed to learn how to apply the authority of heaven. Then one day it finally came to me in my spirit: I want God's will for my life, whatever it is without knowing what it is. I truly believe God can do anything. Nothing is impossible with him. God knows what I need before I ask and at unexpected times God will send just the right person or provision to help me.

Prayer: Lord, deliver me from any evil that has been assigned to me, attached to me, spoken to me or about me and bring about your will exactly that is already established in heaven here in my life today on earth. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Tuesday, March 27

Romans 10:9 If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

At 14, I confessed and prayed to God to forgive my sins and I know he touched me that day. Yet, I didn't know what to do with my feelings so I went back to drugs, sex and cult activities. At the age of 31, I realized Jesus and renewed my vow. Since then he has walked with me daily. I realized that "religion" isn't the key to heaven - it's realizing that God is our father and Jesus is our connection to our father and the Holy Spirit is our personal guide to get through each day. When I live my life, I imagine my father standing over my shoulder and I ask myself, "Am I making him proud of me?" I want to make him happy with me, but I don't always succeed. I know when I don't, then I apologize and try not to do it again. Like a father, he always forgives me and loves me and sometimes I believe he punishes me to keep me in check. It's all good though because that is what a father who cares "for real" does to his child. The coolest thing is that I know at 14 I was saved and even though I didn't live right, he kept me safe enough and guided me to where I am now, a place where he and I connected to be one forever.

Prayer: Thank you Lord for guiding me and for loving me without strings attached. I love you. Amen.

Wednesday, March 28

Psalm 23:4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

The Lord is with me always. He rejoices and celebrates during the good times in my life and is with me through every struggle and obstacle. I walk through my darkest days, am tested and tempted and the Lord remains with me. I shall never fear evil for the Lord comforts and protects me.

Prayer: Protect me, comfort me, Lord your love keeps me. Amen.

Thursday, March 29

Psalm 119:105 Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.

When life's hardness bears down on me, this verse is given me by the Holy Spirit to let me know that God's word shines through my darkness and creates joy in me that is not known by the world.

Romans 8:1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus...

This verse lifts my spirit when Satan tries to use condemnation to guilt me into unbelief and doubt of my security in Christ. It is a very powerful reminder of God's love for me.

Prayer: Lord, grant me strength to remain in your love and not share in the world's glory. Amen.

Friday, March 30

John 1:14 (KJV) And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Jesus Christ stepped into time, took on flesh and blood, dwelt among us for 33 years. His purpose was clear with us on his mind; he paid for our sins with his life. He experienced our pain and he laughed, talked, walked, and cried with us. He was on earth and overcame the world for us. The Word's mission was our reason for eternal life. I feel overwhelmed to know that we will one day be in glory with Jesus Christ forever. With every ounce of your being, hang onto this hope because our Lord and Savior came and left as we will: born, lived on earth, died, raised to life in heaven's glory forevermore.

Prayer: Thank you Jesus for dwelling among the lost and restless. May you be forever glorified. Amen.

Saturday, March 31

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

When I was sentenced to prison, I felt ashamed and unworthy of love. I could not fathom how anyone could love me after I had made such a mess of so many lives. The truth is, my family looked beyond my flaws to what is really inside. I finally accepted this when I discovered how important to God I was. My family was patient, forgiving, supportive and has endured with me throughout this journey. If they are capable of these sincere feelings, how much more is God capable of? How much peace can he bring to us in times of trouble, when we look to him the most? I can't imagine because he knew the exact words to describe love before we ever knew what love felt like.

Prayer: Lord, please help to remind me that you love me despite my bad choices and that my behavior can never sever our relationship. Amen.

Monday, April 2

**Habakkuk 3:18-19 and 2 Corinthians 4:17-18
(Used throughout the meditation)**

Have you ever felt that your life just couldn't get any worse? Here I sit in prison, serving time for a horrible wrong, waiting anxiously for the day when I'll finally go home to see my family. Then I find out one of my relatives has either become gravely ill, only to recover, to just decline again, then God takes them home. **Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign Lord is my strength.** My sister lost her children to the state. **He makes my feet like the feet of a deer.** My sister maintains custody of her oldest son. **Yet I will rejoice in the Lord.** My younger sister has gone to court to lose her daughter to the state. **He enables me to tread on the heights. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.** These verses help me release my worries and rejoice in the Lord.

Prayer: Father, help me to rejoice in you more, that I may look to the things unseen and not on what is seen. So that when I feel that my life just couldn't get worse, I only have to look to you to make it that much better. Amen.

Tuesday, April 3

John 3:16-21 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

This verse is a favorite of mine because I read it a lot to help me to remember it without looking it up. The reason it is my favorite is because I read it every morning. This verse does help me understand that God cares for me.

Prayer: I thank God for letting me learn of his word by reading the Bible and thank God for listening to my prayers. Amen.

Wednesday, April 4

James 1:2-4 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

Life is full of hundreds of things that will cause pain, guilt, shame, joy, perseverance and any other feelings you've felt. But deep in those feelings there is reason. God is that one who sits on the ant hill with a magnifying glass. He's the one who built the hills strong and tall to save us from fires in our life. Sometimes our prayers are answered, but not in what we want; but soon understanding comes from the blessings that were disguised. Being sent to prison ironically has become a pure blessing to me. A lot of times in your life, you'll face tests but it's how we overcome and grow from each test as we get closer to God. All things happen for one reason or another. One thing I found in each of these tests was that I was never alone. Even in the cell of a prison with no one to catch those tears, I found that Jesus died for those tears. No matter how bad you may fail at some tests, they make you stronger for the next one as you depend on the unfailing love and promises of the Lord. If you can remember when a bad day gets worse and turn to God in your times of need, as time passes and God's love becomes more in your heart, tests get easier and life seems to get easier to endure through all the tribulations of each test. It's hard to live a life with no stable backbone to turn to and when you find yourself on your back feeling

helpless, just look up and find those words to your incomplete sentences and soon the tests will add up to a love worth all the tears and emptiness that are now filled with the complete and perfect joy in God's hands.

Prayer: Thank you Lord for bringing me here today and blessing me with this test in my life to help find you in the depths of my heart and the great women I've met through you here. Amen.

Thursday, April 5

Isaiah 43:18-19 Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold I will do a new thing. Now it shall spring forth, shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and river in the desert.

I like this verse because the Lord spoke clearly to me through the verse. When I first arrived here at SDWP I was confused, sad, hurt, and needed direction for my life. This verse assured me that the Lord promises me to do a new thing!

Prayer: Lord God, Creator of the heavens and thy earth, my Strength, my Redeemer, Protector and Faithful One, there's no one like you in all the earth. I write this prayer of praise to you because you are my source of life. Father, thank you for all that you have done and all that you will do. I'm so glad that you are in my life. I love you. Amen.

Good Friday, April 6

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Every day is a struggle. I must sacrifice as Christ did. I die daily with him. He gave his body, his flesh so that I could be forgiven. In dying daily, I am resurrected in him so I let him run my life. I give up my pride, my hatred, my pains and my addictions. I live in faith in Christ that he will provide, that his love will prevail above all of my sinful nature. He loved me so much that he gave his life. That is just amazing, isn't it? Our God, Our Jesus loved us so much he died for us. The least we can do is give up our evil ways, let his Spirit enter us. Let his love flow from us, let his beauty and his glory spread like fire from us. Let us die together daily for his honor. He did it for each and every one of us.

Prayer: Christ, thank you for dying for me. I worship you. I have nothing to offer you that you don't or can't get yourself. I love you. Thank you for your mercy. Aid me today, Lord, to die to myself for your honor. I want to live for you and for you to work through me. Amen.

Saturday, April 7

1 Corinthians 13:13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love but the greatest of these is love.

When he speaks of these feelings, I can also feel that the greatest is love - love of everything in this world. Sometimes when I am just out walking, the sunlight seems more brighter gold, the trees greener. I can feel his love in the day. His presence I can feel in the world. His love for me I can feel in my heart. I just know of his love. But to make what I feel on those days is rather hard, for it's more of feeling than descriptions of how I feel like saying water is wet - that God's love is in the world.

Prayer: My Lord God, please help me with my children and our lives, for his namesake. Amen.

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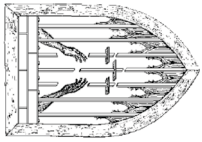
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