

Crossroads Daily Guide
Week of June 26, 2016
Celebrating Vacation Bible School:
Surf Shack



This week's scripture verses come from the lessons experienced in VBS last week. From the creation of life in the beginning to the creation of new life in Jesus, the children learned about the unconditional love of God, the unlimited welcome of Jesus that offers an unwavering hope of transformation.

As we engage these daily scriptures, may we become like children and receive them with open minds, open hearts and open hands so we too might discover an unwavering hope for our lives and the world. May they open our eyes to see as followers of Jesus how we can make a difference in our everyday world. May they help us to open our hands to welcome and give the healing touch of God's unconditional love to all.

Sunday, June 26, 2016

Scripture: Genesis 1:2-4a The earth was without shape or form, it was dark over the deep sea, and God's wind swept over the waters— God said, "Let there be light." And so light appeared. God saw how good the light was. God separated the light from the darkness.

Reflection: In ancient times "darkness" and "deep sea" often described what was void and chaotic. It is in this context that the scripture says God spoke creation into being. As the first and ultimate artist, God gives form to what is formless. While Genesis 1 is an ancient story, and open to many interpretations, we can still learn something from it about the nature of God as creator, inviting us to be God's co-creators at work in our world today. Looking at your own life, how do you see yourself, in albeit small ways, as a co-creator with God? Today, how might you create the space for the people you will be with to feel the unconditional love of God and the unlimited welcome of Jesus through you?

Breath Prayer: (Inhale) *Creator God...* (Exhale) *Create in and through me*

Monday June 27, 2016

Scripture: Exodus 2:1-7, 10 *The woman became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she couldn't hide him any longer, she took a reed basket and sealed it up with black tar. She put the child in the basket and set the basket among the reeds at the riverbank. The baby's older sister stood watch nearby to see what would happen to him. Pharaoh's daughter came down to bathe in the river. She saw the basket among the reeds, and she sent one of her servants to bring it to her. When she opened it, she saw the child. The boy was crying, and she felt sorry for him. She said, "This must be one of the Hebrews' children." Then the baby's sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Would you like me to go and find one of the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?"...So the woman took the child and nursed it... She named him Moses.*

Reflection: This story of Moses' infancy shows us that God not only creates the world, God is also active in it leading people to help other people. All of us can be God's hands of healing, voice of love, and presence of transforming hope. God's big work often begins very small. In today's scripture it began as simply and naturally as a mother's instinct to save her son. Through simple acts of goodness and kindness God is changing the world in profound ways. Is there someone to whom you could offer a simple act of compassion or forgiveness? Is there someone you could serve today? Are you in need of help? Is there someone you could ask to help you?

Breath Prayer: (Inhale) *Open my eyes to see...* (Exhale) *Use my hands to heal*

Tuesday June 28, 2016

Scripture: *Matthew 3:13-15, 17 At that time Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan River so that John would baptize him. John tried to stop him and said, "I need to be baptized by you, yet you come to me?" Jesus answered, "Allow me to be baptized now. This is necessary to fulfill all righteousness." So John agreed to baptize Jesus... A voice from heaven said, "This is my Son whom I dearly love..."*

Reflection: Consider how God turns our expectations of leaders upside down. The people in Jesus' day were expecting a very different kind of Messiah. When Jesus asks John to baptize him John says it should be the other way around, but Jesus insists. Jesus sees heaven and earth as no longer separate. God's power is equipping Jesus for his mission – bringing God's kingdom to light on earth. The blessing from God was not only vital to Jesus, we also need to hear words of love and affirmation. Being reminded that we are loved shapes everything we do. It all begins with receiving God's unconditional love and then moves to sharing that same love with others. How do you receive God's love and affirmation from friends or family?

Breath Prayer: (Inhale) *Loving God...* (Exhale) *May your love flow in and through me*

Wednesday June 29, 2016

Scripture: *Luke 8:22-25 One day Jesus and his disciples boarded a boat. He said to them, "Let's cross over to the other side of the lake." So they set sail. While they were sailing, he fell asleep. Gale-force winds swept down on the lake. The boat was filling up with water and they were in danger. So they went and woke Jesus, shouting, "Master, Master, we're going to drown!" But he got up and gave orders to the wind and the violent waves. The storm died down and it was calm.*

Reflection: The disciples are having crisis of faith. This happens to all of us when the storms rage in our lives. Life is a constant flow of fear, questions, uncertainty hope and faith in God's unfailing love for us. In this flow God welcomes our questions and uncertainties. One of the best things about being part of a community of faith is that we can encourage each other in our times of uncertainty. The disciples were afraid but Jesus reminded them that even in their fears he was with them, offering them peace even in the storm. Has there been a time when you experienced a storm and your faith in Jesus calmed your fears? Was there someone walking with you to encourage you through that difficult time? How might you encourage someone you know who might be facing a storm?

Breath Prayer: (Inhale) *In the storms...* (Exhale) *Jesus is with me*

Thursday June 30, 2016

Scripture: *John 21:2, 4, 12-14 Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, and two other disciples were together. They set out in a boat, but throughout the night they caught nothing. Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples didn't realize it was Jesus... "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples could bring themselves to ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came, took the bread, and gave it to them. He did the same with the fish.*

Reflection: This scene takes place after the resurrection of Jesus. Each time Jesus appeared to his followers they have some difficulty recognizing him. We too can miss seeing Jesus' resurrection power in our everyday lives. Just as the disciples then had to learn to recognize his presence among them in some of the most ordinary ways – a breakfast – we too can remember that Jesus comes to us in our everyday activities. God's love always wants to engage us right where we are. In some translations Jesus calls his followers "children", a reminder that we never stop being God's beloved children and God never stops offering us children love and guidance. How have you experienced God's love and care in the normalcy of everyday life? Keep your eyes and ears open to see and hear it today.

Breath Prayer: (Inhale) *Open my eyes and ears...* (Exhale) *to see and hear your love*

Friday July 1, 2016

Scripture: *John 21: 15-17* When they finished eating, Jesus asked Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" Simon replied, "Yes, Lord, you know I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." Jesus asked a second time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Simon replied, "Yes, Lord, you know I love you." Jesus said to him, "Take care of my sheep." He asked a third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was sad that Jesus asked him a third time, "Do you love me?" He replied, "Lord, you know everything; you know I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."

Reflection: Before Jesus' death Peter denied even knowing Jesus. But in today's reading we see through an interaction with Jesus on the beach one early morning he experienced forgiveness and healing. Jesus knew Peter's weaknesses and yet that didn't keep Jesus from seeing the deeper truth of who Peter really was. Jesus was not just interested in using Peter to carry out his work, he was more interested in helping Peter see his true self – a vulnerable yet beloved child of God's. The same is true for us. Instead of seeing your weaknesses as disqualifying you as a beloved child of God's how might you today see God transforming your weaknesses into strength and a gift to help someone else?

Breath Prayer: (Inhale) *Help me to see myself...* (Exhale) *as your beloved child*

Saturday, July 2, 2016

Scripture: *Mark 10:14* When Jesus saw this, he grew angry and said to them, "Allow the children to come to me. Don't forbid them, because God's kingdom belongs to people like these children."

Matthew 18:3 Jesus said, "If you don't turn your lives around and become like this little child, you will definitely not enter the kingdom of heaven."

Reflection: Jesus repeatedly reminded people of the power of childlike wonder and innocence. Children can suspend disbelief and doubt and see Jesus more clearly than adults. That is why it is critically important that we invest our time and our energy into teaching children about Jesus, and showing them with our lives, not just our words, the reality of God's unconditional love for them and for everyone. Here at Crossroads we are blessed to have a vibrant Sunday morning Crossroads Kids ministry. Our kids learn about God's love and the ways Jesus welcomed everyone, and they experience many ways to share God's love through hands-on service activities. Vacation Bible School is just one of the ways the kids in our community experience and share Jesus. We invite you to participate in this important work by praying for our students and workers, and if you are able, serving in Crossroads Kids one Sunday a month. Your investment will bring incalculable return in their lives and yours as well.

Breath Prayer: (Inhale) *Create in me...* (Exhale) *a child-like heart*