

Daily Reflection on Scripture Week of January 1 New Year's Message



As we begin the New Year the world we live in is still unsettled. Just because the year changes that doesn't mean our reality has changed. The one thing we can change, however, is how we choose to begin and live our lives this New Year.

This week's scripture, reflections and sacred pauses are about forgiveness. When we gather at the communion table we repeatedly say that forgiveness is the way to peace. Forgiveness of self is the way to peace inside of us and forgiveness of others is the way to peace in our families, at work, in all our relationships and ultimately in the world.

May these scriptures, reflections and pauses lead us to choosing forgiveness in the days ahead. It may be our only hope.

If you would like to receive the Sacred Pause on your phone, text "crossroads" to 41411.

Sunday, January 1, 2017

Luke 6:37 *Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.*

Reflection: As we begin the New Year these words of Jesus tell us how we might be able to have a most fulfilling and peaceful year. His instructions are simple to understand and yet hard to do. It is interesting to note that judging and condemning are seen as negative actions and yet forgiveness is seen as a positive action. Could it be that the positive action of forgiveness is how we might best be able to avoid the negative actions of judging and condemning? On this first day of 2017 can you resolve to daily ask God to help you become a more forgiving person?

Sacred Pause: Choose the positive action of forgiveness. Forgiveness frees you from the need to be judging and condemning of self and others.

Monday, January 2, 2017

Ephesians 4:32 *Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*

Reflection: These words from the Apostle Paul lead us inward to search our own hearts before looking at the actions of others. If we begin with ourselves and realize the many times we need compassion and forgiveness, then we are more apt to humbly forgive others. It levels the playing field. All of us stand in need of God's grace and the extension of grace to and from one another. There is a need for great healing in our world and kindness, compassion and forgiveness are the necessary tools to make it happen. As you start this New Year, remember to start with yourself and your need for grace before making any judgements of others.

Sacred Pause: God is extending compassion and forgiveness to you today. Who around you needs compassion and forgiveness from you? All of us need grace.

Tuesday, January 3, 2017

Colossians 3:13 *Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.*

Reflection: Repeatedly the scriptures remind us to begin looking at our own need for forgiveness before looking at the faults of others. Remember how much you want forgiveness. Remember how God freely forgives you. Remember how it feels when someone forgives you. By remembering these things, we are better prepared to bear with those with whom we might have a grievance. You are forgiven. You can forgive others. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

Sacred Pause: Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.

Wednesday, January 4, 2017

Luke 23:34 *"Even if a person wrongs you seven times a day and each time turns and asks for forgiveness, you must forgive."*

Reflection: There is probably not a clearer message about the importance of forgiveness than the one found in this passage of scripture. The need for forgiveness is never over. Every healthy relationship requires forgiveness. Instead of trying to ignore the pain of being hurt by sweeping the offense under the carpet, Jesus is saying before the pain gets too big to forgive bring it to the front and ask for God's grace to help you forgive offenses one by one. Jesus goes on to say that if you want a healthy relationship, then you must practice the grace of forgiveness. Forgiveness of self and the offender.

Sacred Pause: If you want healthy and fulfilling relationships, then you must practice the grace of forgiveness. Forgiveness of self and your offender.

Thursday, January 5, 2017

Luke 24:47 *Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing."*

Reflection: More than just unbelievably gracious words spoken by Jesus from the cross these words are a most gracious teaching for all to hear. Sometimes we offend and hurt others because we don't know the whole story or the true story. This is why it is important to understand another person's story even before we want them to understand ours. Obviously the people in Jesus' day didn't understand his real story, and he understood that. By offering his offenders forgiveness he is teaching us to do the same. Seek first to understand why a person is doing what they are doing and then you will be more willing to forgive.

Sacred Pause: Sometimes we hurt others because we don't know their true story. Seek first to understand the story then you will be more willing to forgive.

Friday, January 6, 2017

Matthew 6:12 *Forgive us for the ways we have wronged you, just as we also forgive those who have wronged us.*

Reflection: The ability to forgive others begins with our willingness to receive God's forgiveness for self. Instead of feeling like we can never measure up to God we can choose instead to receive God's gracious gift of forgiveness. This isn't forgiveness to keep doing the same thing over and over again, but forgiveness to forgive ourselves that then empowers us to forgive others. Who doesn't do wrong? Who doesn't need forgiveness? We all do. And by receiving God's forgiveness for our wrongs we can forgive the wrongs of others.

Sacred Pause: The ability to forgive others begins with receiving God's forgiveness for self. Receive God's forgiveness then you can forgive others.

Saturday, January 7, 2017

Luke 11:4 *Then Jesus said to the woman, "Your sins are forgiven."*

Reflection: These words of Jesus were spoken to a woman who had committed adultery and everyone wanted to stone her for her sin. Everyone that is except for Jesus. Jesus knew that casting stones at someone was not the way to bring healing. Forgiveness is the pathway to healing in all our relationships. On that day Jesus not

only set the woman free with forgiveness, he also freed everyone who had a rock in their hand ready to throw. They heard his words and dropped their stones and walked away lighter. That's what forgiveness does.

Sacred Pause: Jesus said, let the one without sin cast the first stone. Instead of casting stones drop them and walk a bit lighter. That's forgiveness.