

Daily Reflection on Scripture
Week of February 23
The Church of Christian Simplicity
Living the Simple Jesus Way



Sunday February 23

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

Morning Prayer: God, being poor scares me. I work hard to not be poor, or at least to not look like I am poor. Yet today's scripture says that being poor in spirit is the doorway into Your kingdom. Those words startle me. Am I working so hard to create an image of outer success that I am not even paying attention to the poverty of my own soul? Am I playing the game of self-success so that I don't have to look at my own inner emptiness? God if this is true, then like a beggar on the street, I humble myself and ask for Your help. Awaken me to the realization that all my hard work to look successful in the eyes of others is not the pathway to joy. Help me to not be afraid to say that I am poor in spirit. Help me to humbly confess my ongoing need for You so that I can be set free from the external pursuits that keep me running in place on the hamster wheel of life while never getting closer to what I am really looking for. I am looking for inner peace. And today's scripture is clearly showing me that it's not found in the riches of material success, it's found in the poverty of my soul, in my humble need for You. May it be so.

Morning Focus: The pathway to joy begins on the inside. Success may help you feel good in the moment. But inner peace is what will sustain you, even when success eludes you.

Noon Text: Take a 90-second break from what you are doing to go inward. Breathe in while saying, joy comes from within. Breathe out saying, this inner peace sustains me.

Evening Text: God, help me to slow down to prepare my tired body and busy mind to rest. May I rest knowing that success comes from the inside out and not the other way around.

Monday February 24

Scripture: Matthew 5:4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Morning Prayer: God, throughout my life I experienced many losses, and many times I have mourned. As I experience the loss of friends, family members, situations and circumstances that were precious and important to me, it sometimes seems that I am always grieving the loss of something, or someone. I know that life is never static, but is a constantly shifting and changing landscape as the journey of my life takes shape each day, each month, each year. My life journey is a story of change and loss, but at the same time every step brings new experiences, new people, new opportunities to love and serve You and all of creation. I am grateful for the new experiences in my life, and grateful for the knowledge that You are the constant in the midst of all the letting go and moving on. This verse reminds me that while mourning is a part of life, being comforted is also a part of life. Help me to reach out with loving care and concern to those who need comforting. Help me to be kind to myself and to remember that You are the ultimate source of comfort. I will do my best to approach each day on this journey of life and spirit with joyful anticipation. May it be so.

Morning Focus: Today I am comforted by Your loving presence.

Noon Text: Pause for a few moments to engage in some act of comforting self care. These few moments will refresh you and bring calm to the rest of your day.

Evening Text: God, I am grateful for awareness of Your comforting presence throughout this day. I will rest now and wake up refreshed and renewed in body, mind and spirit.

Tuesday February 25

Scripture: Matthew 5:5 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Morning Prayer: God, truthfully being meek is not something that our culture often encourages us to aspire to. The meaning has evolved through the years from kind and gentle to weak and submissive. While kind and gentle sound pretty good (fruit of the spirit), weak and submissive are less so. Some translations use the word 'humble' instead but even this is hard to understand in the paradox of the Beatitudes. But then I think of whom among us demonstrated true humility, and that, of course, was Jesus. Instead of acting out of a place of power, Jesus humbled himself to teach us about love. And if I become all about the love of Jesus, then I will love and care more for the creation and the people of the earth than the things I can buy and own through my power and privilege. So let me be meek, let me be humble, let me be loving enough to care for Your creation and everything and everyone in it. May it be so.

Morning Focus: Today I will humble myself to ensure that I show love to all of God's people.

Noon Text: How hard is it for you to interact with others with an attitude of meekness? You will be blessed by humbling yourself as Jesus did, showing love to everyone.

Evening Text: God, for the gift of this day and all that was in it I give thanks. I take time to rest my mind, body and soul to prepare for another day.

Wednesday February 26

Scripture: Matthew 5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Morning Prayer: Thank you God for this new day. Thank you for the incredible blessing of easy access to healthy food and clean water. My literal hunger is satisfied and my thirst quenched with such ease that too often, I forget to name this life-sustaining gift. In the brokenness of this world, this is not a universal experience. God, remind me of this pain, when my own stomach feels empty or my own throat is dry, so that I can experience a deeper sense of lack and discomfort that goes beyond my own body. Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness are aching for justice, for equality, for redemption and freedom across all communities. I pray, God, for a devoted heart that longs to end suffering in big and small ways. The Bible says that You are a God of justice, and I rejoice that every longing soul will be filled! I pray for the physical and emotional strength to do the work of healing by Your side every day. May it be so.

Morning Focus: I enter this new moment with gratitude, for the blessings I have been given, and humility, so I will be inspired to share them with the world.

Noon text: Name the abundant gifts around you in this moment with gratitude. Ask God how you can use what you have to bring more justice, freedom, and love to the world.

Evening Text: Thank you God for Your calling on each of our lives: to do what is just, to show constant love, and to live in humble fellowship with You. I rest in this hope.

Thursday February 27

Scripture: Matthew 5:7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Morning Prayer: God, as I read this scripture, I think of the saying “do unto others as you would have them do unto you”. But then I remember when You told us to love one another as I have loved you. This more fully helps me to understand that Your limitless unconditional love is what I should be giving. Help me to treat others with Your love and know that though I may fear or feel slighted, that there is enough and we are all enough in Your eyes. Help me to be merciful with others as You have always been with me. May it be so.

Morning Focus: I will go forth on this day excited for the possibilities that being a merciful loving person in the way of Jesus will bring me

Noon Text: Have I been merciful in the opportunities that have presented themselves to me so far today?

Evening Text: I am grateful for this day that has passed and I rest well knowing that I have done my best to show the mercy You have so freely given me and to others.

Friday February 28

Scripture: Matthew 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Morning Prayer: God, as I read this scripture I think about what it means to be pure of heart. I wish I could say that my every thought or every word that I utter is positive and affirming, never critical or negative but that is simply not true. I think to be pure in heart means to be aligned or in sync with You. Eugene Peterson puts it like this: “You’re blessed when you get your inside world—your mind and heart—put right. Then you can see God in the outside world.” God, that is what I want - to see and know You in my world. So my prayer is to do my best to align my heart with You. That my thoughts and my words are pleasing to You and others can see You through me. May it be so.

Morning Focus: Today I will search my heart and hold my tongue to ensure that my thoughts and words are aligned with God.

Noon Text: Take a moment to search your heart. If your heart and your mind are put right then everywhere you look you will see God and others will see God in you.

Evening Text: God, today I did my best to walk in step with You, my thoughts and my words. What a comfort to now come to rest still in sync, secure always in Your love.

Saturday February 29

Scripture: Matthew 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Morning Prayer: It is my desire, God, to be a peacemaker but it’s not always easy as I find myself at times surrounded by those who seemingly have no desire for peace. Their only desire is to challenge and be right. I admit at times that is even true of me and yet I know that does nothing to foster a feeling or atmosphere of reconciliation and peace. Help me, God, to let go of my need to be right. Help me to resist reacting to those who seek to confront. Help me to offer grace toward others, rather than seeking grace for myself. Help me to extend love toward others, rather than seeking to be loved. I know, God, as You’ve shown me time and time again, that I will reap what I sow. So, help me, God, to lead with a peace-filled heart so that I may be a peacemaker amongst all Your children, not just the ones that look and talk like me. May it always be so.

Morning Focus: I awaken ready to make peace among other people and be helpful and friendly.

Noon Text: Take a moment to pause. Breathe in slowly & deeply; hold, saying silently to yourself “with God as my guide”, breathe out saying “I am a maker of peace.”

Evening Text: Rest well knowing you did your best to put peaceful energy into the world. If you brought peaceful kindness to only one person, you made a difference.