



Sunday:

Sunday School – 9:30 am

Worship – 10:45 am

Wednesday:

The Rock Wednesday – 6:45pm

BIG EVENTS:

{NEAR}

Classy Christmas – December 16th (dressy snazzy)

Refuel – MLK Weekend 2016

{FAR}

DNOW – March 11-13 (tentative)

Summer Camp – June 2016

Main Idea:

The Hope & Prayer

The hope of this devotion book is to provide the opportunity for students and adults to spend time with God in His Word and through prayer. There are many great devotion books available to us and we are thankful you have chosen to journey through God's Word with this particular one. We hope and pray that students and adults take this opportunity seriously and become intentional in the time they devote to Him each day. We believe if this happens our walk with Him will strengthen.

The Plan – ABIDE 2015/16

This year we are going through the most beautiful story in the world on Wednesday nights. The story of the Bible is one of romance, jealousy, envy, pride, grace, mercy, power, humility and so much more. There is no way we could ever hope to cover every detail but we do seek to cover the high points on Wednesday and fill in the in between during the week through our devotions.

It is so important that you get on dive into these devotions with us as we seek to know what the Bible is all about and see how it helps us to know our God and follow Him.

Each devotion has a date so if you happen to miss a day or two the best thing to do is jump in on that date. We've set up the devotion to where you can use Saturday and Sunday as catch up days.

Above all we want you in the Word of God. We realize this is the best one but still it's a devotion written to gather the people of God around the Word of God. We hope and pray you'll join us as we dive into the story of the Bible this year!





Solomon

Remember when you were a kid and your parents would give you some ridiculous rules about not touching the stove or sticking paper clips in the electrical sockets? They clearly wanted you to have a miserable afternoon without any fun. Obviously, I am kidding. These rules are important not just because we should our parents but because these rules were for protection. Some times we are given rules to protect other people. Don't steal. Don't murder. These rules/laws ensure that people are not mistreated.

BUT SOMETIMES WE ARE GIVEN RULES TO PROTECT US.

Solomon had been given one of these kinds of rules (he had actually been given tons, but we are just looking at one). God commanded ALL the people of Israel not to intermarry with other nations. NOT because God is a racist BUT because God knew what would happen if Israelite men married Egyptian, Moabite, or Assyrian women—they would worship the Gods of Egypt, Moab, and Assyria.

Now in our “intolerance is the only sin” culture this can sound arrogant or harsh. But think. God knows He is the only true God. When Solomon is hurting because sin (his or someone else's) has made a mess of a situation, what can a metal statue do for him? When Solomon has to bury his Father, what comfort can a block of wood bring? None. But the God of the living, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and Jacob. The God who brought His people out of bondage in Egypt, through the Red Sea. The God who created man. Who was patient through the sin and rebellion of man. The God who promised to send a son of the women to crush the serpent and heal the brokenness of this world. He knew He was the only God, and He didn't want to Solomon, or any of the Israelites to seek out that which cannot satisfy.

But Solomon disobeyed. The wisest man of history disobeyed God and took for himself wives and some others from all over the world.

It didn't just ruin Solomon's life. He ruined his family. He ruined his country. He would lead to the capture of millions of Israelites.

The lesson here has NOTHING to do with race. It has to do with religion. In the New Testament God repeated this command to avoid marrying people of a different faith.

The lesson is *first, Obey God's laws for they are for your good*. God's laws cannot save you, because you cannot keep them perfectly. But God's laws do present a life that can be saved from a lot of pain, frustration, and hurt. They were given, after all, as a picture of God's character.

Second, we see the danger of over-prioritizing romance. There is nothing wrong with romantic, mushy, in-love-kind-of-love. BUT it can ruin your life if it becomes your God. Ask Adam, who listened to his wife instead of his God. Or Samson. Or Saphirra. Or the boy in Proverbs 7.



All...those...kings

Read: 1 Kings 15:3, 15:26, 15:34, 16:19, 16:25, 16:30, 22:52
2 Kings 8:18-19, 8:27, 10:31, 12:2-3, 13:2-3, 13:11, 14:3-4, 14:24,
15:3-4, 15:9, 15:18, 15:24, 15:28, 15:34-35, 16:2-3,

I know that was a lot of reading and a whole lot of page turning, but in time it took you to do it you now understand the entire history of Israel (and Judah) from the time of Solomon to the exiles. It's pretty depressing stuff. Did you catch that one man sacrificed his own son? Or what about how even the best of kings did not do even as good as David, they left the high places (used to worship idols) and stuff? It's a pretty bad time. Maybe now it becomes a little clearer what was going on that lead to God bringing about the exile of this people.

But what can we learn from this?

What we can learn is the UNBELIEVABLE patience and mercy of God!

You see, God could have wiped these people out in one generation. Look at the things they were doing. But He chose not to. He didn't just wait one generation or a few but he wanted over a dozen generations before finally bringing judgment.

God's loyalty to His word.

1 Kings 15:4 is a key verse for understanding the books of Kings. "For David's sake the LORD his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem, setting up his son after him, and establishing Jerusalem."

God was merciful to these horrible, sinful kings because God had made a promise to David. 2 Samuel 7:13, "I will establish the throne of [your descendant's] kingdom forever."

And so now, those of us in 2015 Georgia can believe that God is unbelievably patient, loyal to His word. Maybe you feel like you've gone too far. Look at God's resume. His reputation of grace far exceeds your reputation of bad behavior...I promise.

Saturday – catch up or reflection

Saturdays are meant to use as catch up days or extended times of reflection where we revisit some truths of God's Word. Did you miss anything, hurry through or simply miss a day? Use today to ensure you didn't miss one thing or possibly just go deeper in His Word. We offer 5 days but of course the goal is that each day we are spending time with Him, in His Word.

What does it mean to Reflect?

By reflection we mean thinking a little more on what we've seen or read throughout the week. A good way to do this is by asking some questions:

1. What sticks out from your time in the Word?
2. What are some things I need to continue to dwell on?
3. What did I learn about God this week?
4. What did I learn about myself this week?
5. What is something I need to work on in the future?
6. What would make my time in the Word better?

If you desire to read something new we'd encourage you to read through Psalm 119

Sunday is a day of rest so enjoy the day of worship!



It wasn't just Kings

During the time of these horrible kings there were prophets too. Most of the prophets in the Old Testament lived before the exile.

Isaiah, Micah, and Hosea all prophesied around the same time period.

Unfortunately, this isn't an Old Testament Survey college class. So let's just focus on Hosea because it is unique, can be difficult to understand, and is a great picture of what God was 'feeling' at this point in the history of the Old Testament.

Read Hosea 1-3.

So to summarize: God commands a prophet named Hosea to marry a woman whose character would suggest that she would not be a faithful wife to Hosea. He did. When they had kids God said to name the first Jezreel. The second would be named Lo-Ruhamma. The third would be named Lo-Ammi.. Why?

Because Jezreel was the scene of 2 Kings 9. There Jehu killed Jezebeel. The back story is probably not as important as what happened. You see Jehu convinced some servants to throw the woman out of a window (high enough that when she hit the ground her blood splattered on the horses Jehu and his men rode). They then trampled her with their horses. They left her body long enough for them to eat, and when they returned there wasn't anything left. This is the picture. It be like a modern American family naming their son Normandy or Pearl Harbor, or 9-11. These are weird names but think of the pictures they bring to mind, that's the point.

Lo-ruhamma is Hebrew for "No Mercy." Lo-Ammi means "Not my people." When it was supper time at Hosea's house, Gomer (that's his wife's name) would step out on the porch and call out Jezreel, No Mercy, and Not my people. The prophet of God's children were named as a reminder.

But that's not all. You see Gomer goes off and sells herself into prostitution. If you're not sure what that means ask your parents. Suffice to say that Gomer left her husband and loved another man or at least acted like she did. It was betrayal. It was hurtful.

And you know what Hosea did? He went and got her. He spent his money and bought her out of slavery. And he brought her home.

Why? Because that's what God did. [And for the record-that's what God still does]

Hosea became the message. He showed the people of Israel not just what God was like, but what they were like. They left their true love to cling to another. Idols. Masters that would not love like them. Masters that would destroy them-because its what they do. But God, because of His great love for them, stepped in.

Notice that this is not just the character of Jesus alone. It is the character of the whole Trinity. It always has been. It always will be. It is just who He is.

Notice that this is not just the character of Israel alone. It is the character of the whole world. It always has been. But it won't always be. Because of what God has done.



Didn't those Prophets do some Prophesying? Yep, sure 'nuf.

In those last pages of the Old Testament some good stuff happened. Tucked in those smaller books was some big news. To understand what I mean, think about the wise men in the story of the birth of Jesus.

These astronomers (people who study stars-we call them wise men but essentially they were star scientists) came to the king in the middle east and said a great king had been born. So they asked those who knew the Old Testament and they knew where the baby king was born. You see the prophet Micah had said he would be born in Bethlehem. *Micah 5:2

This is even more remarkable because when the wise men finally got to Jesus, He wasn't in Bethlehem they had followed the star to Nazareth. WHICH ISAIAH HAD SAID THE MESSIAH WOULD BE! *Isaiah 11:1

And that He would be a light to Galilee. *Isaiah 9:1-2.

And that he would spend some time in Egypt. *Hosea 11:1

But it wasn't just about geography.

Zechariah said the Messiah would be betrayed but that he would be called a king. *11:12-13 and 9:9.

Isaiah was given tons of prophecies about the Messiah.

He would heal the brokenhearted. *61:1-2.

He would be rejected by His own people. *53:3

But what is the point?

First, it is statistically impossible for that to be a coincidence. But its not like a man choses where He is born...well not a normal man anyway. But if He were also the God of the Universe. So the prophecies point to Jesus not only being the Messiah of the Old Testament but also God Incarnate.

Second, it continues to show (although I pray that if you've been coming to the Rock this isn't new) that God is actively involved in His creation, working it toward His purposes of His glory and our good. He has not stopped working in the world. He is no less involved in your life than He was in Jesus', although Jesus was more involved in God's working than I am.



Esther

I really don't know how to say the obvious. But, the fact that the Bible contains the books of Esther and Ruth should say a lot about God. Think about it.

Esther is brought up here because the story happened during the period of the Persian exile of God's people.

Esther is about a woman of God. It is a great story. But that's not really the point. Its not pushing feminism, its touting theology. It talks about how great God is. In a book that does not feature the name of God a single time, it could be heard to understand how it proclaims the greatest of Yahweh, because you have to look carefully.

Ahasuerus was king over Persia from India to Ethiopia. Look at a globe. He throws a party and wants everyone to see how beautiful his wife is. But when he gets a servant to go get her, she wouldn't come. Now, we don't know why she refused. What we do know is that the kings' advisers convinced him to remove the crown from the queen and replace her. So they a contest for the most beautiful woman in Persia. A beauty pageant if you will. And wouldn't you know it but Esther won.

Mordecai, her uncle who raised her because her parents had died, just so happened to be standing by a gate when he heard some people plotting to assassinate the king. (you see this "just so happened stuff" is really "When God designed for stuff"). He tells Esther who alerts the king, but apparently the king kind of forgot about Mordecai.

Then one night Mordecai couldn't sleep, so he turned to Old Testament Netflix, having a servant read a book to you. In this book was the story of Mordecai warning the king about the assassination plot. The king remembered that he had done nothing in return so he called to any official that was around, which happened to be Haman. Now Haman was an important dude. He would sit out at the gate and do important stuff and everyone had to bow down to him-he had even gotten the king to make the bowing down part a law. So Haman comes in and thinks, if the king is going to honor someone it must be me. So when the King asks, what should be done to honor the one the king likes? He lists all kinds of stuff. And the king says, okay go do that for Mordecai. Which really made Haman made. He wanted to kill Mordecai because Mordecai wouldn't bow down to him at the gate. In fact, because he hated Mordecai so much he wanted to kill ALL the Jews.

So Esther, now the beloved Queen, asks the King for a favor. He says, whatever you want. She ask for Haman to be hanged and the king does it.

Esther saved the people of God from annihilation.

Once again, God is intimately working in the lives of His people. He takes a great interest in His promises and His creation. Even when exactly how He is doing this is unclear, it is nevertheless clearly true.

If life is tough right now, or when it gets tough, God is working a plan.

You can trust a good God even in a bad situation



- - - REFUEL – MLK WEEKEND (22 Student Spots left)- - -

SIGN UP at the wall in the back.

Keep in mind that you are not officially signed up until you've paid a deposit.

The first 45 deposits will get the 45 spots.