



DISCOVER

MATTHEW 13:44

LAYTON AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH

DEVOTIONALS

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure, buried in a field, that a man found and reburied. Then in his joy he goes and sells everything he has and buys that field." **Matthew 13:44**



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DAY 1

Don't work hard only when your master is watching and then shirk when he isn't looking; work hard and with gladness all the time, as though working for Christ, doing the will of God with all your hearts. Remember, the Lord will pay you for each good thing you do, whether you are slave or free. – Ephesians 2:6-8 (NLT)

When I was asked to write a devotional about building our new facility, my thoughts immediately went to Noah and the ark (Genesis 6,7 & 8). It took about 120 years to build a boat the length of a football field and about three stories high (he had no power tools). Not to mention the heckling he must have endured. Genesis 6:22 says that Noah did everything God commanded.

Our circumstances are so different. God has blessed us with money, land and workers. I know we'll have problems just as Noah did. But if we keep looking to God and praying faithfully, He will help us.

God used the ark to save people and creatures. He will use our new building to draw people to Him if we do our part. That is, to stay in prayer. Pray for the workers. Stand ready to help in any way. Most importantly, pray for the lost.

Remember, that we are not building for the glory of men, but for the Glory of God!

Prayer Thought

Pray that God will use us the way He used Noah.

- Barbara Zbleski



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DAY 2

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies. – 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NIV).

When I was first saved on September 3, 1978, I realized that something had happened to me. I was not told at the time what it was. I felt peace in my heart for the first time in my 43 years of life. When I received instructions from the pastor of the church before my baptism, I was given a verse that made me realize what had happened to me the day I was saved.

I realized then that what happened to me on September 3, 1978 was that the Holy Spirit had entered my body and now lived in me. When I realized this, the first thing He told me to do was to go home and pour out my last three cans of beer—and that is what I did. I haven't had any since that day.

I get frustrated when I hear people refer to the Holy Spirit as an "it," because I know that the third Person of the Godhead is just as important as God the Father and Jesus Christ. He is my comforter when I'm down. He is my best friend when I need one. He guides and directs my footsteps. He is the best thing that ever happened to me. He is my all and all. He is still there for me when I go the Milwaukee Rescue Mission and I'm not feeling able. He always gets me through and always blesses our efforts.

Prayer Thought

Today, thank God for His blessings on your life, and tomorrow, start the day looking for a way to be God's blessing to someone else.

- Tom Kendall



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DAY 3

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. – Psalm 46:1

This Bible verse sustains me because it tells me:

- Who I can count on - **God**
- What He is to me - **refuge and strength**
- What He will give me - **help**
- When He will give it to me - **now**

My heart aches when I hear news of people suffering. I have often asked God, “Why?” – especially when people who love and serve Him faithfully meet with tragedy. God has never revealed to me a specific reason for allowing His people to suffer. He has, however, made me aware of the fact that He is in control, He knows all, and He has a purpose. We are not meant to know everything that God knows. He is reserving that knowledge for Christians when they come into His kingdom. We must live by faith and trust in God. To me, faith is **knowing** God; trusting is **letting** God.

God has cemented that fact in my heart and I do not waver from it. God knows what He is doing and why. Though my heart may ache for people, I do not question or become angry with God when someone is suffering. I know without a doubt that He is my refuge and strength. Instead of telling me why, He teaches me to trust Him. That is His answer to my question.

Prayer Thought

**Remember that we pray in Jesus’ name,
meaning we pray for what glorifies God.**

- Jennifer Frorath



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DAY 4

In Him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in Him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. – Ephesians 2:21-22

As Layton Avenue Baptist begins a year of constructing a new facility, let us be reminded of a concept that past Pastor Chase and present Pastor Cogburn spoke of. However humble or grand a building is, it is just a place where the church people meet. Like a church building, our present physical bodies are not all of who we are. Just as some congregation members are satisfied with our present facilities, some are satisfied with their present bodies. Others would like a new church building, just as some have made a New Year's resolution to improve their present bodies. The mission videos have shown that some churches are under a tree in a forest, a room, a tent, or a secret place to meet in the dead of night.

The preceding contrasting thoughts remind one to pray, "Dear God the Father, in Jesus' name I come to ask for Your Holy Spirit to guide my thoughts and actions in this present church building."

Prayer Thought

May my participation not be my desires, but be those that advance Your plan for the building and the congregation.

- Peter Frorath



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DAY 5

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. – Ephesians 2:19-20

One of the hardest things I've gone through in my life was watching my mother die. She had a difficult upbringing as a poor farmer's daughter who worked for everything. Saved at the age of 13, she never received support from her family. Although happily married in her twenties, her husband left her for another woman when I was 16. She was heartbroken. She became a single parent of two children, struggling to make ends meet. Through all the difficulties, she remained active in children's ministries. Later in life she developed Lou Gehrig's disease.

I don't know why God allowed her to suffer from this disease instead of cancer, heart attack or stroke, but I do know that God was with her. Others noticed not only her struggle, but her strength. Her church family supported her and recognized her 52 years of faithful service to children. When she came to live with my husband and me, her church gave her a calendar of every person and the day they were praying for her. Every day she received mail from someone praying for her. Without the constant prayer support, it would have been harder for her.

My mom lived her faith in front of all who knew her—a living faith! She and her church were a Christ-made temple. May we follow in their footsteps.

Prayer Thought

Pray that God will strengthen you to face the new day with His love and your sacrifice.

- Joanne Sorenson



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DAY 6

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. – Romans 8:38-39

I accepted Jesus in 1970, putting my trust in the Lord. Since then, He has taught me to look to Him for strength. We all will have good times and endure tough times while on earth. No matter what the times, He asks that we have faith and trust in Him, and He will be with us in all times. I've endured several surgeries and maladies. Through faith and trust in the Lord Jesus, He gave me peace and took away my fears. By knowing that He is with me **no matter what**, He took the fear of death, replaced with the joy of knowing I'll be going home, being with Him.

Prayer Thought

Bring all that you have to Him.

Pray that He will use even your difficulties to draw others to Himself.

- Dick Johnson



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DAY 7

For still the vision awaits its appointed time... If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come... – Habakkuk 2:3

Two decades ago, a former pastor cast hopeful eyes on the farm field north of our church. He spoke of a dream for a new building there, an expanded LABC visible to drivers on the freeway. And yet, the farm field remained a farm field. Years later, City of Greenfield officials envisioned a master plan: storefronts, office space and apartments for development along the Layton Avenue corridor—a walkable community. And yet, nothing transpired out of those hopes and dreams.

Five years ago, a question was posed to us that got us excited: Would we consider moving to a tract of land down the road on Layton Avenue? The solution to our discontent with our tight and poorly-functioning facility seemed to drop right into our laps—until it fell, just out of reach.

One year ago, the same posed question, the farm field, and the Layton Avenue development dream coalesced in a reality only God could engineer.

Over these twenty years, each time we thought, “Maybe this time—maybe it’s now,” and it wasn’t, we carried on despite the discouragement. When we could put the disappointment behind us, then we could see that we must wait on God. He would make it happen—in His will, and in His time... And now He has.

Prayer Thought

**Give thanks for the way He has led you in the past, and ask Him,
“What are you calling me to do?”**

- Anonymous