

# *Seeds of Faith, People of Faith Devotional*

*September 13 through September 19*

## *Sunday, September 13*

Seeds of Faith, People of Faith: Moses, Jonah, and Dorcas—Freedom

As we near the end of Indiana's fresh sweet corn season and ebb toward autumn's leafy palette, Trinity English begins a worship and learning series based on a sampling of scripture's vivid personalities *and* God's awesome work in through mere mortals. This week we engage Moses, Jonah, Dorcas and more; each story providing a different lens by which to see God at work planting, nurturing, and, bringing to fruition faith's varied and plentiful gifts. While their stories are not exactly like our own, they are emblematic of the diversity of faith experiences as well as the One accompanying each one. Over the course of eleven weeks, biblical stories will inform, inspire, encourage, and guide us as, in our time, we seek to follow paths God sets before us.

Generous God, we see you at work in the lives of Moses, Jonah, and Dorcas. Open our eyes to discern your claim on our lives and the gifts you have given so freely for faith, praise, and service. Amen.

*–Contributed by Pastor Kathleen Haller*

## *Monday, September 14*

**Scripture: Jonah 3:1-5, 10**

The word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time, saying, Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you. So Jonah set out and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three days' walk across. Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried

out, "Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth.

When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

The story of Jonah has been a topic for much discussion among Christians, notably the literal interpretation of "Jonah, he lived in the whale." But there is more to this story of a man sent by God to a pagan nation, a very sinful nation. Jonah brings God's promise for punishment to Nineveh—a promise of destruction of that nation. Jonah was reluctant, to say the least, to proceed on such a mission which many Christians consider to be the first evangelistic effort, as God presented himself to the Gentiles then. Jonah's message to them was direct—repent or be destroyed, and, amazingly enough, the Ninevites, including their king, humbled themselves in sackcloth, showed remorse for their sinful ways and repented. And God had compassion on them and withheld his punishment!

Do we see ourselves in Jonah? Do we try to run from God's directives? And do we often reluctantly return to God and place ourselves at his mercy?

We, like the people of Nineveh, have sinned and have been condemned and we have earned God's justice. But in true humility and repentance we also are recipients of God's compassion. God's mercy prevails over God's justice. And we are released from our fate.

God freely forgives all who come to him in true repentance and faith. What a message! What glorious news for all of us! Our belief in God's word, our trust in him. Our faith, frees us all from God's wrath and judgment.

Seeds of faith can yield the most bountiful rewards. You had better believe it!

*–Contributed by Dodie Klug*

## *Tuesday, September 15*

### **Scripture: Luke 17:19**

Thy faith hath made thee whole.

Is faith, like freedom, available to all? I believe that faith must be claimed; it must be demonstrated; it must be lived. I claim my faith by acknowledging that life is a journey, with each day bringing challenges to be met with courage or blessings to be received with gratitude. I demonstrate my faith by regarding change as part of God's plan. Through my trust in Him, I see what I cannot see; and my faith directs me to accept change for what it is—a new direction in my life. I live my faith by relying on the Spirit within to guide me. By simply knowing that steadfast hand is on me, I have all that I need for this day. I am complete. I am whole.

Dear God, as I lean more and more on that 'stretched out arm,' guide me on the path on which I am to go—and grow. Help me to see more clearly whatever it is I need to know so that my life can be a testimony to your loving care. Amen.

*–Contributed by Hertha Moran*

## *Wednesday, September 16*

### **Scripture: John's letter the seven churches in Asia begins with this dedication (Revelations 1:5-6)**

To [Jesus Christ] who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power forever and ever.

A "kingdom and priests" is an Old Testament designation of the nation of Israel. Here, in the New Testament, John applies that term to the body of Christ, the church. He reminds us we were slaves to sin,

but Christ freed us from that bondage so we may serve God and be blessed. Christ's sacrifice frees the church to act in faith and be a kingdom and priests of God's word.

*–Contributed by Shirley Weissert*

## ***Thursday, September 17***

### **Scripture: Genesis 1:29, 2:8**

God also said, "I give you all plants that bear seed everywhere on earth, and every tree bearing fruit that bears seed: they shall be yours for food." The man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze—

Though it is September, long past the time of planting seeds, we still enjoy the results of seeds planted last spring. I rejoice every time I walk through our Cloister Garden.

WE are planting our "Seeds of Faith" which can grow at any time of the year. The Church nurtures the seeds with the help of the pastors and through our benevolence giving. WE, as members of the Trinity, can nurture these seeds by our day to day Christian living, through teaching our children, helping our friends, and working in our jobs outside the home.

Will our planting of "Seeds of Faith" result in a garden such as the lovely one in Genesis? This poem my Rudyard Kipling submitted to a devotional book of the First Baptist Church of Worcester, Massachusetts by my sister, Ruth Heywood, suggests an answer.

### THE GLORY OF THE GARDEN

Oh, Adam was a gardener, and God who made him sees  
That half a proper gardener's work is done upon his knees,  
So when your work is finished, you can wash your hands and pray  
For the glory of the Garden, that it may not pass away!  
And the glory of the Garden, it shall never pass away.

*–Contributed by Jane Keltsch*

## *Friday, September 18*

### **Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18**

Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

Driving home from an errand today, I glimpsed one of those clever (or not) billboards in front of a neighborhood church. It was a good one—just three words, so I needed only a quick glance from the road to read it. “Pray without ceasing,” it said. A good idea, succinctly put, I thought, but not very practical. I wouldn’t get anything else done.

Still, there must be more to this than first appears. Maybe it suggests an attitude, more than an act. Perhaps it means I am to live with a prayerful heart, always aware of the One who gave me life, put me where I am, surrounded me with His boundless love, even when I don’t feel it, and still has a purpose for me here. I am not alone. I am still capable of whatever He means me to do, and I am so grateful that I am blessed with His guidance, love and joy.

This is my prayer of thanks today.

*–Contributed by Patricia Jackson*

## *Saturday, September 19*

### **Scripture: Jeremiah 29:11**

“I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

### **Scripture: 1 Corinthians 2:9**

“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined the things that God has prepared for those that love him.”

Heavenly Father, You have a plan to bring good into my life. Thank you for giving me this amazing, incredible life, and for making it possible to enjoy every part of it, even the tough times. Thank you for being my future; I know you have good things in store. I will praise you now and forever for all that you have done for me. Amen.

My dad, a soil conservationist, once told me that no matter where a seed is planted or under what conditions it may grow, a plant will always do its best. We know that if it is at all possible, that seed will sprout, grow, mature, and make more seeds. If this ordered, programmed sequence is interrupted by poor soil, inadequate rain, or deadly attack, only then will the planted seed wither and die.

No less is that the way with God's own people. He had a plan, too, for each of us. In order to understand our own role in God's kingdom, we are required only to trust Him and be faithful. If we try to stray from that path and attempt to override God's plan for us, the results are not what He foresees for us. We become separated from His will, and therefore, spiritually, we wither and die.

We are each a loved and planned part of God's universe. We have only to believe in Him to fulfill His plan for our lives.

*–Contributed by Mary Scrogam*

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