

Devotions for May 23-29, 2011

Monday, May 23, 2011: *Untruth* Daily reading: 1 Peter 2:1-3

The reading names five sins, all dealing with untruth, that are roadblocks to a Christian life: malice (wickedness), guile (deceit), hypocrisy (outward show), envy (ill will), and slander (evil speech). A new Christian begins by rejecting untruth (Satan) and realizing truth (God). It is by moving ever closer to Christ that we come to live more and more in truth, which gives us a fullness of life. Moving ever closer to Christ is like a newborn drinking nourishing milk. A new Christian drinks spiritual milk which leads to salvation. Wickedness, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander are all forms of untruth. How quickly we slip into these behaviors, unaware that they prevent our spiritual growth! What untruths do you live in? Ask God to reveal them, and give you the strength to reject them.

Tuesday, May 24, 2011: *Cornerstone* Daily reading: 1 Peter 2:4-8

The cornerstone is traditionally the first stone set in a masonry foundation, the reference for all other stones. It determines the position of the entire structure. Over time, cornerstones became ceremonial stones set in prominent locations, with inscriptions indicating construction dates, names of architects and builders, and other significant participants. Some cornerstones include time capsules. This passage tells us that Jesus is the cornerstone, the one to which all things in the universe are referenced. We often reference our lives from a false cornerstone. This can be deceptive, appearing only slightly off axis. But as you move hundreds of feet away from the cornerstone, you become way off in both direction and elevation. From which cornerstone do you reference your life? Ask God to align your life to the true cornerstone.

Wednesday, May 25, 2011: *Proclaim* Daily reading: 1 Peter 2:9-10

What we believe and tell others makes a difference in our world. We have the power to bring light and mercy to the world's darkness and pain, through our words and our actions. We daily give ourselves over as building material, trusting in the strength of the cornerstone. We daily seek out the pure milk: Jesus, the word. God transforms us, not because we are good, but because God is. That's what it means to be a future church. If you take time to read with a child at school, you proclaim that education is important. If you give time and energy to a food shelf, you proclaim that you want to better the world. What does your life proclaim, not in words, but in action? What would people learn about your beliefs, if they watched you? Do your actions match your words? Ask God to align your words and actions so your life can be a proclamation of God's good news.

Thursday, May 26, 2011: *Milk* Daily reading: 1 Corinthians 3:1-9

As a baby cries for life-giving milk, so should a new Christian cry for pure milk. Sometimes followers of Jesus need only milk, because they aren't ready for solid food. There's a significant amount of untruth (self-centeredness and petty arguments) running rampant in the Corinthian church, and Paul chides the people for their immaturity. Paul uses words like jealousy and strife to describe their reality. He is trying to lift their eyes to the higher goal of working together for God's purposes and plans. He describes spiritual growth as a mystery known only by God and only accomplished through God's power. What is holding you back from spiritual maturity, keeping you drinking only milk? Ask God to expose your petty, selfish concerns, and lift your eyes to see God's building.

Friday, May 27, 2011: *Light* Daily reading: 1 John 2:7-11

We have the power to bring light and mercy to the world's darkness and pain. If we say we love one another, but exhibit hateful behavior, we live in darkness. Light exposes everything that hides in the dark. Have you ever lifted a rock and watched the little critters scurry away, looking for a dark place to hide? We are often like that. The light of Christ shines on us, and we run for the shadows. There's so much to cover up. If people can see us for what we truly are, they can see the disconnect between what we say and do. When the light shines, there's no excuse for stumbling around. But we can stand straight, and walk into the future with confidence, because Christ is our light, chasing away the darkness. What is hidden in your darkness? Ask God to expose where Christ's light is necessary, and welcome it as a beacon of hope for the future.

Saturday, May 28, 2011: *Construction* Daily reading: Psalm 127:1-2

A builder was commissioned to build a home for a very wealthy person. The builder saw this as an opportunity to make a lot of money; as the construction began, he tried to cut corners wherever he could. He used cheap materials, inferior windows, etc., and spent far less than what he had quoted. The finished home looked fine on the outside, but the builder knew how inferior it was under the sheetrock and shingles. The wealthy man paid the worker, and then handed him the keys. The surprised builder asked the wealthy man what the man was doing. The man replied "This is my great surprise for you. I built this home for you!" Sometimes we think we're investing ourselves in things that will never impact us. This psalm is a great reminder that we don't want to build our lives in vain. Are you constructing an existence with a solid foundation and high-quality materials? Ask God to help you discern where you have been cutting corners, and return to a life of consistency and quality.

Sunday, May 29, 2011: *Future* Daily reading: Jeremiah 29:11-14

God is at work daily transforming us, not because we are good, but because God is good. That is what it means to be a future church. What the future holds has a lot to do with our past, and present. We build on our past experiences and invest into our todays. One stone is placed on another, and when we look back, we are reminded of God's faithfulness and mercy. This gives us confidence to look toward the future. The same God who has been faithful in the past will be faithful into the future. Jeremiah assures us of God's incredible promise for a future with hope. What do you envision for your future? Can you trust God's promises? Ask God for the gift of faith and trust.