

Celebrating Everyday Miracles



A Contemplative Prayer Journal

based on the miracles of Jesus

Written by residents of the Florida Senior Enrichment Center

Celebrating Everyday Miracles...The Doorway of Prayer



Scriptures:

Psalm 145: 8-9 and 17-19

The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The Lord is good to all; He has compassion on all He has made... The Lord is kind in all His deeds... The Lord is near to everyone who prays to Him... to those who call to Him with sincerity. He fulfills the desires of those who revere Him; He hears their cry and saves them.

Matt 6: 6-13

When you pray, go to your room and close the door, and pray to your Father in private... Do not use a lot of words... Your Father already knows what you need before you ask Him... This is the way you should pray: 'Father... May your Kingdom come, may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today the food we need; forgive us the wrongs we have done, as we forgive the wrongs others have done us. Do not bring us to hard testing, but keep us safe from evil.'

Matt 7: 7-11

Ask, and you will receive; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks will receive, and anyone who seeks will find, and the door will be opened to all who knock. Would any one of you give your daughter a stone if she asks for bread? Or would you give your son a snake when he asks for a fish? As bad as you are, you

know how to give good things to your children. How much more, then, your Father in heaven will give good things to those who ask.

Mark 11: 22-24

Jesus answered them: 'Remember this! If you have faith in God, you can say to this hill, Get up and throw yourself into the sea. If you do not doubt in your heart, but believe that what you say will happen, it will be done for you. For this reason, I tell you: When you pray and ask for something, believe that you have received it, and everything will be given to you.

Reflection:

Scripture proclaims and celebrates the truth that the Eternally Loving Heart of God is wide open to all our requests. Our longings for love, comfort, peace, direction, clarity and healing in every aspect of life are all welcome. Our fear, doubt, frustration, disappointment, anger and confusion are tenderly embraced. We're even reminded that God knows what we need before we ask! There seem to be only two requirements for our prayers: honesty and belief.

What need might a person bring to an "asking" prayer?

What may someone be looking for in a "seeking" prayer?

What kind of doorway could a person be trying to pass through in a "knocking" prayer?

What makes it hard to be completely honest with God in our prayers?

What are some obstacles to whole-hearted belief that our prayers are heard and answered?

How would you describe your prayers?

Prayer:

I ask... that Christ will make his home in your hearts, through faith. I pray that you may have your roots and foundation in Love, and that you,

together with all God's people, may have the power to understand how broad and long and high and deep is Christ's love... Yes, may you come to know his love... and so be completely filled with the perfect fullness of God. To him who is able to do so much more than we can ask for, or even think of, by means of the power working in us: to God be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus, for all time, for ever and ever! Amen. (Ephesians 3: 16-21)

(submitted by Faye Perdoni)

Celebrating Everyday Miracles - Jesus Heals the Blind Beggar



Scripture: Luke 18:35-43

³⁵ As he approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. ³⁶ When he heard a crowd going by, he asked what was happening. ³⁷ They told him, “Jesus of Nazareth^[e] is passing by.” ³⁸ Then he shouted, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” ³⁹ Those who were in front sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he shouted even more loudly, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” ⁴⁰ Jesus stood still and ordered the man to be brought to him, and when he came near, he asked him, ⁴¹ “What do you want me to do for you?” He said, “Lord, let me see again.” ⁴² Jesus said to him, “Receive your sight; your faith has saved you.” ⁴³ Immediately he regained his sight and followed him, glorifying God, and all the people, when they saw it, praised God.

Reflection:

What do you think life was like for this blind man sitting by the road? Are there any ways or aspects in which his life could be good?

In what different ways can we be “blind” emotionally or spiritually?

In what way are you having difficulty “seeing” things around you...or within you?

Why did Jesus ask, "What do you want me to do for you?" when it seems so obvious?

What is it YOU want Jesus to do for you now?

Prayer:

God of Love and Grace, may I have the courage to ask what is needed for my faith to be stronger in you. Amen.

(submitted by Kimberly Weir)

Celebrating Everyday Miracles – Zacchaeus’ Determination



Scripture: Luke 19: 1-10

19 1-2 As Jesus was passing through Jericho, a man named Zacchaeus, one of the most influential Jews in the Roman tax-collecting business (and, of course, a very rich man), **3** tried to get a look at Jesus, but he was too short to see over the crowds. **4** So he ran ahead and climbed into a sycamore tree beside the road, to watch from there. **5** When Jesus came by, he looked up at Zacchaeus and called him by name! Zacchaeus!" he said. "Quick! Come down! For I am going to be a guest in your home today!" **6** Zacchaeus hurriedly climbed down and took Jesus to his house in great excitement and joy. **7** But the crowds were displeased. "He has gone to be the guest of a notorious sinner," they grumbled. **8** Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, "Sir, from now on I will give half my wealth to the poor, and if I find I have overcharged anyone on his taxes, I will penalize myself by giving him back four times as much!" **9-10** Jesus told him, "This shows that salvation has come to this home today. This man was one of the lost sons of Abraham, and I, the Messiah, have come to search for and to save such souls as his."

Reflection:

Zacchaeus ran ahead of the others to climb a tree to see Jesus because he was shorter than the others and couldn't see above them. Why do you think he ran ahead?

Knowing he was disliked by everyone because of his greed, collecting more taxes than he should have, he still wasn't going to let anyone or anything get in the way of him seeing Jesus. What might this tell us about Zacchaeus at that moment?

Scripture tells us that Zacchaeus was full of excitement and joy when Jesus told him He was going to be staying at his house that day. Can you think of a time you felt pure joy and excitement?

Even though Zacchaeus was joyful, the crowd was not. They viewed him as an unworthy sinner. In what ways have we been like that crowd? What lesson might Jesus be teaching all of us?

Why do you think Jesus chose to stay with Zacchaeus?

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, please help us to recognize and overcome any obstacles that could hinder our desire and determination to keep our hearts aligned with Yours.

(submitted by Rita Schaaf)

Celebrating Everyday Miracles – The Healing of a Boy with a Spirit



Scripture: Mark 9:17-27

¹⁷ Someone from the crowd answered him, “Teacher, I brought you my son; he has a spirit that makes him unable to speak, ¹⁸ and whenever it seizes him, it dashes him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid, and I asked your disciples to cast it out, but they could not do so.” ¹⁹ He answered them, “You faithless generation, how much longer must I be with you? How much longer must I put up with you? Bring him to me.” ²⁰ And they brought the boy to him. When the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. ²¹ Jesus asked the father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood. ²² It has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you are able to do anything, help us! Have compassion on us!” ²³ Jesus said to him, “If you are able! All things can be done for the one who believes.” ²⁴ Immediately the father of the child cried out. “I believe; help my unbelief!” ²⁵ When Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You spirit that keeps this boy from speaking and hearing, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again!” ²⁶ After crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, “He is dead.” ²⁷ But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he was able to stand. ²⁸ When he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” ²⁹ He said to them, “This kind can come out only through prayer.”

Reflection:

I wonder if the father in this story ever felt it was his fault that his child was this way. Have you ever blamed yourself for something that likely wasn't your fault?

Are there those who would blame the boy for having the evil spirit...for bringing it on himself? Do you think Jesus blamed him? What was Jesus' response?

The father was persistent in wanting help for his son. He didn't give up when the disciples couldn't cure him. He came to Jesus. Is there something you need to bring to God that you have been holding back?

Is there something you consistently bring to God in prayer? Do you tire of asking?

Why should we be persistent in our petitions to God?

Jesus asks us to believe...to have faith in Him. In response to Jesus, the father cried out, "I believe; help my unbelief!" What might we learn from this?

Prayer:

Holy One, having faith isn't always easy. We want desperately to believe in your immeasurable love for us. Help our unbelief, we pray. Amen

(submitted by Edward Valentine)

Celebrating Everyday Miracles - Jesus Heals a Paralyzed Man



Scripture: Mark 2: 1-5 and 11-12

Jesus came back to Capernaum, and the news spread that he was at home. So many people came together that there wasn't any room left, not even in front of the door. Jesus was preaching the message to them when some people came, bringing him a paralyzed man – four of them were carrying him. Because of the crowd, however, they could not get him to Jesus. So they made a hole in the roof right above the place where Jesus was. When they had made an opening, they let the man down, lying on his mat. Jesus saw how much faith they had, and said to the paralyzed man, 'My son, your sins are forgiven... I tell you, get up, pick up your mat, and go home!' While they watched, the man got up, picked up his mat and hurried away.

Reflection:

What qualities of faith did the paralyzed man's friends show when they jumped the line and climbed up on the roof to try to get him help?

What does the fact that they cut a hole in the roof even while Jesus was preaching say about their faith?

What do you sense about the role their faith played in their friendship with the paralyzed man?

The paralyzed man didn't ask for help himself, but what qualities of faith did he show by letting his friends help him?

Jesus began his healing by telling the paralyzed man, "Your sins are forgiven." Why did he start with that statement before proceeding to heal the man's physical paralysis?

The paralyzed man "picked up his mat and hurried away" without even pausing to thank Jesus or his friends for their help. What might he have been feeling in that moment? How do you think his encounter with Jesus affected his life from then on?

The passage says Jesus healed the paralyzed man because he saw how much faith the man's friends had. What does the fact that he didn't demand anything of the paralyzed man himself say about Jesus?

How have you gone 'above and beyond' in efforts to support a dear one? What motivated you to do so? How did your efforts affect your own faith?

What does this story tell you about the power of your own prayers for others, even the ones who don't seem to have their own relationship with the Lord?

Prayer:

Loving God, St. Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 12 that we are the Body of Christ. He says in verse 26, "If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the other parts share its joy." Help us to feel this holy sense of Connection with one another, and to live and pray in ways that strengthen the Body of Christ we are blessed to be in You! Amen. *(submitted by Faye Perdoni)*

Everyday Miracles – Jesus Heals the Gerasene Demoniac



Scripture: Luke 8:26-40

²⁶ Then they arrived at the region of the Gerasenes which is opposite Galilee. ²⁷ As he stepped out on shore, a man from the city who had demons met him. For a long time he had not worn any clothes, and he did not live in a house but in the tombs. ²⁸ When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him, shouting, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me,” ²⁹ for Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many times it had seized him; he was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the wilds.) ³⁰ Jesus then asked him, “What is your name?” He said, “Legion,” for many demons had entered him. ³¹ They begged him not to order them to go back into the abyss.

³² Now there on the hillside a large herd of swine was feeding, and the demons begged Jesus to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. ³³ Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd stampeded down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

³⁴ When the swineherds saw what had happened, they ran off and told it in the city and in the country. ³⁵ Then people came out to see what had happened, and when they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right

mind. And they became frightened. ³⁶ Those who had seen it told them how the one who had been possessed by demons had been healed. ³⁷ Then the whole throng of people of the surrounding region of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them, for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. ³⁸ The man from whom the demons had gone out begged that he might be with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, ³⁹ “Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.” So he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.

Reflection:

Have you ever encountered Jesus in your life spiritually? How did that impact you?

Have you ever recognized your need for Jesus but were reluctant to call on him? Why was that hard?

Has there ever been a time when darkness was in your life and you needed light?

Have you ever thought that your sin was too big to be forgiven by God or others or self?

Why were the people scared when they saw the man sitting in his right mind with Jesus?

Jesus told the man who was healed to go back home to tell others what has happened and how he was healed. Think of a time you wanted to share with others a healing God had done in your life?

Are there things right now you could tell others about how God has moved in your life?

Prayer:

God, we ask for courage to share our deepest needs and fears with you.
Thank you for meeting us in the midst of them and not leaving us there.

(submitted by Mike Cox)

Celebrating Everyday Miracles – Creation



SYMPHONY OF PRAISE Painting by Yongsung Kim

Scriptures

Genesis 1: 1-2 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

Jeremiah 32:17 “Ah, Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You.”

Genesis 2:7 “Then the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.”

Reflection:

1. The miracle of Almighty God's creation -- the heavens and everything in it, and the earth with all the beauty it holds -- touches our spirit in a very special way. I call those moments kisses from heaven when God brings to our attention the perfect design of a flower, or the sky, or those incredible little air hunters the dragonflies. They seem like little things in His grand design but it's during those little moments of awareness and gratitude that we sometimes suddenly feel our spirit connect with our Heavenly Father's. For me, during those moments, He silences the useless mind chatter that never serves me in a good way – ever - and directs my attention Him. He reminds me that He should hold the number 1 spot in my heart. What are those moments like for you?

2. While reflecting on God's creation of human beings, I thought about how a daily encounter with the right person at the right time is like a mini miracle in and of itself. Perhaps you're just having a bad day and in need a kind word or a listening ear from a brother or sister in Christ and lo' and behold Poof! Here they come! You engage in conversation and suddenly you KNOW. Jesus' sent him/her. Have you ever had those moments?

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank You for reminding us that Your creation miracles continue each and every day, whether it's in recognizing the beauty surrounding us in nature, or the beauty of Your Spirit in someone who just happens to show up when we need them the most. Help us to be that person for someone else, and to see You in the beauty that surrounds us daily. In Jesus' name. Amen.

(submitted by Rita Schaaf)

Celebrating Everyday Miracles – Healing at the Pool



Scripture: John 5:2-9 NRSV

Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes. In these lay many invalids—blind, lame, and paralysed. One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, ‘Do you want to be made well?’ The sick man answered him, ‘Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Stand up, take your mat and walk.’ At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk.

Reflection:

Why did Jesus ask, “Do you want to made well?”

Why didn’t Jesus just get the man to the water? Why did he instead tell him to “stand up, take your mat and walk”?

Why do you think the man continued for so long to try to get to the water, when after 38 years, he wasn’t able?

Are there times Jesus wants us to do things for ourselves?

How did Jesus show wisdom in this situation? What can we learn from that?

Prayer:

Lord, help me to seek peace when I am suffering. We want to look to You, Lord, not to ourselves or our own accomplishments. It all comes from You. Amen.

(submitted by Edward Valentine)

Celebrating Everyday Miracles – Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind



Scripture: John 9:1-7 (KJV)

And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man who was blind from his birth. ² And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? ³ Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. ⁴ I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. ⁶ When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, ⁷ And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

Reflection:

There was a common belief in ancient times that sin could be passed from one generation to another OR that if someone were suffering, it was because of his own sin or that of his parents. Jesus challenged this belief. What are your beliefs about sin?

What does this passage tell us about judging others?

What should we learn about our own thoughts and attitudes about our own “sin”? About others’ “sin”?

What does it mean when Jesus says “As long as I am in the world...”

Why does Jesus sit and use the dirt/clay to put on the man’s eyes?

Prayer:

God, thank you for the reminder that you are the Potter. Help us be vulnerable enough to be Your clay. Give us strength to receive your blessings of redemption. Amen.

(submitted by Vicky Green)

Celebrating Everyday Miracles - Prayer



Prayer should be the key of the day and the lock of the night.- George Herbert*

Scripture from the NIV

Psalms 5:3 In the morning, Lord, You hear my voice; in the morning I lay my request before You and wait expectantly.

1. How important is morning and evening prayer?
2. What does the George Herbert quote mean to you?

Prayer:

Heavenly Father today, we pray for discernment in how we can serve You. We thank You and are grateful that You don't look at the *quantity* of our service, but instead look at the *quality* and sincerity. Amen.

*George Herbert was a 17th century English poet and priest, noted for unfailing care for his parishioners, bringing the sacraments to them when they were ill and providing food and clothing for those in need. He died at the age of 39.

(submitted by Rita Schaaf)

Celebrating Everyday Miracles – Jesus Heals a Woman of Faith



Scripture:

Mark 5:25-34 (NIV)

²⁵ And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. ²⁶ She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. ²⁷ When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, ²⁸ because she thought, “If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.” ²⁹ Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

³⁰ At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my clothes?”

³¹ “You see the people crowding against you,” his disciples answered, “and yet you can ask, ‘Who touched me?’ ”

³² But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. ³³ Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. ³⁴ He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.”

Reflection:

The woman in the scripture probably spent whatever money she had on doctors. With no money left, what did she expect Jesus to do? What do we learn about her faith?

What does Jesus offer her (and us) that money cannot buy?

Jesus asks who touched him. With all the crowds around him, why did this woman's touch of his robe feel different?

How much joy do you think Jesus felt performing these miracles?

Is there something we can do to witness a miracle in our lives?

Prayer:

God, we humbly reach for your cloak and your hand. Please open our eyes to see and receive your gifts of love and forgiveness. May we even participate in being a miracle to others. Amen.

(submitted by Edward Valentine)