

Quarantined

Devotions:

By Students for
Students

Tuesday April 14, 2020
“Look Up”

To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name; by the greatness of his might and because he is strong in power, not one is missing. Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, “My way is hidden from the LORD, and my right is disregarded by my God”? Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. Isaiah 40:25-29

In a time full of unknowns, have you ever found yourself wondering whether God truly cares or if He even hears your prayers at all?

The book of Isaiah is about a troubling time for the people of Judah when the Assyrians were becoming a significant threat to them. Isaiah spoke to the people to reassure them of God’s control. Chapter 40 is titled, “Comfort for God’s People.”

You might wonder how a message sent to people long ago applies to your relationship with God today, but God’s word doesn’t expire and neither does the impact of this passage. God is reminding us that when we are struggling all we have to do is look up to Him to know that He never forgets us or leaves us behind. It’s stated clearly in the passage, “He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.” If we simply lift up our eyes to heaven we will be reminded of all that God is and all that He has promised. No man could ever do what God has done and will do. Even in the darkest, most difficult and painful times, God has a plan; there is always a light at the end of the tunnel. We are not always meant to understand why God is doing what he is doing. We are simply meant to trust him and know that he has everything under control.

Spend time reflecting on this passage, “looking up” and ask yourself, “What could I possibly have to fear when God has this all under control?” See that there is nothing to be afraid of when you put your trust in God.

Emily Hutchens
12th Grade

Wednesday April 15, 2020
“Heavenly Mindset”

1 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Colossians 3:1-4

The vast majority of our sinful actions can be traced back to sinful thoughts. All too often it is our minds and ways of thinking that cause us to fall. Paul writes this letter to the Colossians to tell them that their mindset is focused on sin and earthly pleasure and not on Christ. In the following verses Paul urges them to put to death all the sins they have been committing and to put on compassion, humility, kindness, and forgiveness. In other words, he is suggesting that if the Colossians have truly died to themselves, and been raised with Christ, their thoughts should be focused on glorifying Christ.

The importance of this passage is that we as Christians are in the same boat today. It's easy to go through the motions of a Christian life, but how often do we truly make decisions based on Christ and heavenly impact? Everything on earth is temporary, but we will all face eternity. So why set our minds on the things of this earth, which lead to sin, when we can set our minds on Christ, which leads to heaven.

Use Paul's message as a challenge to set your mind on Christ and on things which will have a heavenly impact.

Kaden Kugler
11th Grade

Thursday April 16, 2020
“Yet Not I”

“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” Galatians 2:20 ESV

Think about one of your biggest accomplishments in life. Think about how it made you feel. That feeling of being on top of the world, the adrenaline rush, the endless excitement, and the “look what I did” mentality eventually starts to fill your head. As believers, we are called to give all the glory to Christ instead of ourselves, because it is Christ who lives in us.

Galatians 2 contains Paul's grand statements about the difference between faith in Christ and following the law. In this, he learns that there are false prophets that oppose the gospel. Paul declares that nobody can be justified in God's eyes by the works of the law, but only by faith in Christ. To say that a person can be made righteous by the law is to say that Jesus died for nothing.

Christ died for us because He loves us. Jesus was crucified for our sin. By faith, we trust that His death paid for our own personal sin. In that way, we are crucified with Him, our sin with him on the cross. That sinful "us" dies, replaced by the resurrected Christ "in us." Our Christian life began when, in unity with Him, we died to our old life. We continue to live in the flesh, of course, but our lives are now directed not by our sinful selves but by our faith in Christ. We are no longer alone, for Christ lives in us. Everything we do as believers, is Jesus. Our lives are used to bring Him glory and further the Kingdom, so live like it.

As a time of meditation, listen to the song “Yet Not I, but Through Christ in Me” by CityAlight. Put away all distractions, turn your phone over, close your eyes, and just listen. Let this become your anthem, Yet Not I, but Through Christ In Me.

Brooklyn Bentley
12th Grade

Friday April 17, 2020
“How Do I Deal With Anxiety During A Time Such As This?”

25 “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? 28 And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, 29 yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. 34 “Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. Matthew 6:25-34

It’s no secret that the world today (as of April 2020) is in a time of crisis. With the spread of COVID19, many around the world are worried for their own health or the health of their families. But even if there wasn’t a pandemic, that still doesn’t mean that a large portion of people wouldn’t be anxious for a variety of other reasons. Be it social pressures, economic struggles, or other factors, a large portion of the American public is anxious about the future.

When Jesus was fairly early into his ministry, he and his disciples traveled through Galilee, healing the sick and proclaiming the forthcoming kingdom. Considering the miracles that Jesus had performed, crowds began to follow him from areas all around the region. It was at this point that Jesus went up on a mountainside in order to preach to them. Jesus preached about many things, among them storing all treasures in Heaven instead of on Earth, because earthly possessions will be lost or broken. Being that earthy belongings (money, valuables) are apparently important in keeping ourselves alive, it’s a worrying proposition to suggest not concerning yourself about money. However, Jesus then eases these worries, telling the crowds

that God provides for the birds and other aspects of nature, so why would God not provide necessities for you?

Obviously, this passage is not implying that we should quit our jobs and become homeless, so what does it mean for us? Living life without worry over what we will eat, what we will wear, or the safety of ourselves and/or our loved ones is definitely a challenge. However, by trusting in God and his provisions, we can trust that it all plays into his plan for us and the world. Yes, COVID19 appears scary, cancelling several public gatherings, leading to a spike in unemployment, and leading to the deaths of many. However, God is behind it all, he can provide comfort for those who are impacted, and can create a spark via this outbreak to lead several people to him.

Even though our current circumstance seems bleak, God is working behind it, so we should **fear not**.

Nathan Lee
11th Grade

Saturday April 18, 2020
“Prayer for Spiritual Strength”

14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, 16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. 20 Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.
Ephesians 3:14-21

Have you ever felt physically weak? When you are physically weak, your body’s not as healthy as it could be, making you more susceptible to sickness. Just like being physically weak, you can also be spiritually weak. You are not as strong as you could be and you are more easily tempted. Spiritual warfare can be just as hard, if not even harder, than physical warfare, which is why you need to make sure you are spiritually strong in the Word; that is what Paul is talking about in this passage.

While in jail, Paul is praying for the Ephesians to have spiritual strength, by encouraging them to be strong in their faith as a unified body of Christ. Also, he is encouraging us, along with the Ephesians, to be strong and get ready for battle because if it is not already here, it’s sure to come when we least expect. He is also praying for us to be “rooted and grounded in [Christ’s] love” and for us “to know the love of Christ that surpasses all knowledge”. Is that not crazy? Paul is praying for us to understand the incomprehensible. This should be us everyday! Praying for anything and everything. Just because you think it is impossible does not mean it cannot be done THROUGH CHRIST!

I encourage you to get strong by studying passages everyday.

Brook Fogle
11th Grade

Monday April 20, 2020
“The source of Good Works”

*14*What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? *15*If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, *16*and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? *17*So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. *18*But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. *19*You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! *20*Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? *21*Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? *22*You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; *23*and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”—and he was called a friend of God. *24*You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. *25*And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? *26*For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead. James 2:14-26

Actions speak louder than words. It's an old saying with a sentiment as loud as ever. It sounds simple right? Just practice what message you proclaim and people will believe it. Or at least respect it. It sounds incredibly simple and self-explanatory, because after all, if we believe the message we preach, we would have a propensity to act upon its provisions, right? Yet, if it were as easy as it sounds, then this statement wouldn't convey the same weight. The first time you hear it, you almost can't help but feeling called out, as if whoever said it had video surveillance of your life and was speaking to you directly. James, the half-brother of Jesus, wrote his book to debunk the rampant belief in the church that to become a Christian, one must accept a few spiritual truths to claim their salvation and then they are free to practice their lives in whatever way they please. Now it would be immensely easy for James to simply write a list of rights and wrongs on how to live the Christian life and be done with it. But that is not the case he makes. James asserts that instead, faith without works is a useless faith. He writes that a faith without works doesn't save anyone.

Who would want to uproot their life and commit to Christianity in exchange for the seemingly same exact life, just less time on Sundays? The lukewarm faith saves nothing except a feeling of awkward confrontations. This message is as needed in the church today as it was in the church of Jerusalem. And while it is definitely important to practice giving to the poor and any host of good things James mentions, I think taking that at face value misses the overall message.

We've all heard the saying what goes down in the well comes up in the bucket. This means more than if you fill up your well with scripture, you'll know the correct answers. It means if you fill up the well with things of the spirit, you won't help but have a tendency to do good works. So while giving to the poor, for example, is immensely important, if you do it for the sake of a rule, then the overall message is missed. If you are filled up on righteous things then you can't help but do a whole host of good works. And people see that. They can tell when you are doing something because you have to as opposed as doing something because you want to.

So while we are stuck at home, try to prioritize filling up your well with Scripture.

Jacob Gross
11th Grade

Tuesday April 21, 2020
“A Peace that Surpasses Anxiety”

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. - Philippians 4:4-7

Anxiety has become one of the most common mental disorders in the world, affecting roughly 18% of the population. Our society today has instilled in ourselves a lifestyle that consists of a pace and pressure that can seem to be unbearable at moments. Oftentimes, this causes us to stress ourselves out immensely and it discourages us, feeling like we have nowhere to turn too. Luckily, we have an amazing God who desires for us to confide in Him, and help us relieve the burden of stress through finding joy and peace that only comes from Him.

Paul the Apostle wrote the book of Philippians in order to share joy and encouragement to the church members at Philippi, and to express gratitude for the support he received from them. While writing this, he was also serving time in jail for spreading the news of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, Paul was content with his situation, knowing that if he were to be executed, he would join with Christ, and if he were to be released, he could continue spreading the Gospel message.

This passage is meant to not only encourage us through God’s love and mercy, but also to challenge us to seek and thank Him more, whether in dark times or not. Paul is clearly telling us that even though we try to bring ourselves peace through other people and items, it’s only temporary and we will never be satisfied. We are imperfect people, and it only makes sense that we can not give ourselves perfect peace, but God’s peace fulfills us because He is perfect and He knows us better than we know ourselves. By trusting Him, we are able to find joy in Him and truly be grateful for Him. Knowing that God is all powerful, all knowing, and all worthy of love and praise motivates us to put our faith and trust in Him. And through doing that, God promises that we are his children, we are fully loved, and He will lead us in a transcending peace.

In our busy lives today, it is totally normal to be completely stressed out and feel discouraged because of our struggles, but as Christians, we should find hope in knowing that God assures us through relentless love and an ever calming peace.

Kelsey Wood
11th Grade

Wednesday April 22, 2020
“The Wise and Foolish Builders”

24“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. 26And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.” Mathew 7:24-27

What’s the best advice you have ever gotten?

In this passage Jesus is talking to a group of people using a parable. He uses a house built on rocks and its firm foundation to describe a true Christ follower. He says that if you use his words as your anchor and foundation that you will be firm in your faith. He then compares this to a house built on sand and says that is a foolish man because when it rained, the streams rose, and the wind blew, the house fell down. This is just like one who hears his words and doesn’t abide by or practice them.

We need to keep our faith and focus on God and his word. Doing this will give us a firm foundation through tough times and storms throughout our lives.

We are going through some tough storms in life now. We are sheltered in place as Covid-19 cases continue to rise. In a time like now we see how earthly Things offer no stability. Build your foundation on Christ and the truth of his word. It never lets us down.

Adam Reaves
11th Grade

Thursday April 23, 2020
“Trusting God with your fear”

“Be gracious to me, O God, for man tramples on me; all day long an attacker oppresses me; ² my enemies trample on me all day long, for many attack me proudly.³ When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.” Psalm 56:1-3

Picture this: you’re in an anxiety producing situation where it’s hard to see an end(that shouldn’t be too hard to imagine right now). It seems like everything is changing and you can’t do anything about it. Most of us have experienced this feeling at some point in time, and a lot of us are going through it right now.

Take a moment to reflect back on Psalm 56:1-3. When David wrote this Psalm, Saul was chasing after him to try and kill him. So of course he was scared, I mean who wouldn’t be? Of course we’re in a different situation, but the point still remains. Maybe instead of actual people chasing you, it’s a deadline. Maybe it’s a fear of the future. Maybe it’s a fear that this whole social distancing thing is going to have to last longer than we thought. But David’s response to his fear shows us how to respond to ours. Oftentimes we focus on the feeling of anxiety itself when we should really focus on our response to it in order to achieve peace. Because peace is not the absence of fear, it’s trusting God with it.

So as you go through these next few days and those feelings of fear start to rise, don’t focus on them; focus on God instead. We might not have all of the answers, but he does. And he has a plan.

Cadie Taunton
10th Grade

Friday April 24, 2020
“Peace in Suffering”

“¹Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ²Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. ³Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.” Romans 5:1-5

Have you ever been mocked or made fun of for your faith? If you are one of the many Christian teens around the world you are not alone. When the book of Romans was written, Christians were being persecuted left and right for their faith, and had to worship in catacombs. Paul reminds the church of Rome in Romans 5:1-5 that since we are God’s children, we have peace. And not only that, but we should also rejoice when persecution comes our way, because that builds endurance, which builds character, which produces hope. Hope cannot disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured in our hearts.

Paul wrote this passage to encourage believers during times of uncertainty and persecution. With the outbreak of the Coronavirus, now is the best time to have faith in God and trust in him. Because we have faith in our God, we have peace. I hope that reading this gives you a sense of peace and you can rejoice that God will steer you on the right path.

Harper Thornbrough
9th Grade