

# Daily Walk on the Rock



St. Paul Lutheran Church

“Your Refuge from the Storm”

**Date: December 24, 2023**

**Text: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Luke 1:26-38**

**Theme: Here With Us...Now**

## **Day 1: Monday—“Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus”**

Ask Jesus to quiet your heart as you ponder Louise Stead’s lyrics: “Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus, just to take Him at His Word, just to rest upon His promise, just to know ‘Thus saith the Lord.’” God is faithful; nothing is impossible with God; and, in Jesus, all God’s promises find their ‘Amen’! So be it! Notice God’s promises, their fulfillment, and God’s abiding presence with God’s people as you read Genesis 12:1-3; 2 Samuel 7:1-11 (*also 1 Chronicles 22:5-10, 17-19*); and Luke 1:26-38. How do Simeon’s words (*Luke 2:28-32*) celebrate God’s promise that all nations will be blessed through Abram’s descendants (*Genesis 12:3*)? Tell Jesus you trust him.

## **Day 2: Tuesday—“My Ways Are Higher” (*Isaiah 55:9*)**

Read Isaiah 55:8-11 and Romans 11:33-36. Who but God would tell an old, childless man that the world would be blessed through his descendants? Who but God would make a shepherd boy Israel’s greatest king and, centuries later, announce that the Messiah would reign on “the throne of his father David”? Who but God would choose a young virgin from an inconsequential town to be the mother of the “Son of the Most High”? Read 2 Samuel 7:1-13,16 and Luke 1:26-38. Notice David offering to build God a house and God promising David an eternal kingdom. Notice Mary’s response to God’s call on her life (*Luke 1:38*). Read Romans 12:1 and pray.

## **Day 3: Wednesday—God with Us—Emmanuel!**

For God’s people, the Ark of the Covenant was the visible representation of God’s presence in their midst. Until Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem, the Ark was kept in the Tabernacle (*read Exodus 25:8; 40:20-21,34-38; 2 Chronicles 5:7,13-14; 7:1-3*). Holding this picture in your mind, read Matthew 1:21-23 and John 1:14,18. Consider that the word “dwelt” (*John 1:14 KJV*) can also be translated “tabernacled”; the eternal God, who dwelled in the midst of his people Israel, donned human flesh and came to live among us. And he is still Emmanuel, God with us. Read Matthew 28:20b; John 14:18-20; and Hebrews 13:5b. Worship our Emmanuel.

## **Day 4: Thursday—Jesus**

We have spoken of Emmanuel, God with us, a title that reflects Jesus’ eternal nature and omnipresence, it is

fitting that we also look at the name Jesus, which means “the Lord saves.” Read Matthew 1:21-23 and Luke 1:30-33. Do you treasure Jesus’ holy name? Is it sweet just to speak it; is his name dear when you talk to him and share your life with him? What does it mean that “the Lord saves”? Look beyond the babe in the manger to our Savior on the cross, our risen Lord, and our glorious King. Meditate on John 1:29; Acts 2:21; 4:12; Hebrews 9:28; and 1 Peter 1:18-21.

## **Day 5: Friday—The Lord Is My Shepherd**

Can you rest in Jesus today? Pray that your moments with him now will be a sweet respite; quiet your heart and pray you will experience his presence. Look again at our 2 Samuel 7 text; notice that although the Lord calls David from shepherding sheep to be a shepherd/ruler of God’s people (7:8), it is God who is David’s Shepherd (*see Psalm 23*)! What difference does this make? Read John 10:11,14-18. Pray Henry Baker’s lyrics: “The King of love my Shepherd is, whose goodness faileth never; I nothing lack if I am His, and He is mine forever.”

## **Day 6: Saturday—“Son of the Most High”**

Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us; he is our Savior and the Good Shepherd. In our Luke 1 text, he is also called “Son of the Most High,” “the holy one” and “Son of God” (1:32,35). Pray you will see Jesus ever-more clearly as you read John 1:1-5,14,18; 14:6-11; 17:1-5; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:15-20 (‘firstborn’ can mean preeminent or first in rank or honor); and Hebrews 1:1-3. We embrace by faith what our minds cannot grasp. Pray Charles Wesley’s lyrics: “Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ, the ev-erlasting Lord!... Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail th’ incarnate Deity, pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.”

**Day 7: Sunday—God Is with Us!** Use verse 4 of Louise Stead’s hymn to prepare your heart for today’s time in Scripture: “I’m so glad I learned to trust Him, precious Jesus, Savior, Friend; and I know that He is with me, will be with me to the end.” Now read Deuteronomy 31:8 and John 15:1-17 (in the John passage, notice the word ‘remain’ or ‘abide’); spend time talking to Emmanuel; tell Jesus you want to know his very real presence in your life. King David, the nation Israel, and Mary were called to mission (2 Samuel 7:8; Isaiah 49:3; Luke 1:38), so are we (*John 15:1-17 and 1 Peter 2:9-10*). With Mary (*Luke 1:38 NRSV*), pray, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord.” Worship Jesus.

# LifeGroup Study



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**Theme: Here With Us...Now**

**Belong** Have you ever wondered if God is really with us now? Do you recall what was going on with you at the time? Was it something good that was happening or something tragic? With all of the bad things that happen around us, sometimes it's hard to know if God is here. It's clear from scripture that God was present with the prophets and kings of the Old Testament and God definitely was here during Jesus' time on earth, but how do we know if God is with us today?

During this time when we celebrate Jesus' birth, we are reminded of when God was present here on earth and how, through Jesus' life, helps us know that God is still here. The focus of the texts this week is how God was with David and the Israelites throughout their history and God's assurances to them [and us] that God will establish God's kingdom here on earth. We will also see the connection God created from David to Jesus to how God's kingdom is still unfolding for us and into the future.

**Prayer...** Heavenly Father, sometimes it's difficult for us to sense your presence and know that you are with us. When our lives become so congested with the worries of everyday life we seem to lose our connection to you. We know in our hearts that you are present with us and ask for you to help us recognize when we've lost touch with you so we are able to move back to you. Amen.

**Believe** Read 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16. The book of 2 Samuel starts at the point where David becomes King of Judah after the death of Saul and shares the successes he had at the start of his reign, while the second half shifts moods and describes the struggles he faced. The background of this week's text is that Israel and Judah have consolidated into one kingdom under David and he has brought the Ark of God to Jerusalem.

This text starts with David resting in his new palace wondering why he is sitting in comfort while the Ark of God is sitting in a tent. Knowing David's heart for God, he appears to be asking the prophet Nathan if he should build a home for God. In a way, Nathan's answer made it crystal clear to David what he should do; assuring him that God was with him. However, before David could get started with his plans, God intervened, letting David know that God is not just hanging around a tent outside of the palace and that, in fact, God has never requested a home be built where God can reside. God doesn't stop there and goes on to tell David that, in fact, God will build a house for David.

- *Why did Nathan tell David to do what was on his mind?*
- *What kind of house was God talking about?*

God wanted to remind David that through all the ups and downs

the Israelites faced, God was with them helping along the way; that God took them from pastures, protected them from enemies, and put David's name among the greats of history. God made it clear that it was God's intention to have God's house built by David's heirs and that God's kingdom house would last forever.

- *To whose kingdom is God referring?*
- *How are God's house and kingdom related?*
- *What does it mean that David's throne will be established forever?*

**Read Luke 1:26-38.** The announcement of the birth of Jesus is very similar to the announcement of John the Baptist's birth that just precedes this verses. In both cases we see an angel appearing, which initially brings fear, until the good news is shared and then we see doubt, and then, finally, acceptance of the power of the Holy Spirit. One difference between the two accounts is that in this text a woman, Mary, an unmarried virgin, was approached by the angel. That would seem unusual in a male dominated world; however, her betrothal to Joseph, a direct heir of King David, ensures a connection to his throne, keeping with the covenant God made with David.

- *What does the angel mean when he tells Mary that the Lord is with you? Why do you think Mary was troubled by the angel's words? What does it mean to have favor with God? Does that apply to us?*

The angel Gabriel tells Mary that her child will be called the Son of the Most High and that he will reign over the house of Jacob forever. Gabriel also tells Mary that Jesus' kingdom will never end. If we look back at the text from 2 Samuel we see that God had made a promise to David that he would create a house for him that would last forever.

- *What comes to your mind when you hear the words "nothing is impossible with God"?*
- *Where do we see God's house today? Who makes up God's house? How does God's house assure us that God is with us here and now?*

**Become** When our lives become so busy or full of anxiety and fear we have great difficulty believing that God is truly present here and now. Our minds begin to wonder how God can allow things to get so out of control and that God can't possibly be anywhere near. Those thoughts start us down a path where we seem to move farther and farther away from God and the people in our lives. And then, somehow in the midst of it all, an interruption occurs. Something breaks into our space to move our minds back. We don't always recognize God's work within us to bring us back, but as God reminded David, through all the ups and downs, God is always with us, here and now and forever.

**Prayer...** Lord God, we feel deep in our hearts that you are here with us now and want to connect to you each and every day. We know there are times when we feel distant from you and don't sense that you are here. It's especially at those times that we need your help to see you, so that we may achieve our ultimate desire—to allow you to guide our lives so that we may be active parts of your kingdom here and now. Amen.