

DEVOTIONS TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 2020 – PSALMS 68:19 AND 2 TIMOTHY 2:1-7

Good morning --- it's Monday, March 30 and I am "behind" ... How can that be? These written devotions were not completed last evening so they will not be on today's APP ... BUT they should make it to the website by mid to late morning AND the video version should be on Facebook around 9 AM this morning ... Sorry ...

Two Verses for today:

Psalms 68:19 Praise be to the Lord, to God our Savior, who daily bears our burdens.

Just a couple of thoughts:

1. PRAISE BE TO THE LORD, OUR GOD & SAVIOR

- It is good to give thanks to God --- to praise Him--- if nothing comes to mind, ask God, "Please show me 3 things that I should be especially thankful and grateful for" and I believe God will give you these thoughts.
- Among many things this past weekend, I PRAISE GOD for a successful 1st transmission of a live, mini service on Sunday that was 'streamed' on Facebook and then transferred to You Tube!!! WOW!!! It was not perfect, but the team did a wonderful job, the quality was pretty good and it has set the foundation for future transmissions and, it seems, a growing ministry platform. Wow! Thank you, God!!!!
- Thank you God for providing for us all that we've had enjoyed this past weekend --- for moments of laughter and rest from the "stuff" of the news, etc.
- Thank you God for a church family that is becoming a CHURCH DEPLOYED --- calling one another – caring for one another --- and reaching out to one another.
- I could go on for pages --- **WHAT DO YOU GIVE GOD PRAISE FOR TODAY?**

2. WHO DAILY BEARS OUR BURDENS?

This simple Psalm reminds us ... to not only be 'THANKFUL' but that GOD HELPS US TO BEAR OUR BURDENS and ENABLE US TO COPE AND TO PERSEVERE.

- EVERYDAY God is with us --- each of us ... and if we allow Him, His Spirit will settle upon us and encourage us ... enable us... and lift us up
- WHAT A WONDERFUL WORD TO START THE WEEK ---
- **WHAT BURDENS, CONCERNS, FEARS, NEEDS DO YOU WANT TO LIFT TO GOD THIS MORNING?**

2 TIMOTHY 1:3-7 I thank God, whom I serve, as my ancestors did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I **constantly remember you in my prayers**. ⁴Recalling your tears, I **long to see you**, so that I may be filled with joy. ⁵I am reminded of **your sincere faith**, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. ⁶For this reason I remind you to **fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you** through the laying on of my hands. ⁷For the Spirit God gave us **does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline**.

1. I THANK GOD FOR YOU & REMEMBER YOU IN MY PRAYERS

- Need I say more? ☺
- Linda and I love you --- and God loves you even more!!!!

2. I LONG TO SEE YOU

- "Virtual church" is great --- but there is nothing like seeing one another!
- You make us smile! ☺

3. I AM REMINDED OF YOUR SINCERE FAITH

- I am impressed and encouraged as I see your FAITH & TRUST in GOD GROW
- IN CHALLENGING TIMES --- WE TURN TO GOD ...

4. FAN INTO FLAME THE GIFT OF GOD

- I remember as a Scout ... and many times since Of the act of nurturing and ‘fanning’ a small spark into a huge and roaring fire --- Paul is writing to Timothy to encourage him to nurture and fan the flame of the Holy Spirit in his life
- The Gift of God is the life of Jesus imputed and indwelling within us --- the Holy Spirit of God in us –
- **ARE YOU A GOOD HOST?**
- **WHAT CAN WE DO TO MAKE THE HOLY SPIRIT MORE WELCOME IN THE DWELLING PLACE OF OUR HEART & LIVES?**

5. THE SPIRIT OF GOD GIVES US POWER, LOVE & SELF-DISCIPLINE (a sound mind or a calm mind)

- POWER --- like dynamite!!!
- LOVE --- the ability and capacity to see others and to see their needs more than your own SO THAT you might encourage them and bring out the best in them
- SELF-DISCIPLINE (some translations use the words “sound mind” or “calm mind”) – the ability to think straight ... and to make sound decisions...

TODAY’S PRAYER: Dear God --- THANK YOU for _____. In the name of Jesus, I CHOOSE THE POWER OF GOD and REFUSE TO BE CONSUMED BY THE SPIRIT OF FEAR & WORRY. Dear God, please help me to be an AGENT of “CALM” --- Help me to keep myself calm; help me to keep my family calm --- and God help me to spread your calm over the storms of life. Father, I claim your promise of the indwelling Holy Spirit --- help me to be a good host and to open my heart and soul and life to the Holy Spirit’s influence in my life, my work, my family and my ‘all in all’ ... THANK YOU GOD. IN Jesus’ Name, AMEN.

DEVOTIONS WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2020 ~ 1 CHRONICLES 12:8 & 12:32

Good morning: These are certainly interesting times Filled with challenges ... threats ... changing times ... disoriented perspective and feelings of being displaced ---

It is easy to “shut-down” and “curl up” ... or become absorbed with social media, the news, or assorted wastes of time ...

BUT WE CANNOT --- WE MUST NOT ... NOW IS THE TIME THAT WE MUST BE BUILDING AND PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE ... NOW IS THE TIME TO BE AWARE, BE SHARP AND BE STRONG --- FOR, WE KNOW THAT TOUGH TIMES MAY LOOM AND WE MUST BE READY ...

I was reading 1 Chronicles 12 today ... an interesting chapter. While we be focusing on 2 particular verses --- some of you may enjoy the entire chapter.

Here’s what is happening: David has been running from the aging King Saul. Saul has deteriorated into a generally godless mess --- anxious in spirit and defeated in every essential way ... yet David, who has already been anointed and designated as the next king to succeed Saul refuses to take Saul’s life.

David has been proactively preparing for the day that he will become the official king over all of Israel --- but David was not going to make the final moves until it was God’s time.

We read in 1 Chronicles 10-11 that Saul tragically took his own life ... and then there was a mad scramble to fill Saul's void. Many different contenders and forces try to move in ... BUT DAVID WAS READY --- **ARE WE READY FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO STEP UP WHEN IT IS TIME?**

As David begins to put everything in motion and consolidate what had been a divided kingdom, his blessing from God, and his preparedness were obvious ... and before long ... the STRONGEST AND BEST were JOCKEYING FOR POSITION TO BE A PART OF KING DAVID'S LEADERSHIP TEAM.

1 Chronicles 12 outlines and highlights many of the factions and groups that are stepping forward to pledge their loyalty to David.

The 2 verses that I want to highlight today are:

1. **1 Chronicles 12:8: "Some Gadites defected to David at his stronghold in the wilderness. They were BRAVE WARRIORS, READY for battle and ABLE to HANDLE THE SHIELD & SPEAR. Their faces were FACES of lions, and they were SWIFT as gazelles in the mountains."**
2. **1 Chronicles 12:32: "... from Issachar, men who UNDERSTOOD THE TIMES and KNEW WHAT Israel SHOULD DO – 200 chiefs, joined David with ALL OF THEIR RELATIVES under their command."**

OK --- has Pastor Keith lost it? What kind of devotional can come from this chapter and these two verses?

1. David was PREPARING and READY --- David was at his STRONGHOLD in ZIKLAG.
 - David had been prudently accumulating and storing supplies --- not indulging the temptation to over eat or waste --- but rather to protect and preserve... to prepare for the day they would be required.
 - David was 'in-shape' and so were his people ... they trained, worked and prepared every day --- they knew that it was not the time to be lazy or to flitter away time --- their day was coming.
 - David has prepared a safe-place --- stocked and ready for whatever the future may hold.
 - ARE WE READY? ARE WE PREPARING? ARE WE BEING PRODUCTIVE OR WASTEFUL?
2. As David's superiority was being realized --- people from all around began to approach David to join forces with him ... consider these Gadites --- I WANT THEM ON MY SIDE! FACES LIKE LIONS (wow! I can only imagine) -- BRAVE --- READY FOR BATTLE --- SWIFT & ABLE ---
 - I feel that our church has come together as David's forces have come together --- SHUMC is blessed by each of you joining together to be a part of God's work at and through SHUMC --- YOU ARE A GIFT TO SHUMC as the Gadites were a gift to David!!! THANK YOU GOD FOR EACH PERSON WHO IS A VITAL PART OF THE SHUMC FAMILY!
 - This verse is a REMINDER TO ME TO BE ---
 - + BRAVE (Am I being brave?)
 - + READY FOR BATTLE (Am I ready?)
 - + SWIFT & ABLE (Am I swift and able?)
 - *** Probably not as much as I should be – **DEAR GOD PLEASE HELP PREPARE ME TO STEP UP AND BE READY WHEN THE TIME COMES**
3. Now, consider verse 32 --- the tribe of Issachar "**UNDERSTOOD THE TIMES AND KNEW WHAT TO DO**"

- As important as the Gadites were to David --- consider the tribe of Issachar --- if I had to choose between the two --- I do not know whom I'd choose ... I THINK THAT I WOULD select the tribe of Issachar--- it is REALLY IMPORTANT to have a KEEN UNDERSTANDING, inklings and sense as to:
 - + WHAT IS GOING ON ?
 - + WHY? and
 - + WHAT TO DO ABOUT THINGS!
- I've seen the term lately called SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS --- knowing the situation and being able to assess and understand the situation correctly ... and then respond correctly --- quickly & effectively.
- The tribe of Issachar EXCELLED at SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

NOW – MY CLOSING APPLICATION & CHALLENGE TO YOU ... I got all excited reading about David putting everyone and everything together SO THAT he and his team were ready to BREAK-OUT and RISE TO THE POSITION THAT GOD HAD ORDAINED FOR THEM YEARS BEFORE.

I AM IMPRESSED --- DAVID AND HIS PEOPLE WERE READY!!!

AM I READY FOR WHAT'S TO COME?

I AM NOT GOING TO LOSE SLEEP OVER THIS ... BUT I AM MOTIVATED TO BE READY AND TO WORK DILIGENTLY TO BE AS READY AS POSSIBLE WHEN THE TIME COMES AND WHEN THE TIME REQUIRES.

WE FIND OURSELVES IN THE MIDST OF INTERESTING TIMES (as did David) ... DAVID WAS READY and I PRAY THAT I AM READY ... READY TO HELP MY FAMILY --- READY TO LEAD SHUMC --- and READY TO DO AND BE WHATEVER MIGHT BE REQUIRED ... I AM STOKED WILL YOU COMMIT AND RECOMMIT YOURSELF TO BE READY FOR WHATEVER THE FUTURE MAY HOLD? FOR WHATEVER GOD MAY SET BEFORE US?

DEAD GOD, Please help me and all of us as part of the SHUMC family and beyond PREPARE OURSELVES FOR THE DAYS TO COME. May we be ready --- and able ... and may we have people with us who are gifted and skilled at SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS SO THAT WE MIGHT PROCEED WISELY, EFFECTIVELY and RIGHTEOUSLY – as a PART OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD HERE ON EARTH. AMEN.