

40 Days of Renewal

CALLED TO LAY DOWN MY LIFE FOR HIM (RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP)

Nehemiah 8:10 tells us that “*The joy of the Lord is our strength!*”

We celebrate our lives together as a covenanted community in a spirit of joy. We rejoice and give thanks to the Lord our God for His great works in our lives. We thank Him for having chosen and destined each one of us for a particular work in His plan of salvation. We express our desire to renew our covenant with Him --- to live as followers of Christ and to be vibrant members of the Ang Ligaya ng Panginoon Community, bonded together in steadfast love and faithfulness.

God's call for us at this time is *to lay our life before Him and to do more for Him*. It is a personal challenge directed at our innermost beings, because it means total trust and surrender to Him.

In preparation for the Feast of the Covenant on September 19, 2010 and to allow the community to respond to this call in greater faith and trust, we would like to enter again into a spiritual journey which we have institutionalized as the 40 Days of Renewal.

For these 6 weeks we have prepared the following weekly Bible meditations. May they deepen our commitment for the way of life He has given us and urge us to do more as ministers of His grace and messengers of His good news to others!

WEEK 1 - (August 8-14)

Theme: BELIEVING IN GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY, WISDOM AND LOVE

2 Chronicles 20:6 -- "O Lord God of our fathers, are you not the God who is in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in your hand, and no one can withstand you."

Romans 11:33 --- "Oh, the depth of the riches of both wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!"

Romans 8:35-37 -- "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger of sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us."

REFLECTION POINTS:

God is in absolute control. No plan of God's can be thwarted. When He acts no one can reverse it. God does as He pleases, and works out every event to bring about the accomplishment of His will. Such an unqualified statement of the sovereignty of God would make us fear God, if that were all we knew about Him. But God is not only sovereign --- He is infinite in wisdom and perfect in love.

Do we really believe that a God who loves us and knows what is best for us is in control of our situations? Do we trust Him fully even if we don't understand Him? What truths about God must we store in our hearts to use in times of doubts and despair?

WEEK 2 - (Aug 15- 21)

Theme: EXPERIENCING GOD'S LOVE

Isaiah 54:10 --- "Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed."

Lamentations 3:22-23 --- "Because of the Lord's great love, we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness."

REFLECTION POINTS:

Often we do not see God's love and tender care manifested in our lives. We have a tendency to see ourselves beset with all kinds of trials and adversities, with all kinds of calamities that come rolling in upon us. Yet, we must remember that God's unfailing love for us is a fact affirmed over and over in Scriptures. It is true whether we believe it or not. It originates in the very nature of God himself, who is love.

Reflect on the love, compassion and faithfulness of God in your life all these years. Recall also the special moments when, in times of difficulties, God showed you His compassion and unfailing love.

WEEK 3 - (Aug 22-28)

Theme : RESPONDING TO GOD'S LOVE

John 15:9-11 --- As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in My love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in My love, just as I have obeyed My father's commands and remain in His love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command.

1 John 4:19-21 --- We love because He first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God yet hates his brother", he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

REFLECTION POINTS:

What does Jesus say about loving one another? He "commands" us to love one another. (Note definition of command: to authoritatively direct, to demand, to order).

The desire of Jesus is that we love our brothers and sisters as much as He loved us. Do we take this command of loving one another to heart? Do we allow ourselves to be saturated with and soaked in the same love that Jesus had for people? Think love! Express love! God's love!

WEEK 4 - (Aug 29 –Sept 4)

Theme: SERVING THE LORD WITH GLADNESS

Philippians 2 --- Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus. Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the very nature of a servant....

Psalms 100: 1-3 --- Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness. Come before him with joyful singing. Know that the Lord is God. It is He who has made us and not we ourselves. We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

REFLECTION POINTS:

Why should we serve with gladness? Because we love the Lord and we are grateful for his graces and blessings. We love our brothers and sisters and we enjoy helping them meet their needs. We think less of ourselves and more of others.

Jesus emptied Himself and took on the very nature of a servant. How often do we empty ourselves of our pride and selfish interests for someone else's benefit? How often do we seek approval and validation of our work by others? Do we always serve the Lord and our brothers and sisters with gladness?

WEEK 5 - (Sept 5-11)

Theme: TRUSTING IN AND SURRENDERING TO GOD FULLY

Matthew 14: 28-31 ---

"Lord if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."

"Come", he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me." Immediately, Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith.", he said, "why did you doubt?"

Psalms 9:10 --- And those who know Thy name will put their trust in Thee; for Thou O Lord, hast not forsaken me.

REFLECTION POINTS:

One popular Christian book has an interesting title : If You Want to Walk on Water, You've Got to Get Out of the Boat.

Like Peter, many of us have the same longing to walk more closely towards Jesus.

Sometimes, this means getting off our boats , going out of our comfort zones or heading towards unfamiliar and maybe even terrifying places. Do we desire Jesus enough to take these risks?

In what ways is the Lord calling us to come closer to him? What unsafe waters are we afraid of? Are we ready to align ourselves with God's purpose in our lives at the expense of our comfort zones?

WEEK 6 - (Sept 12-18)

Theme: BEARING FRUIT FOR GOD

Colossians 1:10 --- That you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God , being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might.

John 15:8 --- This is to my Father's glory that you bear much fruit , showing yourselves to be my disciples.

John 15:16 --- You did not choose me, but I chose and appointed you to go and bear fruit --- fruit that will last.

REFLECTION POINTS:

Some of the different kinds of fruit that God wants us to bear in our lives are: witnessing and winning souls for the Lord, holiness of life, and good Christian character.

Ezekiel 36: 26-28 says: "I will give you a new heart and a new mind. I will take away your stubborn heart of stone and give you an obedient heart. I will put my spirit in you and will see to it that you follow my laws and keep all the commandments. Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors. You will be my people and I will be your God."

Are you willing to allow God to work in you and through you so that you may bear fruit? In faith, say a prayer, yielding yourself to Jesus for the purpose of bearing fruit, much fruit, so that His purpose in your life may be fulfilled!

Note to Pastoral Leaders:

Please make sure that all your members are able to get a copy of these weekly meditations and that the fruits of their meditation be discussed in your Men's and Women's Groups. For those who do not have emails, please provide them with a hard copy of this material.

The mandatory one to one will be scheduled on the fifth and sixth week (Sept 5 -18, 2010). A copy of the Self-Evaluation Form is attached. Ask your members to accomplish them in time for your one to one meeting.