

**The Summer Devotional Series is written by a variety of different Jacob's Well staff members, overseers and leaders, based on their real-world experiences. May the broad perspective and style minister to you throughout these summer months! You can also find the Summer Devotionals on our website [jacobswellchurch.church](http://jacobswellchurch.church).**

**Monday, July 29<sup>th</sup>** (Contributed by Isaac Addie)

Poems can often be confusing and abstract but through metaphors, poems can help reveal aspects of God's character in a new way. When you read and listen to this poem, think about it in light of God's word. Look to how the metaphors given can help describe us and how our attitude should be toward the Father and how encouraging it is to be reminded of it and what's to come.

Read Mathew 6:25-33

Listen to the song "Redwood & Daisies" by Jason Upton or read the lyrics here:

*Long live the journey  
And long live the children we raise  
Long live the memories  
like leaves the years carried away  
Just like a tree that slowly grows  
The higher we reach the deeper we go  
We're living for something  
that'll be here when we're old  
And we're headed for some place  
a little further down the road*

*Redwoods and Daisies  
never look worried to me  
They take what's been given  
As if that's all they'll ever need  
And if that's all they'll ever need  
Maybe that's all we really need  
We're living for something*

*that'll be here when we're old  
And we're headed for some place  
a little further down the road*

*Some people reason for living  
is to get all they can and move on  
But I find more grace in what's given  
Because it leads me to where I belong  
Elders are people who hold law and  
grace in their hands*

*Where death is a doorway  
And falling's just learning to stand  
And less is more than we really need  
And empty's a space for us to receive  
We're living for something  
that'll be here when we're old  
And we're headed for some place  
a little further down the road*

What sticks out to you in this poem? How do the metaphors describe God's grace and provision?

Now with this in mind read again Mathew 6:25-33

How does this metaphor correlate with Mathew 6:25-33? What does it teach you on how we should be in surrendering to God? What's hard about surrendering? Spend some time praying reading over and praying Psalm 16. How does it encourage you for circumstances now and also what's to come? How does it remind you that we are living for something a little further down the road?

**Tuesday, July 30<sup>th</sup>** (Contributed by Jeff Henson)

*O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me.* Psalm 139:1

Have you ever felt lost? Have you ever felt that in the very moment you wake, you've made a decision to clothe yourself in a façade to mask your real pain or fears? So that no one would truly know? Do you ever walk around boasting of success all the while feeling the grip and fear of failure within?

We have all carried the weight of a burden that has left us feeling alone. Like no one really knows, is really aware or would even care. But here, the psalmist, David, reminds us of God's immense love for us. Throughout the entirety of Psalm 139, David acknowledges God's presence in our lives. Not just in knowing when we sit, stand or what we say, but proclaiming that God intricately knit us together in our mother's womb! He, the creator and sustainer of the universe, intimately KNOWS us. Not just knows us, he chases us! He meets us where we are. Wherever we have tried to hide. He knows and is there, with us, longing to comfort us and care for us.

If you're feeling lost or alone, trust that He who is greater, the great I AM, is with you. He really knows and loves you. If you need reminding, the cross bears witness to His profound love for you.

**Wednesday, July 31<sup>st</sup>** (Contributed by Sean Kaiser)

Read Philippians 2:12-18

*<sup>12</sup> Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, <sup>13</sup> for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose. <sup>14</sup> Do everything without grumbling or arguing, <sup>15</sup> so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky <sup>16</sup> as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain. <sup>17</sup> But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. <sup>18</sup> So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.*

What does it mean to “work out your salvation with fear and trembling”? How do we connect this with the grace Jesus gives us?

In the spring “Wandering” series we talked about toxic grumbling. What do you think of Paul's words here, to “do everything without grumbling...so that you may become blameless and pure”? Why would grumbling cause us to be impure? What are the things in your life right now you tend to grumble about the most?

In verse 17 Paul uses the metaphor of an offering of wine or another liquid that would be poured out on an altar in worship to describe his life. What do you think he's conveying here?

Why does Paul encourage the believers to rejoice even in these hard circumstances (suffering, persecution, Paul's imprisonment)?

**Thursday, August 1<sup>st</sup>** (Contributed by Diana Peterson)

When I was growing up, everyone listened to the radio. There was one station in the small town in Pennsylvania where I lived, and it featured the top-forty hits. During the week, everyone listened to the same music, news, and weather.

But on Sunday nights, when many stations went off the air for a period of time, it was possible to explore other options. There was a lot of static to get through, but if you were persistent and patient, you could find your own special station. When I was in college, I found a show on KMOX in St. Louis called *Trivia Spectacular*. It was cohosted by a local schoolteacher, David Strauss and Art Fleming, who was the emcee on *Jeopardy* for decades. It was exciting to hear something different and learn something new.

Learning to tune into God's voice is very similar. We must be persistent and patient, but if we are still and listen, we will hear something special. When we can't dial into his frequency, it is usually because we don't really believe He wants to speak to us, we're not paying attention, we allow interference to drown out His voice, or we need to be patient and wait for a good signal. But when we learn to hear His voice, it's exciting, and we learn new things.

*The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. . . . the sheep follow him because they know his voice. John 10:2-5*

*Heavenly Father, help me to tune into Your voice. If I am patient and wait to hear from You, You will reveal the plans you have for me and show me the areas I need to improve in. We live in a busy and static-filled world, so help me to find quiet spots where I can concentrate on You and Your unique programming. Amen.*

**Friday, August 2<sup>nd</sup>** (Contributed by Jeff Henson)

*This I declare about the Lord: He alone is my refuge, my place of safety; he is my God, and I trust him. Psalm 91:2*

Imagine. You are spiraling in the throes of anxiousness. Your heart races and your hands tremble as you attempt to catch your breath. Your mind is chasing every fear that is paralyzing and holding you down like a weight upon your chest. Imagine that as you desperately try to calm the storm inside, the only feeling in return is the loss of any semblance of control as it slips through your grasp. I don't have to imagine, I have endured countless moments where I have been immobilized with anxiety and fear. Here the psalmist chose his words beautifully. He says, "This I declare about the Lord." He did not suggest. He declared. He affirms, he announces, he states and gives all due authority of power to our Lord and savior. Alone there is no other refuge. No other place of safety. He was and is and is to come. He is our Lord, our creator, the author and finisher of our faith, and our protector. He is enough. My anxious thoughts still, from time to time, bring me to my knees. But, in seeing my Jesus on the cross with His arms open wide, I know that my fears, anxious thoughts, imperfections were all buried with him in a tomb. They remain buried as my Jesus had risen. And that's why I trust Him. Who has your trust? Where is your refuge or place of safety? Let's declare about our Lord.



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