

Devotions – May 16-22, 2021

By: Hayley Smith

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Negaunee, MI

Six Isolated Saints

Sunday, May 16, 2021

Text: Genesis 32: 24

So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak.

It has been a whole year since I was able to sit down and work on devotions. What a year it has been for all of us. We have been through so many trials during this pandemic, and I pray most of you have walked through them with more grace than I have. Something that Jesus did for me was remind me of how many of his people spent time isolated. So, while I was trying not to panic and eat all of the chocolate in my home, I started looking into Biblical isolation. It’s surprising how many Biblical giants have spent time in isolation. I hope you enjoy this week of isolated saints.

Let us pray: *Holy and Gracious Lord, allow your spirit to give us peace during this time of trial. Replace our fear with faith in you and draw us close to you. Amen*



Monday, May 17, 2021

Text: Genesis 3:24

After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

During the lockdown, I couldn’t help but think of Adam and Eve isolated together. It’s always fun for me to let my mind wander and think of the ways they might have annoyed each other after the fall. Having spent weeks and weeks with my family, I missed my old way of living, pre-pandemic, and often visualized cherubim with flaming swords outside of what my life used to be.

Let us pray: *Protecting God, thank you for giving us examples for all hardships. We praise you for all the work you have done for this world, especially now. We pray we notice your love today and every day as we walk together on this new journey. Amen*



Tuesday, May 18, 2021

Text: Genesis 39:20-21

Joseph's master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined. But while Joseph was there in prison, the Lord was with him;

Sometimes, life just isn't fair at all. I think of my family who has contracted Covid. I think of all the people who have lost loved ones. I pray for understanding but I have yet to get it. Not a single burning bush...can you believe that? Sometimes we just aren't meant to understand, and we have every right to be angry that we don't. God can handle it. God can handle our anger and fear and love us through the darkest places of ourselves.

Let us pray: *God of Salvation, how is it that we humans are gifted with your mercy? How is it that you love us and care for us during times we can't even stand ourselves? How great is it to have the promise of your unfailing love? We can never praise you enough. Amen*



Wednesday, May 19, 2021

Text: Kings 17:5-6

So he did what the Lord had told him. He went to Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan, and stayed there. The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening and he drank from the brook.

Elijah is one of my favorite people in the whole Bible. Mostly, I am jealous of how much faith he had to climb up on Mount Carmel and just tell a whole crowd that their gods were fake. But then I read about how when he was all alone at the ravine, ravens brought him food, morning and evening. God showed up for him. Every day, he was never really alone. Sometimes, I miss my miracles, and it makes me worry about standing up to the crowd.

Let us pray: *Forgiving God, please forgive me for all the times I walk with my head down and miss you. Forgive me for feeling alone in the ravine and missing my ravens. Remind me that when we are alone, we aren't really alone. Amen*



Thursday, May 20, 2021

Text: Daniel 6:17-18

A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel's situation might not be changed. The king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep.

Something that I find interesting about Daniel is that we never hear his side of the story while he is in the den. The only perspective we hear is from the King. Have you ever had a friend you know is about to walk through some troubled times and you just can't sleep because you've been fretting over them? I can't begin to imagine what those minutes felt like for Daniel. I assume every minute felt like a lifetime. I can relate to the King in that I have hurt friends and family with things I've done or said without ever meaning to.

Let us pray: *Lord, we thank you for your word and how it speaks to us, how it can convict us. We pray for your presence when we are in the lion's den and when we are in the palace. We praise you in all things. Amen*



Friday, May 21, 2021

Text: Luke 4:1-2

Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.

Our Lord knew isolation. He knew hunger and exhaustion. The devil waited until he thought he could break Jesus because He was vulnerable. I'm someone who gets "hangry." I'm someone who loses my temper when I'm tired. I'm not Jesus. But I can look to him as a pillar of strength during these times where I'm bitter, scared, or lonely and remember there is no emotion I feel that He hasn't. There is no step I take that he is not there. He is here during this time, even when I don't see Him.

Let us pray: *Dear Jesus, we need you more than we ever could have imagined. We praise you for all the ways you care for us, what we notice and what we miss. We praise you for all the love you surround us in even when we dismiss you. Forgive us. Amen*



Saturday, May 22, 2021

Text: Matthew 9:20-22

Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. She said to herself, “If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed.” Jesus turned and saw her. “Take heart, daughter,” he said, “your faith has healed you.” And the woman was healed at that moment.

I think that I have connected with this woman more now than I ever have. According to Jewish law, excessive blood flow made a woman ceremonially unclean. Anything she touched was unclean. If other people touched anything that she had touched, they would also be unclean. There are cultures that still practice those rules today. I often wonder what her life was like right after she was healed. Did she wait a few months before she felt safe enough? Did she venture out and live a peaceful life? I wonder about the second half of life after healing. I will never know this side of Heaven, but I can't wait to meet her.

Let us pray: *Loving Father, sometimes it feels like your cloak is just out of reach. Sometimes it feels like your cloak is 12 years into the future. We ask for your healing for our world and for life after healing. Amen*

