

GROW. PRAY. STUDY.
First United Methodist Church- Weekly Study Guide
“equipping people in becoming deeply committed Christians ”

“What Are You Waiting For?”
January 10-15

Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals. Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, “Do you want to get well?” “Sir,” the invalid replied, “I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.” Then Jesus said to him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.” At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.

*The day on which this took place was a Sabbath, and so the Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed, “It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat.” But he replied, “The man who made me well said to me, ‘Pick up your mat and walk.’” So they asked him, “Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?” The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there. The man went away and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had made him well. **John 5:1-13, 15***

Yesterday we focused on a passage in John where Jesus healed a man who’d been an invalid for 38 years. You may remember Jesus found him lying on his mat near one of the gates in the city of Jerusalem. When Jesus asked him if he would like to be made well the man initially didn’t answer the question....but rather told Jesus all the reasons why he was still sick. Sometimes this describes our spiritual lives. We know meaningful life is found in a relationship with Jesus...and that each day Jesus offers us this relationship. Yet, instead of taking the initiative to claim this life as our own we spend our energy on why we are still empty....blaming everything and everyone except ourselves! To us Jesus says once and for all....“rise up and be made whole.”

This week spend some time thinking about your role in the life of the church and how serving others and worshipping can give you the life you’ve been waiting for.

MONDAY- Read Isaiah 65:17-25

This is a beautiful passage that describes God’s dream for life on earth... “as it is in heaven.” How does this make you feel? Does it seem as if we are close to this dream today or far away? As you might be aware, Isaiah’s particular message was addressed to the Israelites living in exile at the time, meant to console them. Think about the ways we are helping to bring this vision to

reality here at FUMC. What is your part in that undertaking?

Pray the Wesley Covenant Prayer

TUESDAY- Read Acts 4:32-37

The first apostles had a very clear understanding of how they were called to go about their task of spreading the gospel throughout the land. As you read this description of their life together, which parts of it are exciting? Which parts of it seem to be completely “unrealistic” for today’s world? Why? What is the larger message we are meant to hear when we read about the way the disciples lived and shared with each other?

Pray the Wesley Covenant Prayer

WEDNESDAY- Read Habakkuk 2:1-3

Many times in our lives, we seem to be waiting for a vision to appear to show us God’s will. This passage – written from the viewpoint of the prophet – shows us something very important about being people who serve God’s vision. What key lesson do you take from this passage... for yourself? For our church? Have you ever thought of yourself as someone to whom God might entrust a vision? Go back and read Jeremiah 1:4-8 and reflect on Jeremiah’s reaction to God’s call for him to be a prophet.

Pray the Wesley Covenant Prayer

THURSDAY- Read Philippians 2:3-11

As we come to deepen our understanding of what it means to be a Christian community, we receive some very explicit direction here from Paul. Which of his instructions in this passage are the most challenging to you personally? What prayer might you pray to ask God to help you deal with this challenge? Paul observes that Jesus “emptied himself, taking on the form of a slave” to affect his ultimate victory; compare this approach to the guidance we receive from the culture.

Pray the Wesley Covenant Prayer

FRIDAY- Read I Corinthians 12:4-12

What is the most important role in the life of the church? As we see from this letter to the church at Corinth, each one of us who makes up this community of faith brings a different, unique gift and is called to use it in service to Christ’s kingdom. What is your gift? How have you decided to offer it in service to God? If you are still trying to understand your gifts and how God

might use them, do not hesitate to call one of our staff members and set up a time to discuss this important question. God needs each and every one of us.

Pray the Wesley Covenant Prayer

SATURDAY- Read Matthew 25:14-30

Today you will be reading the passage we will use in worship tomorrow. Pray that God will open your heart and prepare you for a powerful worship experience as we come together tomorrow as the body of Christ.

I invite you to pray the following prayer:

Dear God,

As I read this passage today help me do so with an open heart, sincerely listening for your voice in my life. Use this passage to prepare me for worship tomorrow. As I read it help me to set aside my own agenda and my own desires so that I may come to worship tomorrow prepared to be molded by you as I continue my journey to becoming a deeply committed disciple of yours. In Christ's name I pray, AMEN

Here at FUMC we believe part of becoming a Deeply Committed Christians is praying daily. If you find yourself struggling with what to say, we suggest you try praying Wesley's Covenant Prayer.

A Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition

I am no longer my own, but thine.
Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.
Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee,
exalted for thee or brought low by thee.
Let me be full, let me be empty.
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal.
And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it.
And the covenant which I have made on earth,
let it be ratified in heaven. AMEN