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Daily Devotional, Monday, December 4, 2017 - Preaching Like Peter

DECEMBER 04TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Monday, December 4, 2017 - Preaching Like Peter

Acts 2:14-42

Peter's first sermon takes less than five minutes to recite. Sharing the gospel doesn't need to be complicated or lengthy. In fact, Peter's message contains a formula we can use to outline our own testimonies.

Preparation. The disciple relied heavily on the Scriptures to make his case for faith in Christ. But Peter knew there was another important element—after being miraculously enabled to proclaim the gospel in multiple languages, he must have realized the significance of the Holy Spirit. No matter how persuasive a man's message is, only the Spirit can open the door to unbelieving hearts and minds.

The Savior's credentials and purpose. Peter cited the “miracles and wonders and signs” that validated Jesus as the promised Messiah (Acts 2:22). Then the disciple made clear Jesus' foreordained mission on earth: to die for mankind's sin. Christ willingly and obediently submitted to the task assigned by His Father.

A personal invitation. Peter wasn't shy about convicting the hearts of his audience. “This Man ... you nailed to a cross,” he said (Acts 2:23). The new preacher made sure listeners knew their responsibility in the Messiah's death, but then gave the exciting news that Christ was alive.

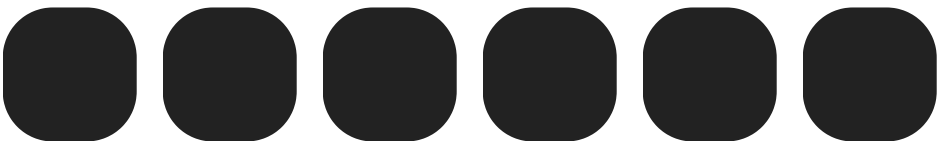
Those who believed were invited to repent and be baptized in Jesus’ name (Acts 2:38). Any gospel message should finish by telling people how they, too, can be saved.

Witnessing to others can be intimidating. But if you are prayerful and prepared, you can trust the Holy Spirit to be with you and to handle the outcome.

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Daily Devotional, Friday, December 1, 2017 -

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Daily Devotional, Friday, December 1, 2017 -

Philippians 4:11-13

God has provided us with many things to enjoy (1 Tim. 6:17). But our lives are frequently filled with turmoil instead of contentment. Here are four practices that create dissatisfaction.

1. Busyness. We live in a hurry-up society, dashing from one activity to another. Jesus did not rush, yet He accomplished everything God gave Him to do. Rarely did He tell His followers to move faster. He even praised Mary for choosing to stop and spend time with Him (Luke 10:39, Luke 10:42).

2. Earthly perspective. Too often we live focused on our circumstances. Our minds are filled with what occurred earlier in the week, what's on today's agenda, and the activities happening next week, month, or year. No wonder enjoyment of life remains elusive. The solution is to have an eternal perspective, which acknowledges God is in charge and our goal is to please Him.

3. Self-imposed pressure. We have all experienced the unavoidable burdens of schoolwork, employment, and relationships. But we bring needless pressure on ourselves when we allow unnecessary "musts" and "shoulds" to rule us. The remedy is to turn to God, acknowledge His right to order our days, and ask for His plan.

4. Unhealthy attitudes. Things like perfectionism, false guilt, and apathy all undermine our enjoyment of life.

Satisfaction is found in a life that reflects God's priorities—and time with Him comes first. Reading His Word, we become mindful of the Father's great love, learn what He views as important, and experience the joy of belonging to Him. When contentment is elusive, it's time to reexamine our priorities.

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Daily Devotional, Thursday, November 30, 2017 - Jesus: The Source of Peace

NOVEMBER 30TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Thursday, November 30, 2017 - Jesus: The Source of Peace

Colossians 1:15-20

Before we knew Jesus Christ, our life was full of godlessness and wickedness—we had self-seeking ways and stubborn, unrepentant hearts (Rom. 1:18; Rom. 2:5, Rom. 2:8). Like our strife-filled world, we clamored for peace and tried to find it, but our efforts failed.

When we came to faith in the Savior, all of that changed. We were rescued from the dominion of darkness and brought into Christ's kingdom (Col. 1:13). Every one of our sins—past, present, and future—was forgiven. Divine justice was satisfied by Christ's sacrifice, and God's wrath upon us was removed. We became a new creation, washed clean by Jesus' blood (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Now that sin's power over us has been broken, we can become members of God's family rather than His enemies (Rom. 5:10). He sent His Holy Spirit to be our personal guide in this new life, helping each of us experience Christ's peace (Rom. 8:6). We also can look forward to an eternity spent in heaven, where righteousness, tranquility, and joy abound (Rom. 14:17).

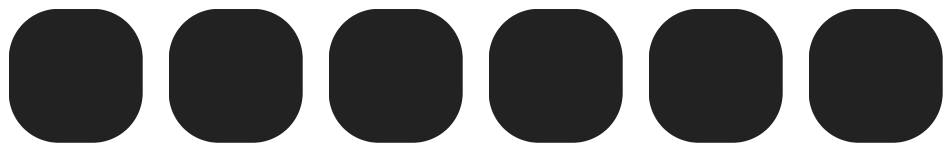
The story of the Prodigal Son's return is a picture of our reconciliation with the Lord (Luke 15:11-32). The young man had chosen to leave his father, living instead to please himself. Repentant, the son eventually returned home; his father joyfully greeted and forgave him, and there was harmony between them. God has done all this for us.

Our unity with the heavenly Father came at a great price—the sacrifice of His only Son. Christ gave His life for us so that we could be reconciled to God (Col. 1:20). Christian lives are to testify that Jesus is the source of our peace. Does your life communicate this message?

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Daily Devotional, Wednesday, November 29, 2017 - Peace With God

NOVEMBER 29TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Romans 5:1-2

One day I posed a question to the waitress at a restaurant: “If you could ask God for anything, what would your request be?” Her answer was immediate. “I want to feel at peace.” She tearfully explained that her grandmother had died and emotional turmoil resulted.

Many in our world are like this woman, in that they desire inner calmness but have no relationship with the Lord. People often seek contentment by trying to improve their appearance, physical fitness, financial situation, or social status—or by abusing substances. But such things can’t bring tranquility of heart or mind. Only a relationship with Jesus leads to true peace.

Prior to salvation, we were slaves to sin and living in opposition to God (Col. 1:21). Our transgressions had formed a barrier of hostility between Him and us, and on our own, we were helpless to cross it. Without God’s intervention, we could not have found the way of peace. But our heavenly Father provided the perfect solution to our sin problem. He sent His Son to pay for our iniquities and remove the separation that existed between us and Him.

When we trusted Jesus as our Savior, we were reconciled to the Lord and no longer at odds with Him (Rom. 5:10). In Christ, we have peace with the Father.

Our triune God has provided everything we need for inner tranquility. The Father opened the way for us to be in His family. Jesus continually offers His peace so we can experience serenity of mind and heart (John 14:27). And the Holy Spirit cultivates the fruit of peace in our lives (Gal. 5:22).

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Daily Devotional, Tuesday, November 28, 2017 - Heirs to a Grand Inheritance

NOVEMBER 28TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional, Tuesday, November 28, 2017 - Heirs to a Grand Inheritance

Ephesians 1:9-14

Did you know that you are an heir to unimaginable wealth that will never fade away? If you're a believer, then God has an inheritance reserved for you in heaven. In fact, He says you have already obtained it. (See Eph. 1:11.) Your right to this treasure is not based on anything that you've done, but on the one to whom you belong. If you are a child of God, then the inheritance is yours and will be "revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:4-5).

No one can take our inheritance from us, because God has guaranteed it by sealing us with His Holy Spirit of promise. The transaction is complete and merely awaits the ultimate consummation when everything will be brought under the headship of Christ. This seal shows His ownership and authority over us, and one day our full redemption will come.

Naturally, we all want to know what we're going to inherit. Much of that is beyond our earthly comprehension, but Scripture gives us a few hints. It will involve the transformation of both our body and soul. The goal for which God predestined us will be completed as we stand before Him, conformed to the likeness of His Son (Rom. 8:29; 1 John 3:2). And these weak, perishable bodies will be changed into strong, glorious ones that are free from sin and death (Phil. 3:20-21).

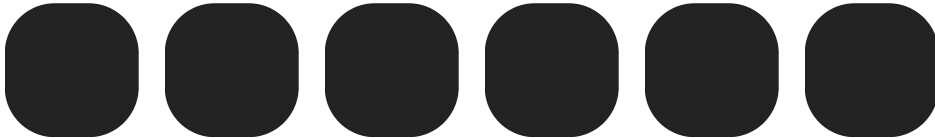
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Why has God done all of this for us? Amazingly, He says it's so that throughout eternity He can show us "the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:7). In love and gratitude for such amazing goodness, let's devote each day of our life to living for Him.

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