

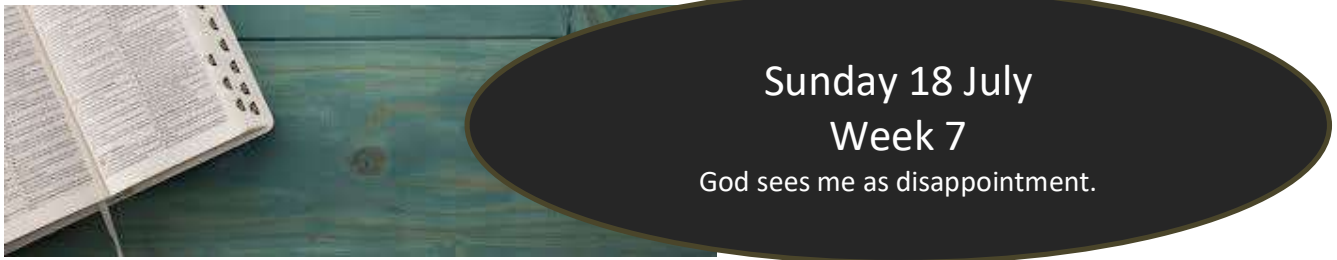


Daily Bible readings, a memory verse and a prayer for individual contemplation
Weekly worship song, reflection and small group questions

ARE YOU GOING THROUGH A MID-FAITH CRISIS?

CONTENT:

Sunday 18 July	Week 7	God sees me as a disappointment.
Sunday 25 July	Week 8	God don't call me



BIBLE READING:

Sunday 18 July Genesis 3:1-12; Matthew 14:25-33; Rom 7:14-8:2

PRAISE AND WORSHIP:



Let's worship our God with the following You Tube song:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=xrUI45d4cKY

Reflection

by Rev Gavin Landers

Romans 7 captures a moment when a Christ follower reflects on moments that are disappointing. Paul confesses in v14-24:

"I know that all God's commands are spiritual, but I'm not... I've spent a long time in sin's prison. What I don't understand about myself is that I decide one way, but then I act another, doing things I absolutely despise. So if I can't be trusted to figure out what is best for myself and then do it, it becomes obvious that God's command is necessary.

¹⁷⁻²⁰ *But I need something more! For if I know the law but still can't keep it, and if the power of sin within me keeps sabotaging my best intentions, I obviously need help! I realize that I don't have what it takes. I can will it, but I can't do it. I decide to do good, but I don't really do it; I decide not to do bad, but then I do it anyway. My decisions, such as they are, don't result in actions. Something has gone wrong deep within me and gets the better of me every time ...*

²⁴ *I've tried everything and nothing helps. I'm at the end of my rope. Is there no one who can do anything for me?"*

This was the same condition the disciples were in after the death of Jesus. They were defeated – numb, disillusioned, confused, insecure, scared – directionless, tossed this way and that way as directed by their emotional state; captured by shame at their disappointing history of abandoning their leader and everything they hoped for and believed so deeply. The memory of that betrayal left them on rocky ground - they were questioning everything. They were in the midst of a mid-faith crisis.

Maybe you too can identify times in your own living when this has also been your state of being?

Paul helpfully pushes through this disappointment and goes on to answer the question he asked in v24, “Is there anyone who can do anything for me in this state of being?” In v25 he writes,

²⁵ *Thank God because Jesus Christ can and does. He acted to set things right in this life of contradictions where I want to serve God with all my heart and mind but am pulled by the influence of sin to do something totally different. Thanks be to God - through Jesus Christ our Lord for there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus, the law of the Spirit of life will set me free from the law of sin and death. 8 ¹⁻² With the arrival of Jesus, the Messiah, that fateful dilemma is resolved. Those who enter into Christ's being-here-for-us no longer have to live under a continuous, low-lying black cloud. A new power is in operation. The Spirit of life in Christ, like a strong wind, has magnificently cleared the air, freeing you from a fated lifetime of brutal tyranny at the hands of sin and death” (Romans 7:25-8:2).*

It is humbling and overwhelming to be confronted by Jesus' offer of salvation from our most disappointing moments lived. We may not feel we are worthy of such a response from God, but there is nothing we can do or say to stop God being God. It is up to Jesus who out of a love for people, bore all the evil the world could throw on Him, all the sinfulness that people offered Him, all the suffering that came to Him. While these realities killed Him, the power of love, raised Him and after he rose Jesus continued to do what He always has done - offer His love for people – in the case of His resurrected living, as we are told in Romans 8:34, by pleading our cause with Almighty God – interceding for us at the right hand of God.

We need to leave it up to the Jesus, who an English Baptist minister from the 1800's - J.C Philpot speaks of as follows, “The Lord of life and glory became a security and substitute for us. He entered into our place and stead. He endured the punishment that was due to us. For us he fulfilled the whole law by his doings and by his sufferings. For us he bled, died and rose again. And for us he ascended up to the right hand of the Father. And now justice demands our pardon... God's justice says, "It is your due; it is your right; it belongs to you; it is yours because the Redeemer has discharged your guilt and punishment, because the Surety has stood in your place, because the Saviour has obeyed that law for you which you could not obey on your own. I am faithful and just to forgive and will respond with a full, free, and irrevocable pardon of all transgressions. I can, will, and do pardon, forgive, and blot out every iniquity and every transgression.”

In the light of a Jesus who:

- returned to do for his disciples what they could not do for themselves
- uttered words of compassion and mercy from the cross – “*Father forgive them for they know not what they do*”...

there might just be case to be made that you and I and those we love; that we, even in disappointing states might just be treated with grace, mercy, forgiveness and love.

Thanks be to God, Amen

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS:

1. Recount a moment when you disappointed God.
2. Give testimony to receiving God's grace in that disappointment.
3. Do you know someone who maybe needs to forgive themselves for being disappointing? Is there anything you can say to help them receive God's grace?
4. In this week, pray daily for one person who is in the mid-faith crisis of feeling like they have disappointed God.



DAILY BIBLE READING:

Monday

Reading: Mark 14:27-31 *“²⁷You will all fall away,” Jesus told them, “for it is written: ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’ ²⁸But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.” ²⁹Peter declared, “Even if all fall away, I will not.” ³⁰“Truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “today - yes, tonight - before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times.” ³¹But Peter insisted emphatically, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.” And all the others said the same.”*

Prayer: Father, forgive me in those moments when blind to my actual condition, I overstate my goodness. Create in me a pure heart. Amen.

Tuesday

Memory verse: Psalm 38:1-22 *“Lord, do not forsake me; do not be far from me, my God. Come quickly to help me, my Lord and my Saviour.” (v21-22)*

Prayer: Father, you know the frailty of my being – strengthen me I pray. Amen.

Wednesday

Reading: Mt 11:28-30 *“²⁸Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”*

Prayer: Thank you Father for your promise of treating me better than I treat myself and better than my acts deserve. Amen

Thursday

Reading: Genesis 12:10-20 *“¹⁰Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to live there for a while because the famine was severe. ¹¹As he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, “I know what a beautiful woman you are. ¹²When the Egyptians see you, they will say, ‘This is his wife.’ Then they will kill me but will let you live. ¹³Say you are my sister, so that I will be treated well for your sake and my life will be spared because of you.” ¹⁴When Abram came to Egypt, the Egyptians saw that Sarai was a very beautiful woman. ¹⁵And when Pharaoh’s officials saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh, and she was taken into his palace. ¹⁶He treated Abram well for her sake, and Abram acquired sheep and cattle, male and female donkeys, male and female servants, and camels. ¹⁷But the LORD inflicted serious diseases on Pharaoh and his household because of Abram’s wife Sarai. ¹⁸So Pharaoh summoned Abram. “What have you done to me?” he said. “Why didn’t you tell me she was your wife? ¹⁹Why did you say, ‘She is my sister,’ so that I took her to be my wife? Now then, here is your wife. Take her and go!” ²⁰Then Pharaoh gave orders about Abram to his men, and they sent him on his way, with his wife and everything he had”.*

Prayer: Father, save me from moments when I, like Abram, trust in devious schemes rather than in your Word to protect me. Amen

Friday

Memory verse: Acts 13:16-35 *“God raised him from the dead so that he will never be subject to decay” (v34).*

Prayer: Father, for your great love that gives second chances, I give thanks. Amen

Saturday

Reading: Ex 2:11-15 *“11 One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labour. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people. 12 Looking this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. 13 The next day he went out and saw two Hebrews fighting. He asked the one in the wrong, “Why are you hitting your fellow Hebrew?” 14 The man said, “Who made you ruler and judge over us? Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian?” Then Moses was afraid and thought, “What I did must have become known.” 15 When Pharaoh heard of this, he tried to kill Moses, but Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in Midian, where he sat down by a well.”*

Prayer: Father, save me from impulsive moments that destroy and bring harm and lead me into regret. Amen



It is important for parents to take time to lead the conversations of family time and to be honest with their children in these conversations.

BY JENNY BLAKE – CHILDREN’S PASTOR
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Sunday 18th July

Pray daily: Set up family time for prayer and devotions and stick to this arrangement. All devotions should always begin by with a prayer. Ask a family member to pray or one of the children.

Scripture Reading: Genesis 3:1-12

Allow children/teens to read out loud for the family.

Activity/Family Moment

Bullseye!

What you will need for this game is a bullseye (printable option found below) and craft feathers.

If you have a dart board you can use this too but make sure that the darts are blunt.

Have each family member throw the feathers to try get a perfect score. Notice how the feathers do not pin themselves to the bullseyes, or fall short, or not hit the mark.

Refer to the genesis reading.

What did they do wrong that got God was not happy with? Talk about that.

Now refer to the game. Say, did anyone get a perfect score and hit the target perfectly? No? Nobody did?

Did you know that the Hebrew word for ‘sin’ means to miss the mark? To miss the bullseye. So, in archery, when you miss that, it means you’ve sinned. It’s the same way in the Bible.

Did anyone’s dart not even hit the target and fall short? Yes,

Did you know that in the Bible, it says, that “All of us have sinned and fallen short of God’s glory”. That means all of us are imperfect – none of us are perfect like God. Everyone does wrong things like, Lying, disobeying, hurting others and being selfish.

Talk about what sin is. Sin can be anything that keeps us from God.

Do you think God thinks we are bad or not worth it if we sin? No, Because Jesus died on the cross for our sins. God knows we all sin and has already paid the price. God does want us to learn and try not repeat our sins.

Play a quick game of would you rather

Here everyone chooses a statement which they would rather have/do

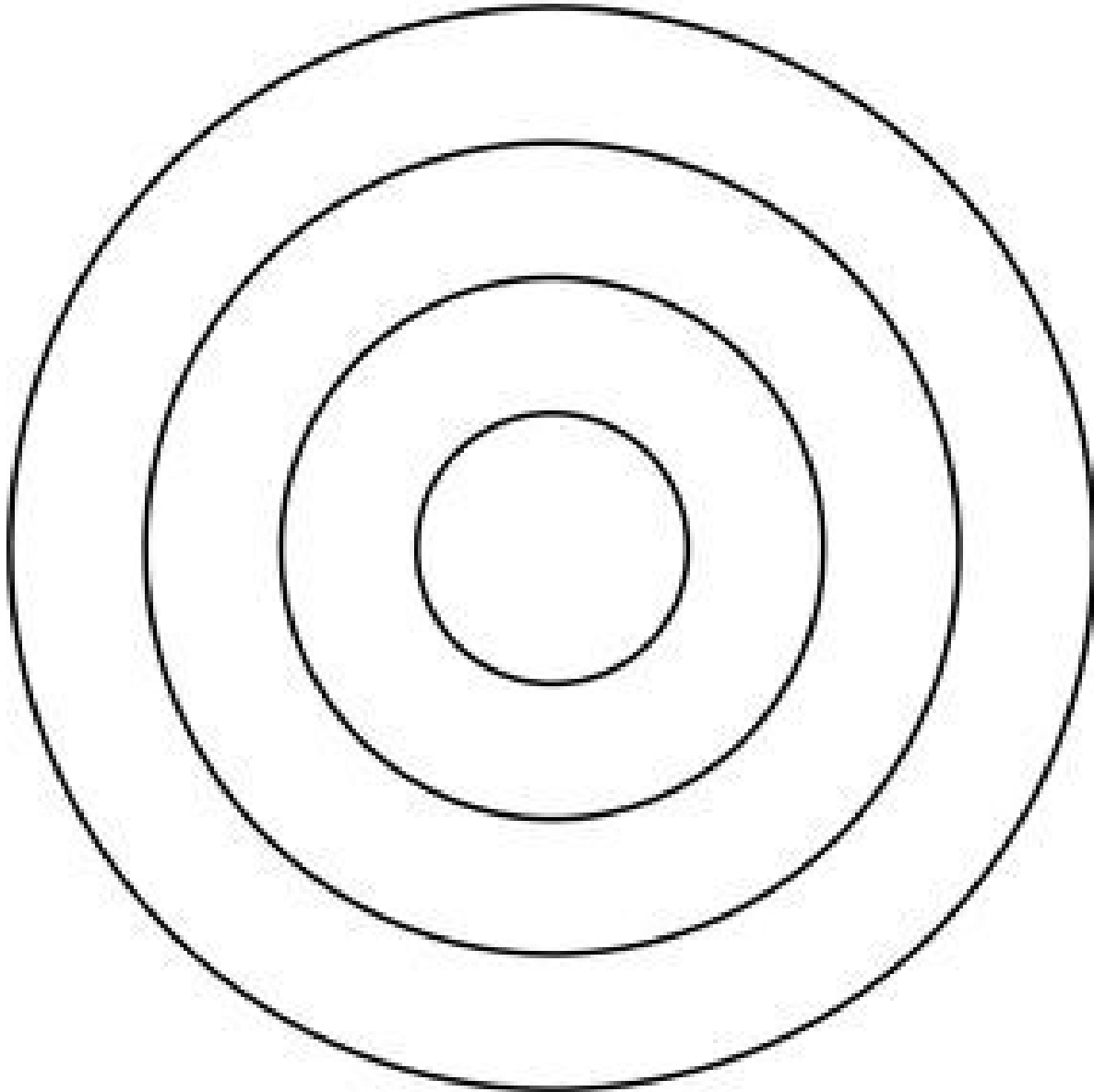
It could be things like:

- would you rather be able to fly or be super strong?
- eat only chocolate for the rest of your life or would you rather eat marshmallows for the rest of your life
- would you rather wear too big socks or too small shoes?

Have each family member come up with a statement.

Now talk about how we have a choice to choose what we would rather do. We can choose not to sin, and we can also choose to say sorry when we have.

Bullseye



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