

## FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENTEN SEASON

MARCH 22, 2020

### SCRIPTURAL THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD and whose trust is the LORD. For he will be like a tree planted by the water, that extends its roots by a stream and will not fear when the heat comes; but its leaves will be green, and it will not be anxious in a year of drought nor cease to yield fruit.*

Jeremiah 17:7-8 (NASB)

### REFLECTIONS

My question to you is: “Where do you see God in all of the voices you are hearing regarding the coronavirus? I only wish I could hear your responses.

I want to assure you God’s healing power, staying power, keeping power is not limited any more now than it was hundreds of years ago when Jesus walked this earth. The virus has not changed God the Father, God the Son nor God the Holy Spirit **in any way shape or form**. He is God this very moment and will still be God when all of this virus has passed away.

This past Wednesday evening in our Lenten service we shared together the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm.

The following is a translation given me by two very precious friends just hours ago.

The author attempts “to reintroduce the passion and fire of the Bible to the English reader. It doesn’t merely convey the literal meaning of words. It expresses **God’s passion for people and His world** by translating the original, life-changing message of God’s Word for modern readers.”

Read this from *The Passion Translation*.

### PSALM 23

The Lord is **my Shepherd I always have more than enough.**

He offers a resting place for me in His luxurious love.

His tracks take me to an oasis of peace, the quiet brook of bliss. That’s where he restores and revives my life. He opens before me pathways to God’s pleasure and leads me along in His footsteps of righteousness so that I can bring honor to his name. Lord, even when your path takes me through the valley of deepest darkness, fear will never conquer me, for you already have. You remain close to me and lead me through it all the way. Your authority is my strength and my peace. The comfort of your love takes away my fear. I’ll never be lonely, for you are near. You become my delicious feast even when my enemies feast, even when my enemies dare to fight. You anoint me with the fragrance of your Holy Spirit, you give me all I can drink of you until my heart overflows. So--why would I fear the future? For your goodness and love pursue me all the days of my life. Then afterward, when my life is through, I’ll return to your glorious presence to be forever with you!

*[Read until it begins to sink into your mind, soul and spirit.]*

I hope you can receive a new touch and presence of this masterful passage of Scripture in “The Passion” translation as I have. BE BLESSED!

I offer a song we would sing if only together this morning. Read it to yourself and claim the truth in this time of disorientation of our society worldwide.

[If you are with others allow time for discussion with each other.]

The words of Fanny Crosby’s “Blessed Assurance” should help us keep our focus on our “STORY”-- today, tomorrow, next week--that is being written as we live through this pandemic. Our assurance is still in the Godhead not ourselves nor man.

This Psalm regardless of translation and even paraphrase gives us so much hope, assurance, strength, peace, and comfort. It is quite a contrast to fear and other emotions that may be stirred up within you by the external voices.

Read or sing this song by yourself or with others and allow the Holy Spirit to minister to you right now.

## BLESSED ASSURANCE

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine  
O what a foretaste of glory divine  
Heir of salvation, purchase of God  
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

Perfect submission, perfect delight!  
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;  
Angels descending bring from above  
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

Perfect submission, all is at rest  
I in my Savior am happy and blessed  
Watching and waiting, looking above  
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

### CHORUS:

This is my story, this is my song  
Praising my Savior all the day long  
This is my story, this is my song  
Praising my Savior all the day long.  
Fanny J. Crosby

## FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT DEVOTIONAL

The Scripture reading is found in John 9:1-41 NASB.

### John 9:1-41 NASB

#### Healing the Man Born Blind

**9** As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. **2** And His disciples asked Him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?” **3** Jesus answered, “*It was* neither *that* this man sinned, nor his parents; but *it was* so that the works of God might be displayed in him. **4** We must work

the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work. **5** While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world.” **6** When He had said this, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes, **7** and said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which is translated, Sent). So he went away and washed, and came *back* seeing. **8** Therefore the neighbors, and those who previously saw him as a beggar, were saying, “Is not this the one who used to sit and beg?” **9** Others were saying, “This is he,” *still* others were saying, “No, but he is like him.” <sup>[a]</sup> He kept saying, “I am the one.” **10** So they were saying to him, “How then were your eyes opened?” **11** He answered, “The man who is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash’; so I went away and washed, and I received sight.” **12** They said to him, “Where is He?” He *said*, “I do not know.”

#### Controversy over the Man

**13** They *brought* to the Pharisees the man who was formerly blind. **14** Now it was a Sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. **15** Then the Pharisees also were asking him again how he received his sight. And he said to them, “He applied clay to my eyes, and I washed, and I see.” **16** Therefore some of the Pharisees were saying, “This man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath.” But others were saying, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such <sup>[b]</sup>signs?” And there was a division among them. **17** So they *said* to the blind man again, “What do you say about Him, since He opened your eyes?” And he said, “He is a prophet.”

**18** The Jews then did not believe *it* of him, that he had been blind and had received sight, until they called the parents of the very one who had received his sight, **19** and questioned them, saying, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? Then how does he now see?” **20** His parents answered them and said, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; **21** but how he

now sees, we do not know; or who opened his eyes, we do not know. Ask him; he is of age, he will speak for himself.”<sup>22</sup> His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone confessed Him to be <sup>[e]</sup>Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.<sup>23</sup> For this reason his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

<sup>24</sup> So a second time they called the man who had been blind, and said to him, “Give glory to God; we know that this man is a sinner.”<sup>25</sup> He then answered, “Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.”<sup>26</sup> So they said to him, “What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?”<sup>27</sup> He answered them, “I told you already and you did not listen; why do you want to hear *it* again? You do not want to become His disciples too, do you?”<sup>28</sup> They reviled him and said, “You are His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses.”<sup>29</sup> We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where He is from.”<sup>30</sup> The man answered and said to them, “Well, here is an amazing thing that you do not know where He is from, and *yet* He opened my eyes.”<sup>31</sup> We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him.<sup>32</sup> <sup>[d]</sup> Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind.<sup>33</sup> If this man were not from God, He could do nothing.”<sup>34</sup> They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you teaching us?” So they put him out.

### Jesus Affirms His Deity

<sup>35</sup> Jesus heard that they had put him out, and finding him, He said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”<sup>36</sup> He answered, “Who is He, <sup>[e]</sup>Lord, that I may believe in Him?”<sup>37</sup> Jesus said to him, “You have both seen Him, and He is the one who is talking with you.”<sup>38</sup> And he said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped Him.<sup>39</sup> And Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become

blind.”<sup>40</sup> Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things and said to Him, “We are not blind too, are we?”<sup>41</sup> Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but <sup>[f]</sup>since you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.

### Footnotes:

- a. [John 9:9](#) Lit *That one*
- b. [John 9:16](#) Or *attesting miracles*
- c. [John 9:22](#) I.e. the Messiah
- d. [John 9:32](#) Lit *From the age it was not heard*
- e. [John 9:36](#) Or *Sir*
- f. [John 9:41](#) Lit *now*

The people in this day assumed a person suffering was because of sin.

So the disciples in keeping with the belief of the day inquired, “What is the reason for this young man’s blindness?”

In v. 4 the word “day” spoke of Jesus’ ministry as the Messiah.

The “night” referred to Christ’s coming Crucifixion.

The word “work” would lead us to think about Jesus’ deeds, labor, performances, actions, and most assuredly His miraculous signs and wonders.

It also reflects on His Father’s power and might working in Him.

As the light of the world, He had his work cut out for Him while in this world.

The Pharisees sought to discredit Jesus and His miracles and performance.

They went against everything Jesus did on the Sabbath.

Jesus was “upsetting their cart” so to speak.

They went so far in v. 16 to discredit Him as not being from God because of the things He did on the Sabbath.

They were sure God would never do anything to violate the Law regarding the need to rest.

Yet, they were unable to deny the man's testimony.

To show the power of the religious authorities, they stooped to the cowardly way out and excommunicated the young man.

**Note how Jesus took the discussion from physical blindness to spiritual blindness.**

To believe in Jesus' way was to see spiritually.

The others who did not believe remained blind.

[Think or discuss with others what this means in context of this scripture.]

Where are you personally in this scripture?

What keeps us blind spiritually?

It is the inability to believe, the darkness of sin, and the lack of human ability to change.

What do you suppose keeps people from seeking Jesus today?

Is it unwillingness, lack of faith, lack of experience, trust, or something else? Possibly, it is sin, guilt, failure, disgust with self, and disbelief in God.

You may also wish to read and study from the following passages:

1 Samuel 16:1-13

Ephesians 5:8-14

**TODAY IN MINISTRY AT APNC**

Adult Sunday School	
Avon Park Church of the Nazarene Facebook page	9:45 am
Pastor's Devotional	
Avon Park Church of the Nazarene Facebook page	10:45 am

**THIS WEEK IN MINISTRY AT APNC**

	<b>THURSDAY</b>	
WOW Bible Study	Fellowship Hall	10:00-11:30 am

**OUR STEWARDSHIP & ATTENDANCE AT APNC 2020-21**

	<u>Mar 15</u>	<u>Mth to Date</u>	<u>Yr to Date</u>
Tithe/Offerings	\$4,591.30	\$17,758.50	\$35,107.60
Sunday School	\$40.00	\$140.10	\$277.06
Faith Promise	\$930.00	\$2,065.00	\$8,884.00
Kids Reaching Kids		\$100.00	\$639.00
Child Sponsorship	\$31.00	\$34.00	\$79.00
Alabaster		\$219.56	\$1,355.24
In Jesus Name	\$685.00	\$735.00	\$1,033.00
<b>ATTENDANCE</b>	<b>SDMI 90</b>	<b>AM 110</b>	<b>PM 74</b>
			<b>WED 63</b>