

## **Devotionals for the Week of January 15, 2023**

Our devotional section provides additional spiritual input for helping you go further and deeper in your journey with the Lord. It is our desire, our hope, and our prayer that this devotional section will be a helpful Spiritual Life tool for you to utilize on a regular basis. Each day's devotional will typically consist of Scripture, commentary, and a prayer response. Current Devotionals can be accessed each day online at [www.capecodchurch.com/devotionals](http://www.capecodchurch.com/devotionals) or by using the Cape Cod Church App (select "Connect" on the bottom main page and then "Daily Devotional" on next page). Be sure to check Saturday and Sundays for special postings of poems, stories, etc. Printed copies from the prior week are available at the Connection Desk.

### **Monday - The Touch of the Master's Hand -The Presence of God - Our Ministering to Him**

To You, O Lord, I lift up my soul. O my God, in You I trust .... Make me know Your ways, O Lord; teach me Your paths. Psalm 25:1-2A, 4

*Today's thoughts from today's verses:*

Today we begin week three of a five-week Devotional Series entitled, "The Touch of the Master's Hand." When it comes to realizing Christian spirituality that is truly triumphant, it is "the Touch of the Master's hand" that is absolutely essential and makes all the difference. This Devotional series calls us to an understanding of Christianity that is absolutely dependent on the touch and work of Christ living in and through us. This series is a compilation of separate weeks of Devotional material. They were selected and put together because they all contribute very nicely to this emphasis. This is truly a series to help the person who wants to explore, enter into, and consistently experience the "Deeper" Christian life. We hope the "Touch of the Master's Hand" Devotional Series blesses you and wonderfully guides you into a "Deeper" Christian experience.

This series has five weeks of Devotional material with two weeks having six Devotionals and three having five. This week has six devotionals (Monday through Saturday). Week One: Divine Adjustments. Week two: Communion with God. Week three: The Presence of God. Week four: Becoming Spiritually Whole. Week Five: Tale of the Soul. We begin week three: The Presence of God, with the following:

"The Touch of the Master's Hand"

*By Myra Brooks Welch*

'Twas battered and scarred and the auctioneer

Thought it scarcely worth his while  
To waste much time on the old violin,  
But he held it up with a smile.  
“What am I bid, good folk?” he cried.  
“Who’ll start the bidding for me?  
A dollar, a dollar ... now two ... only two ...  
Two dollars, and who’ll make it three?  
“Three dollars once, three dollars twice,  
Going for three” ... but no!  
From the room far back a gray-haired man  
Came forward and picked up the bow.  
Then wiping the dust from the old violin  
And tightening up the strings,  
He played a melody pure and sweet,  
As sweet as an angel sings.  
The music ceased, and the auctioneer,  
With a voice that was quiet and low,  
Said, “What am I bid for the old violin?”

As he held it up with the bow.

“A thousand dollars ... and who’ll make it two?

Two...two thousand, and who’ll make it three?

Three thousand once and three thousand twice ...

Three thousand and gone!” said he.

The people cheered, but some exclaimed

“We do not quite understand ...

What changed it’s worth?” and the answer came:

“Twas the touch of the master’s hand.”

In answer to the question, “What changed,” our poem proclaims triumphantly, “the touch of the master’s hand.” When it comes to realizing Christian spirituality that is truly triumphant, it is “the Touch of the Master’s hand” that is absolutely essential and makes all the difference. This Devotional series calls us to an understanding of Christianity that is absolutely dependent on the touch and work of Christ living in and through us.

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You know that something very special has transpired if you overhear someone say to their friend, “Thank you so much, you have really ministered to me, you have touched my soul. Today’s verses speak of lifting up one’s soul to God. It is the lifting up of one’s soul to God that really ministers to him and touches him deeply. You see we were made to know the presence of God and be in intimate communion with him – soul to soul, so to speak. To initiate special times of intimacy with God, we must lift up our soul to God. Lifting up the soul can be described as coming before God in worshipful surrender in order to focus on all that God is with all that we are.

We minister to God when we take our rightful place before him with a soul filled with exaltation, adoration, and praise to him and empty of ourselves and what we want from him. This is what

touches, blesses, and delights God more than anything. Being empty of ourselves and wrapped up in God is what communion and intimacy with God is all about. Ministering to God in this way allows God to be God to us and frees him to minister to all that we are with all that he is, and we are touched, blessed, and delighted in return. It is out of such communion and intimacy with God that we are able to trust him with every bit of our lives. As the presence of God becomes

more and more real to us and we experience a close and trusting relationship with him, we come to know his ways and learn his paths and the life we live becomes his doing.

*Today's prayer response from today's thoughts:*

Lord, to You I lift up my soul. O my God, in You I trust. Make me know Your ways, O Lord; teach me Your paths. Amen!

## **Tuesday - The Touch of the Master's Hand -The Presence of God - Our Waiting on Him**

Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; for You I wait all the day. Psalm 25:5

*Today's thoughts from today's verse:*

Prayer *is* our relationship with God. In 1 Thessalonians 5:17, the Apostle Paul says that we should, "Pray without ceasing." In addition to the kind of praying where we stop, fully focus on God, and become deeply engaged in communion with him, there is an "on the go" kind of praying. The Psalmist in today's Scripture, says to God, "for You I wait all the day." Being alone with God in concentrated prayer is not something we can do all day. But we can "wait all the day" on God. "Waiting on God" is "on the go" praying. "Waiting on God" is maintaining an "attitude of prayer."

Maintaining an attitude of prayer is something we can do all day long. It involves having an ongoing sense of God's presence and a confidence that he is always at work leading the way and unfolding the life he has for us. This was the Psalmist's approach to life, and it is reflected in his words, "Lead me in Your truth and teach me." If you are one who joins the Psalmist and says to God, "You are the God of my salvation, you must also join him in saying to God, "for you I wait all the day." Truly prayer *is* our relationship with God.

*Today's prayer response from today's thoughts:*

Lord, “lead me in your truth and teach me” in regard to having and maintaining a constant “attitude of prayer.” Guard me from running ahead of you and without you. May it be that today I truly “wait for you all the day.” Amen!

## **Wednesday - The Touch of the Master’s Hand -The Presence of God - Our Yielding to Him**

He leads the humble in justice, and He teaches the humble His way. All the paths of the Lord are lovingkindness and truth to those who keep His covenant and His testimonies. Psalm 25:9-10

*Today's thoughts from today's verses:*

The main point of today’s Scripture is this: only those who are truly humble will truly yield to the presence of God properly. The pathways that God lays before the humble are in perfect accord with his love and his truth. When we keep the arrangements (covenant and testimonies) that exist between God and us, we experience his love and truth in fullness. The arrangements God has in mind for us involve, first, establishing us in a relationship with himself and then in having our relationship with him result in our lives becoming all he desires them to become. These arrangements are accomplished for us and in us through Jesus Christ.

The key word is “keep.” It is the yielded person who keeps God’s covenant and testimonies (the arrangement that exist between God and us for our redemption and sanctification). Both redemption and sanctification are a work of Christ, and it is incumbent upon every one of us to yield to Christ for both of them. Why are there so many people who won’t allow Christ to redeem them? Why are there so many redeemed people who won’t allow Christ to sanctify them? The answer is the same for both questions: pride. The “leadable” and “teachable” person is the humble person. The humble person is the person who does not let pride stand in the way of being totally available to the God of the universe for whatever he wants and commands.

*Today's prayer response from today's thoughts:*

Lord, I can see that pride is “me getting in the way” and humility is “me getting out of the way.” You are God and I am not. Forgive me for following so readily in the sin that started all the trouble back at the very beginning of time – the sin of wanting to be in charge; the sin of

usurping the place of authority and power in my life that is reserved for you and you alone.”  
Lord, I humbly bow, yield, and surrender. Amen!

## **Thursday - The Touch of the Master’s Hand -The Presence of God - Our Prospering in Him**

Who is the one who fears the Lord? He will instruct him in the way he should choose. His soul will abide in prosperity, Psalm 25:12-13A

*Today's thoughts from today's verses:*

Today’s Scripture speaks of prosperity. Some brands of Christianity today make “prosperity” a central theme, but the prosperity emphasized is an economic prosperity rather than a spiritual prosperity. An emphasis on economic prosperity is much more compatible with the experience of God’s people under the old covenant of the Old Testament than it is with the experience of God’s people under the new covenant of the New Testament. But even at that, the prosperity spoken of in our passage is a spiritual prosperity. The Psalmist is talking about the one whose “soul will abide in prosperity.”

For both the Old and New covenants or both the Old or New Testaments, the prosperity of the soul is a very wonderful and necessary thing. Rest assured that God is absolutely committed to the prosperity of our souls. Psalm 25 begins with the words, “To You, O Lord, I lift up my soul.” Picture baby birds in a nest craning their necks toward their mother above with mouths open wide. This is a very helpful image as we seek to relate properly to the presence of God and the intimate relationship he has in mind for us. We must be like baby birds craning our souls toward the Lord above in anticipation for all that he will pour in so that our souls prosper spiritually. Jesus said, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied” (Matthew 5:6).

There is a lot in between the “lifting up of the soul” in verse one of Psalm 25 and the “soul abiding in prosperity” in our passage today. Take some time to read Psalm 25:1-13 and notice all

the things that go into a person being “one who fears the Lord.” For as our passage says, it is the “one who fears the Lord” whose “soul will abide in prosperity.”

*Today's prayer response from today's thoughts:*

Lord, I am learning to “lift up my soul to you.” Help me hunger and thirst for you. I am seeking to put you at the center of everything (fear and reverence of the Lord) by becoming one who ministers to you, waits on you, and yields to you. Lord, Grant that my soul will truly abide in prosperity. Amen

## **Friday - The Touch of the Master's Hand -The Presence of God - Our Intimacy with Him**

The intimacy of the Lord is for those who fear Him, and He will make them know His covenant. My eyes are continually toward the Lord, for He will pluck my feet out of the net. Psalm 25:14-15

*Today's thoughts from today's verses:*

Jesus likened the relationship between himself and one who is truly his disciple to that of a vine and a branch (John 15). It doesn't get much closer than that. It is this kind of closeness that today's Scripture has in view when it speaks of “the intimacy of the Lord.” “Intimacy” is a great word for capturing the closeness of the connection that exists between a vine and a branch. The vine is the source of all the resources the branch needs to be vitally alive and fruitful. It is the close, intimate connection the branch has with the vine that make it possible for the life-giving resources of the vine to flow into the branch. Experiencing “the intimacy of the Lord” is essential for the life-giving resources of God to flow into us so that we are vitally alive and fruitful.

But “the intimacy of the Lord” is more than just the spiritual life we receive from God; it is also what God receives from us. We minister to God when we take our rightful place before him with a soul filled with exaltation, adoration, and praise to him, and in doing this we are giving to him as well. But “the intimacy of the Lord” is even more than mutual giving, it is also communion with God. Communion with God is just our being with him and him being with us. This is what

Psalm 46:10 is focusing on when it says, “Be still and know that I am God.” Knowing and experiencing the presence of God in this way requires spiritual discipline and practice. Our passage says that “the intimacy of the Lord is for those who fear Him.”

The reason intimacy with God is the experience of those who fear God, is because it is those who fear God who are willing to give themselves to the spiritual discipline and practice necessary for becoming good at being still before God to the point of truly knowing him and experiencing him. Remember that “fear” means reverencing God to the point where we absolutely surrender to him and give him the center place in our lives. When we surrender to him and he has the center place in our lives, we will want what he wants for us more than anything else. We will give up what we want for what he wants - and God wants an intimate and close relationship with us that is continuous (my eyes are continually toward the Lord).

*Today's prayer response from today's thoughts:*

Lord, I am making the commitment to spend time each day just being still before you. I am counting on you to teach me all about being intimate with you. Help me to be faithful to the spiritual discipline and practice of seeking you so that I will become one who truly knows you and experiences you. I give myself to you and the intimate and close relationship you desire for us to have with each other. Amen!

### **Saturday - The Touch of the Master's Hand -The Presence of God - Our Preservation through Him**

Guard my soul and deliver me; do not let me be ashamed, for I take refuge in You. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for You. Psalm 25:20-21

*Today's thoughts from today's verses:*

Psalm 25 (which we have been looking at all week) was written by David, king of Israel in Old Testament times. He was preceded by King Saul, the first king of Israel, who was anointed with the Holy Spirit to help him serve well as Israel's king. Because of great disobedience the Holy Spirit was removed from him and given to David. The anointing of the Holy Spirit was a unique thing to king Saul and king David. David did not want to end up like king Saul and have the Holy Spirit removed from him. He wanted to keep on knowing and experiencing the presence of

God. After a time of great moral failure king David said to God (as recorded in Psalm 51), “create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence and do not take your Holy Spirit from me.”

Today’s Scripture is a prayer of David asking God to preserve him as the Holy Spirit anointed king of Israel. King Saul and king David being anointed by the Holy Spirit is similar to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that is ours as Christians under the New Covenant. The Holy Spirit was removed from Saul, but this will not happen to us as Christians. Ephesians 1:13 says, “having also believed (in Christ for salvation), you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.” The Holy Spirit could have been removed from David, but God answered his prayers (like in Psalm 51 and here) and preserved him as the Holy Spirit anointed king of Israel.

While we cannot lose the Holy Spirit, we still need to pray that God will preserve us to the end so that his purposes are fulfilled in us. The same Holy Spirit who anointed king David and accomplished amazing things through him is the same Holy Spirit who can accomplish amazing things through us. The same Holy Spirit that transformed, led (Acts 13), and empowered those early disciples in the book of Acts so that they impacted their world in amazing ways, is the same Holy Spirit who is at work transforming, leading, and empowering us to impact our world in similarly amazing ways.

*Today's prayer response from today's thoughts:*

Lord, “Guard my soul and deliver me; do not let me be ashamed, for I take refuge in You. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for You.” Here I am waiting for your touch as an instrument in your hands. Take me and do amazing things with my life through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. Grant that all the way to the very end (preserved), I “live fully” for you, for the sake of the Gospel, and for the advancement of your kingdom. Amen!

*Note:*

**Personal help, encouragement, and support are available for your “Deeper” Christian life journey.**

At the beginning of the week the following three things were said:

- (1) When it comes to realizing Christian spirituality that is truly triumphant, it is “the Touch of the Master’s hand” that is absolutely essential and makes all the difference.
- (2) This Devotional series calls us to an understanding of Christianity that is absolutely dependent on the touch and work of Christ living in and through us.
- (3) This is truly a series to help the person who wants to explore, enter into, and consistently experience the “Deeper” Christian life.

Each week of our five-week devotional series gives you a lot to consider and respond to. Help, encouragement, and support are a vital part of the “Deeper” Christian life experience!

So, I want you to know that I am available to help, encourage, and support you. Please feel free to email me at [kenhart5273@gmail.com](mailto:kenhart5273@gmail.com) anytime with questions, thoughts, or concerns and I will gladly interact with you. Do not click on my email address. Just write it down and use it in your own email program. I can also be available by phone when needed. Just email me and I will email you my number. Blessings! Ken Hart