

the encouragement on someone's face. So, here's a challenge for you. Make it your goal to get to know one new person at Union, in your neighborhood, or in your place of work. Find someone you can initiate a relationship with and establish a new connection. The more we learn about others, the more we learn about ourselves. Soon you'll be saying, "What a fellowship, what a joy divine...!"

Prayer: God, I thank you for the Church. Thank you for a place where people will rejoice with me and weep with me. I know the church is imperfect, because I am imperfect, but I am grateful for the blessing of spiritual fellowship and friendship. Amen.

Saturday, Luke 10:30-37

I was walking around the field while my son was at soccer practice. As I hit my stride, I noticed a woman in an electric wheelchair. She was trying to drive along a narrow dirt path, but she could not move. The leash for her little dog was tangled around the wheels and the chair was stuck. I walked over and asked if I could help her. I untangled the leash. It was nothing to me. But to this woman, it meant everything. I realized she had been stuck for about 30 minutes and no one had stopped to help her. I was glad to be there for her that day, but I also wondered how many people had I not noticed? How many people had I passed by because I was too busy? Jesus tells a great story in Luke 10. Which person in the story are you today?

Prayer: Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Open my eyes and use my hands as you will. My desire is to serve you this day and give you all glory, honor and praise. Amen.

Lent 2019: *Being Transformed - Daily Devotions*
Rev. Prince R. Rivers

April 6 – April 13, "The Good Life"

Sunday, John 1:35-46

Life is a team sport. We were never created to do life alone. From the beginning of his ministry, Jesus emphasized the importance of relationships. When two of John the Baptist's disciples saw Jesus for the first time, they began to follow him. Jesus invited them to stay with him. One of those disciples, Andrew, later found his brother, Simon, and brought him to Jesus. The following day, Jesus called Philip and then Nathanael. The disciples did not know it at the time, but they would need each other one day. Discipleship is not just about individual salvation. Discipleship offers the joy of new relationships. If we want to live the good life, we can only do it when we are building healthy relationships like Jesus did.

Prayer: Lord, sometimes my love for others depends on things that do not matter to you. Open my heart and give me the desire to love those you love. May I find great joy in seeing old relationships thrive and new relationships prosper. For your glory, Amen!

Monday, John 13:2-5; 31-35

A friend of mine has such a loud, joy-filled laugh, you can hear him before you see him. I recognize my friend by the sound of his voice. On the night before his crucifixion, Jesus taught the disciples how he wanted them to be recognized by the world. After a meal with his disciples, Jesus washed their feet, which was a task normally assigned to a servant. When the disciples expressed shock that Jesus would do a servant's job, Jesus replied, "I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. (v.15)" Later, Jesus said, "A new command I give you: love one another...By this everyone will know that you are my disciple. (vv.34-35)" Jesus wanted the disciples to follow his example of loving and serving one

another so that the world would recognize them as his disciples. This week, how will anyone recognize you as a disciple of Jesus Christ?

Prayer: Merciful God, Jesus came to show us the way of humility and love. Sometimes we are distracted by pride and selfishness. Make us less concerned with titles and recognition and more interested in being recognized as a follower of Jesus. Amen.

Tuesday, Philippians 2:19-29

Paul is one of the most influential people in the Bible. Yet, he consistently relied on and acknowledged the support he received from others. Paul praised Timothy for being a leader who cared about others' interests rather than his own. Paul also commended Epaphroditus, who is referred to as his 'co-worker'. Paul never sought to take all the credit for himself. He freely praised the people around him. Who is in your inner circle of friends? How are these relationships impacting your life? Do these people show genuine concern for you? Who do you need to thank today? Choose your relationships wisely. Life is good when we are surrounded by the right people.

Prayer: Thank you, Lord, for the people who have poured into my life. I am grateful for those who have looked out for my interests and have shown selfless concern for my welfare. Show me how to do the same for others. Amen.

Wednesday, Mark 8:34-37

How do we define the good life? Chances are our definition begins with having more of something. Maybe we want more money. Perhaps we want more success. Jesus has a unique definition of the good life. His idea involves having less, which is hard to accept in our consumer culture. Jesus says that whoever wants to have more life, must lose their life. By losing life, Jesus means that following him is the best way to the best life. To do this we must not focus on

living for ourselves. Losing ourselves means surrendering to Jesus' purpose and his agenda. Why would you want to gain the "world" and lose the one thing that matters, our soul? Stay with Jesus and he will always lead you to what is good.

Prayer: Good Shepherd, you have promised to lead and guide me to what is good. Show me what you want me to let go of so that I can more faithfully follow your Spirit. I am listening. Amen.

Thursday, Galatians 5:19-26

One of the blessings of this time of year is that more fresh fruit is in season. As a toddler, my daughter loved fruit so much that she would eat it first and leave everything else on her plate. Apparently, God loves fruit, too. The life that God wants for us is filled with spiritual fruit, the fruit of the Spirit. Paul outlines the nine ways that the Holy Spirit manifests in our lives. When life is good, we are loving, joyful, peaceful, longsuffering, kind, gentle and we have self-control. When the Holy Spirit is controlling our lives, these nine virtues are what people see in us. These characteristics are the fruit of a life being transformed into the image of Jesus. Take a few moments to examine yourself. Are you bearing any fruit today?

Prayer: Fill me, Holy Spirit! Fill me with your love and kindness. Fill me with your peace and gentleness. Fill me until all of You fills all of me. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Friday, Acts 2:42-47

Contrary to what our individualistic culture tells us, we do not live the good life alone. In every good life, we have relationships that build us up and do not tear us down. This is certainly the pattern we see in the early church in Acts. The believers are described as being devoted to fellowship. Being together was an important part of their spiritual life, which is why we gather for corporate worship each week. Digital church has its place, but it does not replace face-to-face community. We need to exchange smiles and hugs and see