



Daily Devotion

Wilsonville Baptist Church
Steve Thomas, Pastor

Day 21—Steve Thomas

Fishers of Men

We need to realize that evangelism is more than just what we say - it is how we go about living our lives every day. It is serving others and meeting needs. It is showing people Jesus every day, all day. It has been said that people will not listen to what we have to say until they know how much we care. If you want to be a positive witness for Jesus, begin where you are with the people around you.

Acts 1:8 (NASB), "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even the remotest part of the earth."

What kind of fisherman are you?

Father, I ask you today to make me a fisher of men. I have tried doing it my way, and now I am ready to do it yours. Teach me through your Word. Lead me by your Spirit. Give me wisdom with my words. Forgive me for being selfish and prideful in my life and words. Help me to be humble and learn to fish well. In Jesus name. Amen.

*Wilsonville Baptist Church
2018 Church Renewal*

Day 15—21

Day 15 – Jeffrey Vick

Who Am I?

One of the most intriguing singular verses in the Bible is Acts 19:15 (NASB), *“And the evil spirit answered and said to them, “I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?”*

Who am I? That’s a great question for me to ask myself today. Some people assume that who they are is a product of who they came from (parents), who they hang out with (friends), and what they do (occupation) - all which pale in comparison to who we are in Christ. Our struggles to pay bills, fit in with a peer group, or to live up to the expectations of others may be fulfilling, but they are temporary, and may in the end, prove to be out of balance within God’s plan for molding us into effective spiritual warriors for Christ.

In Ephesians 6:12 (NASB), Paul tells us, *“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.”*

I’m working two jobs again – sometimes three, and I could quickly become consumed with my daily struggles to complete tasks, solve problems, fight with traffic, and to meet a growing list of people’s needs, all of which are rewarding. But the only struggles that matter eternally, are those that lead me to do battle for the souls of the lost wherever I go, and on behalf of whomever I meet. So, I ask myself – who am I? An employee? Or an effective spiritual warrior for Christ?

In Acts 19:16 (NASB), seven sons of a Jewish chief priest have just found out who they are in terms of their effectiveness as spiritual warriors, in the mind of the demon, whom they confronted, each of them is an absolute nobody. The next verse tells us what happened when they tried to cast out a demon by wielding the name of Jesus (someone they did not know personally) as if it were a magical incantation.

“And the man, in whom was the evil spirit, leaped on them and subdued all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.”

Day 21—Steve Thomas

Fishers of Men

Matthew 4:19 (NASB), “And He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

When I was pastoring in the Smith Lake area, I went fishing one day with an elderly man named Dimp. Dimp knew what he was doing when he went and always seemed to bring home a good catch. He grew up on this lake and spent as much time out fishing as he could. He knew how to catch fish.

I, on the other hand, had never done much fishing. I did not know what to do to catch the fish. We had been fishing for a good while when I noticed Dimp was not fishing anymore. I turned and looked at him and before I could say anything, he said, “Son, you ain’t never going to catch a fish fishing like that!” I said, “Well, what do I need to do?”

Dimp began to explain to me what I was doing wrong and how I needed to cast, what I needed to do with the lure when it hit the water, how to reel it in, and what to do when I felt one bite. I listened and the next three casts, I caught fish.

When I began to fish on the Amazon River, I was taught that the fish are more aggressive, so I needed to be more aggressive with the lure. I have caught peacock bass because I learned what they were looking for.

We are told to go into all the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19-20). That may be next door and it may be in another part of the world. We have opportunities to share Jesus with those around us every day. The problem with many of us is, “We ain’t never going to catch a fish fishing like that!”

Jesus spent time loving people where they were and meeting real needs that they have. He helped them to move from their physical needs to their spiritual needs. Reaching people is more than a checklist of telling people. It is loving people and desiring to see God do in them what He has done for you. God does the saving, but we must be faithful with the whole message.

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Day 20—Danny Moore

You are here on purpose for a purpose. God has a ministry for you and only you.

Years ago, we had a person in our church working in a ministry with a full-time staff minister in charge. The Pastor appointed this person as director. The director's job was demanding with a great deal of responsibility. This ministry was evangelical and vitally important to God's work in our church. This person worked as hard as any paid staff member. The organizing of people and the execution of work was amazing. The amount of effort this person put into this ministry was incredible.

Also let me add, God used this ministry to reach many. Each year people came to Christ through this ministry. BUT, every year there was fussing, hurt feelings, and bickering. Time after time members were coming to the Pastor complaining about this person. This person could make more people mad, faster than anyone I have ever witnessed. This person had talent, experience, and knowledge but no spiritual wisdom. This person was a baby spiritually.

With spiritual wisdom and maturity come "relaxed mental attitude" (this person did not have), "capacity to love" (this person did not have), and "understanding God's will" (this person did not have). Again, let me say, "this person had talent, experience, and knowledge" but no spiritual maturity. He was using the truth from the word of God but in a mean way. He would tell people if you don't do what I say you will go to hell. He would see a sin in someone's life and tell them they were not saved.

You cannot know the will of God until you know the word of God. You must mature as a Christian to be effective in your God given ministry. God loves you just the way you are, but He refuses to leave you that way. He wants you to be just like Jesus. Truth without grace is mean. Grace without truth is meaningless. Truth and grace together are good medicine for the soul.

Day 15 – Jeffrey Vick

Who Am I?

So, let me just ask you, when you leave your house each day, do you feel like you are going to war? When you come home later and later each night, do you feel beaten down, wounded, and spiritually or emotionally poorer than the day before? If so, then let me challenge you to do one simple thing. Stop focusing your energy on battling the things of this world and take the first step in becoming an effective spiritual warrior for Christ, which is simply put, STAND FIRM! Stand firm and resist the devil's attempts to tempt you into what you already know is wrong.

As Paul said in Ephesians 6:13 (NASB), "*Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.*"

Day 16—Chuck Webb

Kamikaze Pilot

I have told the story of the kamikaze pilot who flew in World War II for the Japanese Air Force. He was interviewed by a newspaper reporter after returning from his fiftieth mission. The reporter asked the pilot if he wasn't a contradiction in terms. How can someone be a kamikaze pilot (whose mission is to fly into military bases and give up his life in the process) and still be alive after fifty missions? "Well it's like this," the pilot responded. "I was very involved. Not very committed, but very involved."

This is a great story. A true kamikaze pilot only flies on one mission. He gives his life for that one mission. He cannot be involved without being committed. There is no such thing as a half-hearted kamikaze pilot. Commitment goes with the territory. And so it is with us. If we desire to be a godly Christians, we must choose wholehearted devotion to God, not just being half-hearted. This is the stark contrast to the popular brand of Christianity these days that operates on mild enthusiasm, partial obedience, and serving when it feels good. Being wholehearted is being genuine, not pretending. Wholeheartedness toward God is single-minded in its pursuit, with no reservations, no compromises, and no excuses.

We cannot be involved without being committed. The rest of the world may enjoy involvement without commitment, but as Christians we cannot. We should wholeheartedly be committed to God. We then need to be committed to our families and our church family.

"Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." (Deuteronomy 6:5, NIV)

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." (Mark 12:30, NIV)

Day 19—Steve Thomas

Jeremiah 29:11

God has a plan for your life. He has a plan for you in this renewal process. As we look for God to do something special, we need to trust that God is at work in each one of our lives to accomplish a work for His honor and glory. We don't know everything that will take place in our lives while we are on this earth, but we do know we have a future with Him and our hope lies in Jesus. We need to be at work with God's plan for us now.

God's first plan for every life is to accept Jesus as your personal Savior and begin to follow Him as the leader of your life. Until that happens, the rest of the plan will not take place. God will take your background, the circumstances of your life, the people in your past and present, among other things, to prepare you for what He wants you to do.

Too many Christians do not want to do what God is leading them in. It looks too hard. It takes us too far. It changes too much. It is not what we had in mind. Let me remind you, God always knows what is best for us and how we can best serve Him. He lays out the plan and we need to follow it.

When I surrendered to preach, I was fifteen. I was scared and did not know what that would mean down the road. It has been an exciting, but sometimes difficult journey to get to where I am today. I do not know what God has in store for me in the days, weeks, months, and years ahead, but I know I can trust Him. I have seen Him work in the past and that gives me more confidence that He will work in the future. It is not always in my time or in my ways, but the focus is not me, but Jesus. I have learned to follow God in His plan for me.

I hope you are following God's plan for your life and feel His blessings every day. God loves you and His plan is wonderful. Trust Him.

Dear Jesus, thank you for coming into my life as my Lord and Savior. Forgive me for not always following your plan, but trying to do what I wanted to do. Renew my spirit every day. Show me Your will and your plan in Your time and help me grow in faith as I strive to live a life to bring You all the honor and glory. Help me to lead others to you. In Jesus name. Amen.

Day 18—Vonda Vick

“Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” (Psalm 51:7, NASB)

“Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the LORD, “Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool.” (Isaiah 1:7, NASB)

I was standing at my kitchen sink in a decidedly grumpy mood washing a pile of dirty dishes. It had been a long and trying day, and I was successfully channeling my frustrations toward the task at hand. I grumbled as I scrubbed aggressively at a particularly dirty piece of glassware, knowing full well it wouldn't be as difficult to clean if I had addressed it immediately instead of letting it sit all day allowing the food to cement itself in the corners and edges.

As I washed dish after dish I began to realize these exact same pieces would find their way back to the sink, and I would have to wash them all over again tomorrow. Overwhelmed and on the brink of despair I felt the Holy Spirit speaking to my heart: "It's ok. I like doing dishes."

Immediately, I became aware of the metaphor before me. I was like these dishes, stained and dirty from sin, some of which I had allowed to cement in my heart for days or weeks, hindering my usefulness to God's service. In that moment I allowed myself to experience God's cleansing power and my heart was flooded with hope and renewal. I knew I would probably be back tomorrow and the day after that, but instead of despair I was grateful for the knowledge that He delights in forgiving us day after day if we come to Him with a repentant heart.

Day 17—Steve Thomas

Isaiah 40:31

When running long distance, a runner will become tired. Muscles begin to get tight, breathing becomes labored, and the mental focus needed becomes difficult. As this begins to take place, it is easy to think about quitting. The goal of the finish line is not seen, but the failure of the race comes into focus. It is very important for the runner to keep going. To keep doing what he knows to do. Don't quit, but just keep going.

Somewhere along the way, there comes what is called a second wind. All of a sudden, the oxygen once again begins to flow freely. The muscles begin to work without a major effort and the finish line becomes the goal once again. Keep going. Don't quit.

Christians often need to get a second wind, a renewal. We have become tired and the work being done is not done in joy. The struggle begins and too many times, we see Christians walk away rather than continue on. We know what to do, but it has become difficult. We are no longer focused on Jesus, but self. We are no longer sharing His love, but our frustration. We need that second wind.

God provides what we need when we need it. He never said it was going to be easy. He told us to, *“Take up our cross and follow Him.”* His cross took Him to Calvary. He was beaten and nailed to a cross to die. He did it with you in mind. He did not forget His goal, YOU. Jesus loves you and did not quit. He longs to give you what you need to get through.

Are you ready to walk and not faint? Are you ready to run and not get weary? Are you ready to soar with wings like eagles? Wait on the Lord. Trust Him. Keep doing what you know to do. God will give you what you need at just the right time.

Dear Jesus, forgive me for trying to run this race called life my way. Help me to put my eyes on You and run it your way. Help me to keep doing what you have given me to do and not quit. I know You will give me a second wind at just the right time. Thank you for loving me. In Jesus name. Amen.