



TIMELY REFLECTIONS

A MINUTE A DAY WITH DALE MEYER

365 INSPIRATIONAL SELECTIONS FROM
THE MEYER MINUTE
DAILY DEVOTIONAL SERIES

March 6

God's Forgiveness – the Final Word?

Forgiveness is the heart of the Christian message. In Jesus Christ “we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (Colossians 1:14). God’s gracious justification of the sinner through faith has been called the article on which the Church stands or falls. So we say, but do we in the Church act as if God’s forgiveness truly is the final word?

Think about your own sins. Think especially about what you did, that something that can keep you awake at night, that thing about which your conscience says, *Look what you did! That can never be made right!* You’d like to turn the clock back and do it right but – and oh, this is so big – you can’t turn the clock back and do it again. So when you hear that God has forgiven you for Jesus’ sake, is that word final? Or does your sin keep coming back to haunt you? It probably keeps coming back, and so you need to hear God’s final word over and over again: “your sins are forgiven” (1 John 2:12).

How about your husband, wife, child, a friend, someone who has done you wrong? How about someone in your church whose past sin is known but who comes and hears and believes the word of forgiveness week after week along with you? Do you try to put that wrong out of your mind, or is it something you hang onto and sometimes talk about? If God’s word of forgiveness to you for your sins is final but you keep needing to hear it so that you live in forgiveness, isn’t God’s word of forgiveness for others also final and you need to keep hearing His decision about them so that you can extend His forgiveness?

“Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors” (Matthew 6:12). (Also see Matthew 6:14-15.) Is the Church standing or falling?

For further reflection: 1 Corinthians 6:1-11 – A congregation that wasn’t practicing forgiveness

Lord Jesus, I’m wired to feel guilty. Thank You for coming to me again and again with Your words of forgiveness. I confess it’s sometimes hard for me to forgive others. Please keep coming at me, get into my head, with Your words that I should forgive as I have been forgiven. Help all of us in our church to forgive. For Your sake, Amen.

April 5

Run to the Tomb!

The women returned from the tomb and told the disciples that Jesus had been raised from the dead. “But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. But Peter rose and ran to the tomb...” (Luke 24:11-12).

Again and again the Spirit urges, *Run to the tomb!* When the circumstances of your life suggest that you’re in a dead end... When friends and family disappoint you... When your prayers seem to go up and evaporate unanswered... When your heart and hope hit the ground with a thud... When words of faith seem an idle tale... Then the Spirit of God invites, *Run to the tomb!*

Jesus just doesn’t do things our way. He was born in a stable, not the palace of a king, rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, not a regal horse, died that we might live... He just doesn’t conform to our reasoned expectations. He’s always going before us. Our joy is to follow.

Peter ran to the tomb because he remembered what Jesus had said. So too the women – “they remembered his words” (Luke 24:8). In all you do today, remember God’s promises to you and let the empty tomb resurrect your hope.

For further reflection: Think back to all the times the Lord brought you through in an unexpected way. “Who from our mother’s arms / Has blessed on our way / With countless gifts of love / And still is ours today.”¹ *Run to the tomb!*

*Now I will cling forever / To Christ, my Savior true;
My Lord will leave me never, / Whate’er He passes through.
He rends death’s iron chain; / He breaks through sin and pain;
He shatters hell’s dark thrall; / I follow Him through all.*²

April 29

Last In, First Out

“Last in, first out.” That’s one of the perks of being Seminary president when “Call Day” comes and our students learn where the Church is sending them. The announcements happen in a festive service, joyous but anxious for students and their families, and the presidential perk is that I’m the last one to process in for the service but the first one to recess out. When I walk out, I head straight up to the balcony so that I can watch the students, calls in hand, walk out two-by-two.

They are going into a world they do not know and into experiences they cannot imagine. Some go with maturity; others have maturing ahead of them. Their average age is in the very early 30s. Some are A+ students but will need to learn better interpersonal skills. Others may not be good at parsing Greek or Hebrew but do have emotional intelligence, a characteristic of a good pastor. Some have seriously heavy student debts and are worried. Others have middling debts, and only a few have none. I watch them walk out of the chapel and think of all the interactions I’ve had with them during their time here. But most of all I pray that they more and more consciously follow Jesus Christ. They know it already in their heads, that they can’t put their faith in a seminary or in the institutional church or in their own abilities, good as they may be. They’re walking out to experience sin and grace in the depth of their souls, and in that experience to be reminded that faith has no other resort than Jesus Christ. Looking down from the balcony, I admit that I get a bit teary-eyed. I also wish I were a young man again, walking out into life and ministry.

“Last in, first out” also happens to be the goal of people who go to church grudgingly. May these new pastors keep walking – walking in their communities, walking among their people – so that when Sunday comes more and more people will say, “I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go to the house of the LORD!’” (Psalm 122:1).

For further reflection: Psalm 37 – An old man offers insights for a life of faith.

Lord God, You have called Your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go but only that Your hand is leading us and Your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.¹ Amen.

February 28

“See You Later, Guys!”

“Hi, Christian here! I am becoming very verbal. I make little sentences. I speak my mind. Last Sunday in church I was restless. So I hopped off the pew, stepped into the aisle, and said to Daddy, Mommy, and Connor, ‘See you later, guys.’ Opa will tell you this is true. I am not making this up. Well, I didn’t see anything wrong with leaving church but Mommy grabbed me and plopped me back in the pew. A plop in the pew is a hard thing, especially when you don’t want to be there.

“Do you big people ever walk away from church and say, ‘See you later, guys?’ Big people can get away with that. Do you like having the time to do what you want to do? Do you think you make your life simpler by not listening to God? Do you ever come back to church? When I grow up, I wonder if I’ll say to church, ‘See you later, guys.’

“Well, after my hard landing on the pew, it came time for the children’s message. I went to the front. Pastor John told me about Jesus. I was glad I was there. If I had still been away from church, I would have missed something good.”

For further reflection: Colossians 4:14; Philemon 24; 2 Timothy 4:10 – The example of Demas

*Oh, to grace how great a debtor / Daily I’m constrained to be;
 Let that grace now, like a fetter / Bind my wand’ring heart to Thee:
 Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it; / Prone to leave the God I love.
 Here’s my heart, O take and seal it, / Seal it for Thy courts above.¹
 Amen.*

December 17

Hoping for the Perfect Christmas?

When comes the perfect Christmas? In a few days?

For some we know this Christmas will be spent in a hospital bed, hopefully with some family sitting close by. For some we know this Christmas will be spent in the loneliness of a nursing home. For some we know the circle has been broken because that enemy death has robbed the family circle of a dear one. For some we know the absence around the tree is because of love – a family member offering himself, herself in defense of our country, perhaps laying it on the line in the Middle East. There are other circumstances for some, less spectacular, but still they prevent the whole family from gathering. And even if all will gather and things appear well outwardly, worries and fears and angers within make the holiday less than perfect.

When comes the perfect Christmas? If conditions are all well for you and yours, see these days as a dim reflection of the better celebration still to come. And if the next days will be less than perfect, trust God's promises to you, look ahead, look beyond the horizon.

They are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. (Revelation 7:15-17)

Now through His Son doth shine / The Father's grace divine.
 Death was reigning o'er us / Through sin and vanity
 Till He opened for us / A bright eternity.
 May we praise Him there! / May we praise Him there!¹

For further reflection: 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 – “We do not lose heart.”

*O Christ, do Thou my soul prepare / For that bright home of love
 That I may see Thee and adore / With all Thy saints above.²*

Amen.

A minute's worth of reading for a day's worth of reflection.

Timely Reflections is a collection of 365 inspirational devotions from the long-running and ever-popular *Meyer Minute* weekday online series. Dr. Meyer aptly uses Scripture along with his own wisdom and experience to guide his readers through the joys and pitfalls of daily living. Insightful, uplifting, and sometimes challenging, these daily reflections will provide plenty of spiritual food for thought. Set aside a minute a day to read, reflect, savor, and share each one!

"Profound. Poignant. Practical. Provocative. The Word in words – all in a minute each day. Thanks, Dale, for opening your compassionate heart, your brilliant mind, your sanctified spirit, and your abundant faith in Jesus to us and allowing us to laugh, cry, praise, meditate, reflect, pray, and especially grow closer to Jesus Christ, our Savior."

- Brian Friedrich, President, Concordia University, Nebraska

"I began leading a devotion at a homeless dining room in Phoenix in 2009. Part of my outreach involves speaking to each of the 500 attendees every Tuesday. But what to say? Dr. Meyer's Minutes have provided the perfect handout. Whether for your personal use or feeding 500, there is always an appropriate Minute."

- Karl Jenkins, CEO, Phoenix Benefits, Inc.

"Dale Meyer has the ability to juxtapose sacred Scripture with events of our everyday lives. Each Meyer Minute provides a moment for me to pause and reflect how I will let God's hand guide me on my personal and professional journey."

- J. Michael Pressimone, President, Fontbonne University



Dale Meyer with grandson Connor, looking up at the cross atop the Concordia Seminary chapel.

Dr. Dale A. Meyer currently serves as President of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, MO. He was the Speaker of *The Lutheran Hour* radio program from 1989 to 2001. Dr. Meyer continues to be a beloved and well-known preacher and conference speaker. He and his wife Diane have been married for over 40 years. They have two grown daughters and five grandchildren.



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