

MORNING WATCH-2015

Sunset Gap

You may remember that the third of our goals for this week together, was to “*enable us to live in Christian community, with worship as a key part of our week.*” To that end, we begin and end each day with worship. Each morning by **7:40**, we are all out of our bunks and in a private, quiet space to have at least 10 minutes of devotion time, using the guide below. It has scripture for each day, as well as a guided reading to spur your prayer and thoughts. Our themes each morning come from the daily programs for our Day Camp this week. Each talks about God’s power and presence in our lives. And then at **7:50**, we gather at the pavilion for our morning worship. Let this time enrich your week and your growth in faith.



GOD PROVIDES Monday 1 Kings 17 Today our campers will meet the prophet, Elijah whose name means “my God is *Yahweh*, Lord” or to put it another way, “the Lord is my God.” Elijah came from the small, rural town of Gilead and spread his message about God throughout the capital and major cities of Israel and Judah, places foreign and unfamiliar to him. He was initially shunned and rebuked by the city dwellers who looked down on him and considered him inferior because of his humble beginnings. The story helps us understand that we are all part of God’s family and God provides us with gifts that enable each of us do his work in the kingdom. Think about the workers in God’s house today. Think about your brothers and sisters of the faith who rode on the bus with you for 13 hours. What makes the work that we are here to do so important? It is about being part of a family, God’s family, the Family of Faith. How will God provide for you during this time together here on this day and this week? What are you anxious about in this new place? Take a few moments to meditate and pray for all those you will come in contact with today...familiar faces and new friends. Take a few moments to pray for God’s help in all the challenging moments that you will face and know that God will provide.

“And God will generously provide all you need.” ~ 2 Corinthians 9:8



GOD COMFORTS Tuesday 1 Kings 19 Today our campers will hear another story about Elijah. As Elijah flees from King Ahab and his wife, Jezebel, he hits one of the lowest points in his life and even pleads with God to end his life. Jezebel, the powerful queen of Israel, wants to kill him since he was the only prophet in Israel serving God. Jezebel tried to have all the other prophets of God killed and the few who were left were in hiding. Elijah begins a 40 day trek to Mount Sinai and God responds not in the mighty wind, earthquake or fire, but in a gentle whisper. God reveals that he is more than just a powerful God controlling the forces of nature, but is always present even in the quiet, gentleness of a whisper. Experience tells us that the world is an imperfect place. There is nothing like being comforted when we are hurting. Today is a reminder that we are never alone, God is always by our side. Jesus’ life changes us and his death forever changed the world. Our life experiences change us and who we are. We are called by God to be a comfort and care for others. We are comforted and cared for by the people of Sunset Gap and by members of our Ministry Team. This might be a good day to think about and record those moments when you have felt touched by God’s presence and have grown in faith.

“He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others.” ~ 2 Peter 3:18

GOD HEALS Wednesday 2 Kings 5 Today our campers will hear the story of Naaman, who was a commander of the king’s army of Syria and was a favorite of the king and well-respected because of his success. There was one catch, though, Naaman had leprosy, a disease that carried with it a great social stigma. God sent the prophet, Elisha, to heal Naaman instructing him to have Naaman bathe in the Jordan seven times, which Naaman thought was a lot to ask him to do. Although we live in a world where we are connected by technology and used to immediate gratification, our story reminds us that God’s power to heal and care for us does not always happen immediately. There are also times that we are never fully healed, but must learn to adapt and



adjust to a new normal. One of the things that we remind one another when we are doing God's work this week in Sunset Gap, is that we need to be able to go with the flow, expect the unexpected, and be ready to help wherever and whenever we are needed. How do we find God at work in us today? How is God using you to do God's work here? God has the power to heal in many different ways. Maybe there are things that you will learn here that you can use in other ways when you return home...next week, next month or next year.

"He heals the brokenhearted and bandages their wounds" ~ Psalm 147:3

GOD FORGIVES Thursday Luke 22:31-24:12 In our story today, Jesus predicts that Peter will



betray him by denying to know him three times before the cock crows. When Jesus died on the cross, the curtain in the inner sanctuary of the Temple was torn in two. This inner space, called the Holy of Holies, was the earthly dwelling place of God's presence. God ordained that only the high priest could go past this curtain once a year. The torn curtain revealed that now, because of Jesus' sacrifice, anyone who puts their faith in Jesus has access to God. Luke is the only book of the Gospels that tells about Jesus forgiving the thief, saying, "I assure you, today you will be with me

in paradise." Jesus forgave the people who put him to death. Because of his sacrifice on the cross, our sins are also forgiven. If only it was as easy for us to forgive others. Think about and pray for those who need forgiveness. Pray for peace, healing and reconciliation in a world that suffers from injustice and bigotry. How can you teach others about God and share the love of Jesus in a world that is broken by sin?

"You are a God of forgiveness." ~ Nehemiah 9:17

GOD LOVES US FOREVER Friday John 14:1-3 In the Bible story

on this last day of camp, Jesus describes heaven as a house filled with many rooms, an expression meaning unlimited space, where there is always a place for us. Jesus gives his disciples a message of comfort and assurance of heaven to help prepare them for what is to come. Being a disciple is not always easy. It wasn't for those first followers of Jesus and it isn't for us. This week has been one of challenges and has given each of us opportunities to grow in our faith and understanding of who we are and what it means to be a child of God as we walk with Jesus. We have seen how God provides care and comfort for the people of Sunset Gap and for each of us. God loves us so much that he sent his son to live among us and to die for us. What a wonderful message to share that no matter what we do, we are loved unconditionally and forever.



"Everyone who believes in him will have eternal life." ~ John 3:15



FAITH Saturday On the bus and heading home. It was faith that brought us here in every sense of the word. The faith that God has given each of us. The Family of Faith that organizes this annual pilgrimage. And now its time to thank God for this week. We give thanks for those who have touched our lives and those whose lives we have touched. For new friends we have made and for relationships that have grown. For the gift of being able to live in this special Christian community for a week. In the

quiet of the bus ride today, take some time to thank God for these gifts and for the special blessings you have encountered. Pray for those we are leaving and understand that ministry always involves movement. Praising God always involves movement. To strange places like Tennessee, like New Providence, like Newark, like Tanzania, and countless other places. Like Jerusalem, where the world was forever changed. Thank God for calling us, for leading us, and for caring for us on this journey of faith. *"O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through challenges 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."* Thank God for always providing what we need. Thank God for the gift of faith and of Faith.

Our Family members back home will receive copies of this devotional and are invited to join us each morning for prayer at 7:40