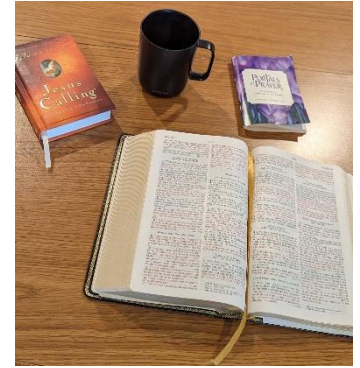


Strengthening Your Faith in a Fast-Paced World

It is no secret that we live in a fast-paced world. With the pandemic waning, there is a “new normal” to our lifestyle. Those working seem busier than ever, perhaps doing the job previously accomplished by more than one employee. Yet, I have recently detected a new commitment to serve others, even among busy people. Despite a full plate of responsibilities, we have not lost our purpose to serve others. One of my observations comes from being a member of a civic club in my community. We are on hyper-drive, growing our membership and expanding how we serve our community.

In the Gospel of Mark, the author emphasizes Jesus’ servanthood and sacrifice as He responds to the will of His Heavenly Father. The key verse in the Gospel of Mark reads, *For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as ransom for many (Mark 10:45)*. Mark is the shortest of the Gospels centering its focus on the person and mission of Jesus. It leaves the genealogy and childhood years of Jesus to other Gospels. Mark is a fast-moving look at the ministry of Jesus -- preaching, healing, teaching, and concluding with His death on the cross, resurrection, commissioning of the disciples, and His ascension. Many printings of the Bible show Jesus’ actual words in red.



We are now in the Lenten season, the 40 days between Ash Wednesday and sundown on Holy Thursday (often referred to as Maundy Thursday). To remind us of Jesus’ forty days in the desert and focus our attention on His sacrifice, many of us “give up” something during Lent. His sacrifice leads to our hope for salvation. In honor of this special season, people try to be more intentional with prayer and bible study.

Here is a suggestion for a Lenten activity tailored to a fast-paced life. Take a few minutes to read through the Gospel of Mark. Read a chapter each day reflecting on Jesus’ ministry. How do we do this with a busy schedule and many things on our to-do list? Spend a quiet time with God over a morning coffee. Leave the cell phone, iPad, and to-do list in another room, removing all distractions. Psalm 46:10 says, *Be Still and Know I am God...* The goal is to put *God first* to help us through the day. These precious minutes are only for God and you. Perhaps you could read a short devotional, looking up the accompanying Bible passages for a better understanding of God’s direction for your life. Many churches provide a daily devotional book. There are also motivating daily devotional books, such as Jesus Calling, written in the “first-person” of Jesus speaking directly to us. You would be surprised at how often the faith lesson of the daily devotion speaks directly to an issue in your life. Then, read a chapter in Mark and conclude with prayer. You may even become comfortable with this time to become a new routine and commitment that continues after Easter. The morning coffee stimulates the body and mind, while God’s Word awakens the Spirit. Together, they can give your day a great start, with God leading the way. Reading the scripture and a concluding prayer will take just a few minutes but could be a life-changing practice. There is no better time to start this practice than during Lent to awaken your faith. Let five minutes daily, focusing on Jesus (not your to-do list), be a “new normal” for you.

Other Scripture Reading: Read Psalm 5.

What’s the Point: Starting your day with the Lord will help you model your life on the life of Jesus and can start a new relationship that will strengthen your faith and give you peace. Put God first in your day.

Prayer: Dear Lord. We need to start our day with You so that You will guide us through the trials and tribulations we face. Amen.