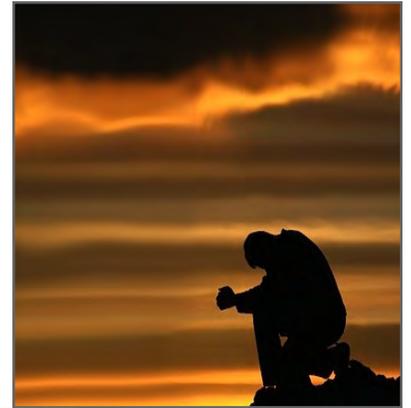


Family Worship, Family Faith



365 Bible Devotions
For Individuals, Couples, Families or Groups
The Rev. Dr. Brad Munroe

Come, Holy Spirit, and fill our lives with your love!

The Word

Acts 16:16-31 (*Paul and Silas proclaim good news even in prison*)

One day a slave girl ran into us. She was a psychic and, with her fortunetelling, made a lot of money for the people who owned her. 17 She started following Paul around, yelling out, "These men are working for the Most High God. They're laying out the road of salvation for you!" 18 She did this for a number of days until Paul, finally fed up with her, turned and commanded the spirit that possessed her, "Out! In the name of Jesus Christ, get out of her!" And it was gone, just like that. 19 When her owners saw that their business was



suddenly bankrupt, they went after Paul and Silas, dragged them into the market square and had the police arrest them, 20 "These men are disturbing the peace — dangerous Jewish agitators 21 subverting our Roman law and order." 22 The crowd had turned into a restless mob out for blood. The judges went along with the mob, had Paul and Silas's clothes ripped off and ordered a public beating. 23 After beating them, they threw them into jail, telling the jailkeeper to put them under heavy guard so there would be no chance of escape. 24 He did just that — threw them into the maximum security cell in the jail and clamped leg irons on them. 25 About midnight, Paul and Silas were at prayer and singing a robust hymn to God. 26 Then, without warning, a huge earthquake! The jailhouse tottered, every door flew open, all the prisoners were loose. 27 Startled from sleep, the jailer saw all the doors swinging loose on their hinges. *Assuming that all the prisoners had escaped, he pulled out his sword and was about to do himself in, figuring he was as good as dead anyway,* 28 *when Paul stopped him: "Don't do that! We're all still here! Nobody's run away!"* 29 *The jailer got a torch and ran inside. Badly shaken, he collapsed in front of Paul and Silas.* 30 *He led them out of the jail and asked, "Sirs, what do I have to do to be saved, to really live?"* 31 *They said, "Put your entire trust in the Master Jesus. Then you'll live as you were meant to live — and everyone in your house included!"*

The Message

The Reflection

What chains keep you from knowing God's Spirit? Did Paul's chains keep him from knowing God's Spirit?

The Prayer

Holy Spirit of the Father and of the Son, you are closer to us than our own breath and know our needs before we know them, so free our spirits from what keeps us chained to sin. Free us to live for you and love one another even when the harsh attitudes and angry voices of others seek to imprison us in embarrassment, hurt or shame. May we live our lives today with the full freedom of knowing we belong to you!

The Blessing

May the Spirit of the Living God descend upon your mind to increase your faith, upon your heart to increase your hope, and upon your whole person to increase your love for those whom you will meet this day.

Come, Holy Spirit, and fill our lives with your love!

The Word

Acts 17:16-17, 21-32 (*Paul proclaims the "Unknown God"*)

Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols. 17 Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the Gentile worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there... 21 For all the Athenians and the foreigners who were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing. 22 Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, *"Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; 23 for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: 24 God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. 25 Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. 26 And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, 27 so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; 28 for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.' 29 Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. 30 Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, 31 because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."* 32 When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, "We will listen to you again."



NKJV

The Reflection

When have you noticed in others a desire to hear a "new thing," a new idea, a new habit, yet ignore that which is of God? When have you noticed this same desire in yourself?

The Prayer

Holy Spirit of the Father and of the Son, you are closer to us than our own breath and know our needs before we know them, you know our need for you even when you are "unknown" to us. O Holy Spirit, show us other places of our hearts and habits that are unknown to us. Reveal to us ways our faithfulness and our following need your guidance, for your ways are currently unknown to us. Open us to all the ways of God.

The Blessing

May the Spirit of the Living God descend upon your mind to increase your faith, upon your heart to increase your hope, and upon your whole person to increase your love for those whom you will meet this day.

Come, Holy Spirit, and fill our lives with your love!

The Word

Acts 19:23-34 (*Faith in opposition to economy and culture*)

And during that time, there was some serious trouble in Ephesus about the Way of Jesus. 24 A man named Demetrius, who worked with silver, made little silver models that looked like the temple of the goddess Artemis. Those who did this work made much money. 25 Demetrius had a meeting with them and some others who did the same kind of work. He told them, "Men, you know that we make a lot of money from our business. 26 But look at what this man Paul is doing. He has convinced and turned away many people in Ephesus and in almost all of Asia! He says the gods made by human hands are not real. 27 There is a danger that our business will lose its good name, but there is also another danger: People will begin to think that the temple of the great goddess Artemis is not important. Her greatness will be destroyed, and Artemis is the goddess that everyone in Asia and the whole world worships." 28 When the others heard this, they became very angry and shouted, "Artemis, the goddess of Ephesus, is great!" 29 The whole city became confused. The people grabbed Gaius and Aristarchus, who were from Macedonia and were traveling with Paul, and ran to the theater. 30 Paul wanted to go in and talk to the crowd, but the followers did not let him. 31 Also, some leaders of Asia who were friends of Paul sent him a message, begging him not to go into the theater. 32 Some people were shouting one thing, and some were shouting another. The meeting was completely confused; most of them did not know why they had come together. 33 They put a man named Alexander in front of the people, and some of them told him what to do. Alexander waved his hand so he could explain things to the people. 34 But when they saw that Alexander was a Jew, they all shouted the same thing for two hours: "Great is Artemis of Ephesus!"



NCV

The Reflection

Not everyone believes in the one true God revealed in Jesus. Why do you think the Ephesians felt the need to shout and riot when their "god" was being threatened? When have you witnessed this same phenomenon in today's world?

The Prayer

Holy Spirit of the Father and of the Son, you are closer to us than our own breath and know our needs before we know them, you know our passionate desire to be right, to be seen as right, and to never be contradicted in matters of faith. O Spirit, these desires are borne of fear and not faith, so please forgive us and implant within us the seed of faith willing to trust that even when we are not perceived as true in the eyes of others, we are still seen as beloved in the eyes of the Father.

The Blessing

May the Spirit of the Living God descend upon your mind to increase your faith, upon your heart to increase your hope, and upon your whole person to increase your love for those whom you will meet this day.

Come, Holy Spirit, and fill our lives with your love!

The Word

Acts 27:14, 18-26, 33-36, 42-44 (*Paul trusts in God's providence, even in the midst of the storm*)

A hurricane-force wind called the northeaster blew down from the island... 18 We were violently battered by the storm, and the sailors began throwing cargo overboard, 19 and on the third day they threw the ship's gear overboard. 20 When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and a violent storm continued to batter us, we finally abandoned all hope of being saved. 21 *Paul stood up among them and said, "Men, you should have listened to me and not put out to sea from Crete, thus avoiding this damage and loss. 22 And now I advise you to keep up your courage, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only the ship will be lost. 23 For last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve came to me 24 and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul! You must stand before Caesar, and God has graciously granted*



you the safety of all who are sailing with you.' 25 *Therefore keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will be just as I have been told. 26 But we must run aground on some island."* 33 ...As day was about to dawn, Paul urged them all to take some food, saying, "Today is the fourteenth day you have been in suspense and have gone without food; you have eaten nothing. 34 Therefore I urge you to take some food, for this is important for your survival. For not one of you will lose a hair from his head." 35 Paul then took bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all, broke it, and began to eat. 36 All of them were encouraged and took food themselves... 42 Now the soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners so that none of them would escape by swimming away. 43 But the centurion, wanting to save Paul's life, prevented them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and get to land, 44 and the rest were to follow, some on planks and some on pieces of the ship. And in this way all were brought safely to land.

The NET Bible

The Reflection

Have you ever been in what looked like a hopeless situation? What happened? How did God comfort you?

The Prayer

Holy Spirit of the Father and of the Son, you are closer to us than our own breath and know our needs before we know them, you are with us during the stormy times in our lives. Even when we cannot see what will come next, you know already that you will be with us. Help us to trust that you are present even during difficult days. Thank you for being with us especially on difficult days.

The Blessing

May the Spirit of the Living God descend upon your mind to increase your faith, upon your heart to increase your hope, and upon your whole person to increase your love for those whom you will meet this day.

Come, Holy Spirit, and fill our lives with your love!

The Word

Acts 28:1-10, 16, 30-31 (*Paul's life is a witness to non-believers*)

When we were safely on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta. 2 The people who lived on the island were unusually kind to us. They made a fire and welcomed all of us around it because of the rain and the cold. 3 *Paul gathered a bundle of brushwood and put it on the fire.* The heat forced a poisonous snake out of the brushwood. The snake bit Paul's hand and wouldn't let go. 4 When the people who lived on the island saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, "This man must be a murderer! He may have escaped from the sea, but justice won't let him live." 5 Paul shook the snake into the fire and wasn't harmed. 6 The people were waiting for him to swell up or suddenly drop dead. But after



they had waited a long time and saw nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god. 7 A man named Publius, who was the governor of the island, had property around the area. He welcomed us and treated us kindly, and for three days we were his guests. 8 His father happened to be sick in bed. He was suffering from fever and dysentery. *Paul went to him, prayed, placed his hands on him, and made him well.* 9 *After that had happened, other sick people on the island went to Paul and were made well.* 10 They showed respect for us in many ways, and when we were going to set sail, they put whatever we needed on board...16 *After our arrival, Paul was allowed to live by himself, but he had a soldier who guarded him...*30 *Paul rented a place to live for two full years and welcomed everyone who came to him.* 31 *He spread the message about God's kingdom and taught very boldly about the Lord Jesus Christ. No one stopped him.*

GWNBS

The Reflection

When have you witnessed integrity and compassion create hospitality in others? When has someone else's integrity and compassion changed your perception of them from bad to good?

The Prayer

Holy Spirit of the Father and of the Son, you are closer to us than our own breath and know our needs before we know them, every day you give us opportunities to care for others. Today may our care for others give glory to Jesus that others may know his love. By your power at work within us and through us, may we be a blessing to someone today.

The Blessing

May the Spirit of the Living God descend upon your mind to increase your faith, upon your heart to increase your hope, and upon your whole person to increase your love for those whom you will meet this day.

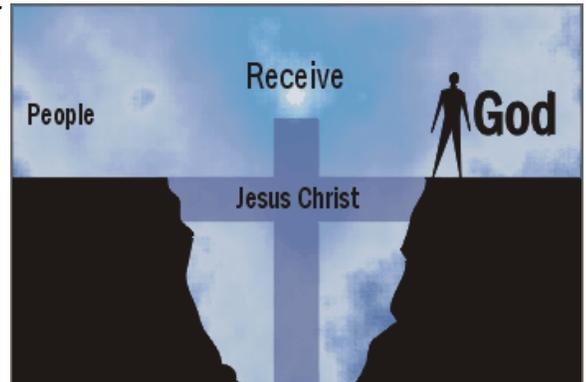
Come, Holy Spirit, renew us by your Holy Breathe, that we might rejoice in the newness of God's mercies to us today!

The Word

Romans 1:16-21, 25, 3:9-12, 21-26 (*All sin, are invited into the life of salvation*)

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is God's power for salvation to everyone who believes, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek. 17 For in it God's righteousness is revealed from faith to faith, just as it is written: The righteous will live by faith. 18 For God's wrath is revealed from heaven against all godlessness and unrighteousness of people who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth, 19 since what can be known about God is evident among them, because God has shown it to them. 20 From the creation of the world His invisible attributes, that is, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what He has made. As a result, people are without excuse. 21 For though they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God or show gratitude...

*25 They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served something created instead of the Creator, who is blessed forever... 3:9 What then? Are we any better? Not at all! For we have previously charged that both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin, 10 as it is written: *There is no one righteous, not even one; 11 there is no one who understands, there is no one who seeks God. 12 All have turned away, together they have become useless; there is no one who does good, there is not even one...* 21 But now, apart from the law, God's righteousness has been revealed—attested by the Law and the Prophets 22 —that is, God's righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ, to all who believe, since there is no distinction. 23 *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. 24 They are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. 25* God presented Him as a propitiation through faith in His blood, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His restraint God passed over the sins previously committed. 26 He presented Him to demonstrate His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be righteous and declare righteous the one who has faith in Jesus.*



HCSB

The Reflection

In what ways do you show your pride in the good news? Where do you see evidence of God in the creation? When have you seen examples of spiritual idolatry (distorted beliefs) leading to behavioral immorality (unhealthy acts)?

The Prayer

Holy Spirit of the Father and of the Son, you are the author and giver of life, the comfort of those who sorrow and the peace of those who are afraid, teach us a holy pride that we are saved by grace — by your gift — through faith. And help us devote ourselves to your true worship that we might better live as your children. May we claim to be wise in nothing else and no one else but Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Blessing

May the Spirit of God renew you for living the way of Jesus: friend to stranger and forgiver of enemies, compassion for the poor and justice for the oppressed, love to all and life to those willing to receive it.

Come, Holy Spirit, renew us by your Holy Breathe, that we might rejoice in the newness of God's mercies to us today!

The Word

Romans 5:1-11 (*God loves the ungodly; Christ died for his enemies*)

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. 3 And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5 and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. 6 For while we were still weak, *at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.* 7 Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person — though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. 8 *But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.* 9 Much more surely then,



now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. 10 *For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life.* 11 But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

NRSV

The Reflection

When have you experienced suffering that produced endurance that produced character that produced hope? If you personally have not experienced this, do you know a story of someone else in whom God has done this? Tell that story.

The Prayer

Holy Spirit of the Father and of the Son, you are the author and giver of life, the comfort of those who sorrow and the peace of those who are afraid, we thank you for the work of character building you work within us. Free us from the thought that a life with God is about changing our outward fortunes, and teach us to accept that life with you is all about an inward journey of grace, an unveiling of our truest selves, a discovery that we are called to be a blessing to others in your name.

The Blessing

May the Spirit of God renew you for living the way of Jesus: friend to stranger and forgiver of enemies, compassion for the poor and justice for the oppressed, love to all and life to those willing to receive it.