Week 3

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Devotional Book



**Devotions from FaithPoint Members**

**Shelby Maruska**

**Sowing Seeds of Love**

**Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.**

**Matthew 25:34-36**

Read Matthew 25: 31-46

Working as a nurse, I have taken care of people from many different walks of life, from babies taking their first breath, adults taking their last, and now surgical patients. Typically, most patients in a medical facility wish to be anywhere else but there, as do their families. They are stressed, in pain, and in a new & uncomfortable situation.

It comes and goes in waves, but it can sometimes be easy to become a bit callous to the struggles of life that I witness every day. Not only in my job, but in social media, the news, radio… everywhere we are surrounded by stories of heartbreak, suffering, and especially conflict. I find myself putting up walls to my emotions and to other people’s hurt to buffer the pain surrounding me in this world right now. It is just simply easier to let it go out the other ear.

But Jesus reminds us in Matthew 25, that he is IN US. He is in my patient struggling with pain, in your boss, and in the annoyingly slow driver in front of you. God has recently nudged me to try to open up my hardened heart and dive deeper into a relationship with Him in order to deal with the stress, uncertainty and difficulty of the world and people around me.

He is reminding me that we need to be SEEING JESUS in each other. We cannot let our hearts harden because of all of the suffering we encounter. Remember, Jesus DIED to save that person we see struggling. Even the annoying person. We need to LOVE these people in our everyday life like it is Jesus standing in front of us. Sowing seeds of LOVE, is what Jesus asks us to do. Instead of honking at the slow driver, pray that they arrive at their destination safely. Instead of sending a nasty email to your boss, do a small act of kindness for them. Turn the news off and volunteer in the community. Try to sow love into these people and situations. It won't only change their lives, but yours too.

“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

**Faith Step:** How different would your day look if you treated everyone you encountered as if they were Jesus?

**Shirley Schulz**

**Sowing seeds of Love**

**1 John 3:16-20**

**16This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. 17If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? 18Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth. 19This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: 20If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.**

When I was younger and so busy with the busyness of life, working and raising children, I would have defined love as the love I had for my children/family. I was too busy with the busyness of life to look beyond that. I felt love in my church family but it was really only in my involvement with different choirs.

Now that I’m older and life has slowed down I look beyond my immediate family and children. I didn’t have to look further than our little community of New Prague! I’m sure there are more signs of “loving with actions and in truth” but I’ll share the ones I have experienced.

Pink Tag Ministry at FaithPoint. My family knows very personally the devastation that living with, caring for, and losing a terminally ill loved one can put upon a person and a family. This ministry is a small way to let someone who is going through a very difficult time in their lives know that there’s someone out there that cares about them, is praying for them, and hopefully gives them a little pick-me-up. But it also gives me an opportunity to heal my heart by helping someone else through a difficult time. It’s a win-win opportunity. Jesus was very active in his ministry of healing. I can’t heal but maybe I can take the edge off for a little bit.

Hope House. People from different churches here in New Prague get together to help those families who are homeless. I have been blessed that I have never had to face that situation in my life. In 1 Peter 3:8 we are counseled to have “compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous”. What a rewarding way to show our love than to provide food and shelter for a struggling family. Jesus was born in a stable, in a way born as a homeless baby and was on the run from those who wanted to harm him.

Loads of Love. This new ministry couldn’t have come at a better time with the struggles some families are having with the Covid pandemic and loss of wages/income. It’s another opportunity to share a small piece of the love God has shown us.

Praha House. I have recently begun working part time at the Praha House with senior residents. The elderly have given so much guidance and love to those in their lives over the years that they certainly deserve whatever kindness and assistance we can give them. The staff at Praha show numerous ways that these folks are loved and that we care. I see the love there every day. Leviticus 19:32: “Stand up in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the Lord.”

Jesus gives us so many examples of how to love with our actions. The bible is full of examples. All we have to do is open our eyes and see the many ways we can give a little back to this world.

**Faith Step:** What ministry could try in the coming year to step out in love?

**Scripture Readings for Sowing the Seeds of Love Week**

**Scriptures are taken from the New Living Translation**

**Monday, March 22**

**1 John 2:9 - 10**   If anyone claims, “I am living in the light,” but hates a fellow believer, that person is still living in darkness.  Anyone who loves a fellow believer is living in the light and does not cause others to stumble.

**Tuesday, March 23**

**John 15:9 - 10** I have loved you even as the Father has loved me.  Remain in my love.  When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father’s commandments and remain in His love.

**Wednesday, March 24**

**1 Corinthians 13:4 - 7**  Love is patient and kind.  Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude.  It does not demand its own way.  It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged.  It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out.  Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

**Thursday, March 25**

**Proverbs 10:12** Hatred stirs up quarrels, but love makes up for all offenses.

**Friday, March 26**

**Matthew 22:37 - 39**  “Jesus replied, “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.  This is the first and greatest commandment.  A second is equally important:  Love your neighbor as yourself.