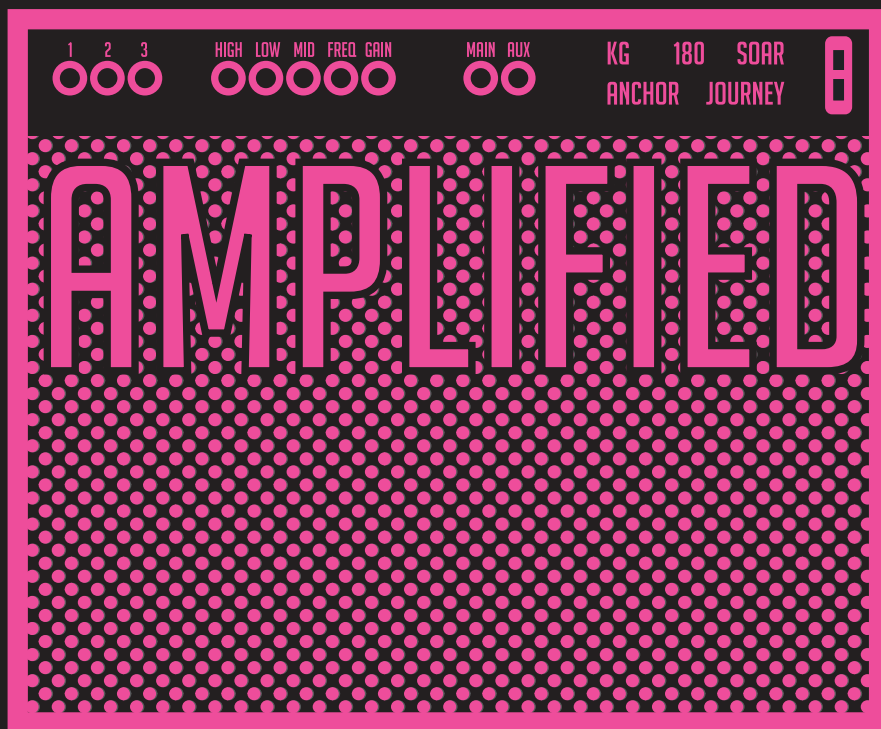


ILLUM INATE



2015
DEVOTIONALS
上海 YOUTH WORSHIP NIGHT

Introduction

Jesus called Himself the light of the world (John 8:12) as He brought light and love into the darkness of our lives and in this world. We were separated from God because of our sins, mistakes and failures, but God so loved the world that He sent Jesus into our world to die for all of those things that separate us from God. All it takes is to accept and believe what Jesus has done for you, and His light, eternal love and presence will invade your life!

It does not end there, but Jesus also stated, "You are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14a). Focus on the fact that He said "You ARE," meaning that you do not have to do anything or try to be better, but just by believing that "You ARE the light of the world!" His light was not meant to end with us, but the purpose was that it would be spread to the whole world through US! Our vision as pastors is to see Jesus' light shine brightly through each of you, in your youth groups, friendships, families, and in your schools.

To shine God's light, we need to be filled with God's Word and Spirit. Write down something that you want to give up as an act of love for God so that you can focus more on Him this week. What is it that steals your heart from God? Write it down and confess it to God and one person. It may be media (TV shows, Facebook, etc.) or perhaps it is an unhealthy relationship or destructive habit. As you give more of your time to God and less to whatever you've chosen to give up this week, I promise you will meet God in a whole new way!

Write down what you will give up this week so you can spend more time with Jesus.

ILLUMINATE COMMITMENT

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

We are going to go through our pastors' favorite stories about Jesus. We challenge you to read these stories over the next five days leading up to Amplified. We will focus on specific stories about Jesus' love. Allow His Word and Spirit to invade and transform you this week. As you focus more on Him, it will enable you to shine His light more brightly!

Before reading, ask God to speak to you during this time. Read the Bible passage and devotional, then:

- Observe: What does the passage say?
- Interpretation: What does it mean?
- Life Application: What does it mean for me?



Learning To Be Humble

Peter Yoo

READ JOHN 13:1-17

OBSERVATION

C.S. Lewis, a well-known Christian author stated, "Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it is thinking less about yourself." Jesus showed one of the greatest acts of humility in John 13 on the night before He would die on the cross as He washed the feet of the twelve disciples.

Washing feet was considered so lowly, because roads in those days had sewage running along the side of the street, not underground like it is today. A lot of times pee, poo and dirt would get caked on people's feet because the only footwear they had were sandals! Just imagine having to walk to school or home with that on your feet everyday!

As a custom, if you entered a house for a meal, the servant wouldn't even clean the feet of the guests, but would make their children do it. At this particular time, there were no servants or their children around. So Jesus does the unthinkable and lowliest act of service imaginable. The Creator of the universe washed the disciple's feet (vv. 4-5)!

Now imagine if the president of your country came to your house and started washing your toilets. Have you even washed your own toilet before? What would you do or think?? It would be unthinkable! Now consider that God—the President and Creator of the universe—willingly served the disciples and us in such love and humility! Jesus did this not only for His friends, but even for Judas—the one He knew would betray Him (vv. 2-3 & 11).

Jesus did not consider His own rights and privileges as Creator, but in love, honored God as He served others. Let's grow in humility during this week of Amplified as we focus more on God and what/who He's asking us to serve, instead of thinking of ourselves.

INTERPRETATION

Jesus said to Peter and now says to us, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." (vs. 8) Have you in humility accepted that you need Jesus to cleanse your heart? Write down when you personally met God and experienced and accepted His love for you. If you haven't yet, write a prayer asking Jesus to fill your heart with love and faith to believe in Him as your Savior, friend, King and Lord.

LIFE APPLICATION

Jesus states in verse 14, "Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet." Whose feet is He guiding you to wash this week? Is it a friend, person in your youth group, family member or even an enemy? Obviously, I don't mean you need to literally wash someone's feet. What I mean is how are you going to show indescribable amounts of love and kindness this week? Write down a person that God is calling you to show humble love to this week. If you're having trouble thinking of someone, the best choice is likely the first person that popped into mind. What acts of service is God leading you to do in order to display His love to them?

PRAY FOR THIS PERSON that God has put on your heart. Also pray and ask God to empower you to show them supernatural love this week. Our own ability and stamina to love can only last so long. We need God to give us HIS unfailing love.

Take Up Your Cross and Follow Jesus

Andrew Feng

READ MATT 16-24:28

(ESV)

24 THEN JESUS TOLD HIS DISCIPLES, "IF ANYONE WOULD COME AFTER ME, LET HIM DENY HIMSELF AND TAKE UP HIS CROSS AND FOLLOW ME.

25 FOR WHOEVER WOULD SAVE HIS LIFE WILL LOSE IT, BUT WHOEVER LOSES HIS LIFE FOR MY SAKE WILL FIND IT.

26 FOR WHAT WILL IT PROFIT A MAN IF HE GAINS THE WHOLE WORLD AND FORFEITS HIS SOUL? OR WHAT SHALL A MAN GIVE IN RETURN FOR HIS SOUL?

27 FOR THE SON OF MAN IS GOING TO COME WITH HIS ANGELS IN THE GLORY OF HIS FATHER, AND THEN HE WILL REPAY EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO WHAT HE HAS DONE.

28 TRULY, I SAY TO YOU, THERE ARE SOME STANDING HERE WHO WILL NOT TASTE DEATH UNTIL THEY SEE THE SON OF MAN COMING IN HIS KINGDOM."

OBSERVATION

During my freshmen year in college I was taking biology and on one Thursday afternoon the professor said "Don't forget to turn in your research paper tomorrow by 1pm." I asked my classmates to confirm the due date and when they all nodded my heart sank.... I was speechless, I had thought it was due a week from now and was going

to work on the paper over the weekend. At that moment I had a choice to make. I could either beg the professor for an extension by making up some extenuating circumstance or face the reality and get started on writing the research paper.

For the next 24 hours I rid myself of any possible distractions (tv, video games, internet, food), I worked through the night and turned in the paper by 1pm. It was the most painful assignment I did in college and to this day, my heart cringes just thinking about the pressure I faced. It got me thinking, wow if I could just focus my efforts I can be pretty productive and accomplish some meaningful tasks.

INTERPRETATION

Jesus wants us to bear the burdens we are facing and fight the good fight. As believers we have been justified by His grace and we cannot lose our salvation, but we must try to be sanctified at every possible opportunity. In this battle against sin, we cannot take a day off, Jesus reminded the disciples that the cross needs to be carried daily. Jesus is our example, and He walked the difficult path to encourage us that it is possible to deny ourselves.

The passage also mentions that we cannot save ourselves, we can only save our lives if we lose it for the sake of Jesus.

Jesus goes on sharing about how if we're following the wrong person then we can be going to the wrong destination. If we are so enamored with the things of this world then we start to worship the created things instead of worshipping the creator.

APPLICATION

What is the hardest thing you've ever done? How does that compare to your spiritual walk of following Jesus Christ as your personal lord and savior?

What do you think Jesus was feeling when he was carrying the heavy pieces of wood on the way to his own crucifixion? Is it possible for us to make a conscious effort to make our bodies submit to God's leading?

Is there something that you can deny yourself this week (instagram, Facebook, video games) and use that time to worship God?

If we made an appointment with our friends, we would do our best to keep it. But why is it that when we make appointments with God, we seldom keep the appointment? I would guess that most of just say “we can reschedule it to another time.”

1. Think about your priorities each day of the week and pray that you would protect your time with God. What is one thing you remove from your schedule?

2. Pray for the students in your grade that they would spend some time to fellowship with God as we spend most of our time with school related activities. Let us put our efforts in tasks that have eternal value.

Forgiveness as a Bridge

Allan Theobald

READ: LUKE 23:33-38

OBSERVATION

I admit, sometimes I lose focus on the actual life of Jesus. Now, let me clarify, I don't stop thinking about Jesus, but I can forget that Jesus actually lived, and I suspect some of you have to. What I mean is that when we think about Jesus' work of salvation in our lives, we can become really focused on Jesus death and resurrection without remembering he lived, taught, preached, ate, and fellowshiped. There's a song I really don't care for called, Above All. You've probably heard it, but there is this line that goes, "crucified, you lived to die, rejected and alone." And before you start declaring me a heretic, let me say that I know that Jesus' death is the climax and source of our salvation, okay? But... The problem is that Jesus did live and and lived more than for simply his death. He showed us how to live, and preached the kingdom of God, using his death as the final inaugural act of the kingdom. If it was all about his death, then the Gospels seem to waste a lot of time talking about his life.

When I look at what Jesus taught, especially in the sermon on the mount, I am challenged to live a life that seems utterly impossible. When Jesus tells the people to love their enemies, to turn the other cheek and bless their persecutors, I wanna yell back, yeah good luck! I imagine I would have scoffed that day at such idealist notions, maybe accusing Jesus of being outta touch with reality.

I used to be a bible teacher in South Korea. One day as an assignment I asked my students to pull out some paper and write a prayer. They were cool with the idea until I told them to bless and pray for the leader of North Korea, Kim Jung Un. (This was 2011). They look

dumbfounded, maybe wondering if their English was worse than they thought. When I reiterated my desire, some refused to do it. They began to list the atrocities of the man, and a list of, "but he did this, and but he is...." And so forth. Jesus taught us to do this but he couldn't really mean this right?

INTERPRETATION

Wrong, He meant it, he taught it, he lived it, and expects the same of us! Jesus died on a cross, a victim of injustice by his own will, but the fact that he died for us sometimes eclipses the way in which he died. The cross is a clear example of how Jesus lived what he preached. And no greater example may be given here than when Jesus looks down at the very people who have sentenced him to death, looking right into the eyes of the men who betrayed him and who put the nails in his hands and says, "Father forgive them."

Knowing he would be betrayed and abandoned by his disciples, he washed their feet. Without retaliation he accepts the cross. What humility, restraint, compassion Jesus was filled with to look at those who murdered him and extend forgiveness. This is what it means to live in the reality of God's Kingdom; to be a person born of the spirit. It means that we are people who no longer categorize each other in ways that divide us or give us excuses to think less or treat anyone less than a child of God, who is made in the very same same image of God as us. This goes for those who have mistreated us, who have insulted us, who irk us in every possible way. To forgive is to believe in the way of the cross, it's to have faith that Jesus' way is the true way. It's recognizing that God is true, that his word is true, and that you and I belong to him. We declare to the world that we're children of God when we not only receive what Jesus has done for us, but begin to receive the life he lived in us.

APPLICATION

Some of you may sense how daunting this command to love really is and despair is starting to creep in. Take heart!! Don't let excuses like, "Jesus was God of course he could live like that, I'm only human," creep in. That's all hogwash! Jesus leaves us his spirit and he empowers us to live as he lived. And when we do, when we extend forgiveness to the world, teaching them that we don't have to live divided and in conflict, in competition, in awkward disconnect and isolation. We show there's a way of communion, of brotherhood, of fellowship and hospitality, of genuine humanness and forgiveness that rushes from our hearts eroding the walls of hostility and self preservation.

That's why I love this story of Jesus forgiving his enemies. In this moment I see Jesus' death in perfect balance with his life and what he taught. As I read it, as I meditate and pray on it I can feel the spirit calling us to be the same. Right now as you meditate on these things God will bring faces and names to your mind. People who are hard to love, people you may hate and despise, people that just make you soooo angry, and he will give you strength to see them as God's children so that you can begin the kingdom work of forgiveness. Forgiveness becomes the pavement for the salvation of the world and the advancement of the Gospel.

If you take Jesus for an idealist, think it's cool Jesus died for you, but can't seem to accept that God really is that scandalous in his love, as to forgive the most horrendous of offenders and expect you to do the same, you're in essence a road block in the advancement of God's kingdom. So whoever it is that has popped in your head as you ponder these things, take a step of kingdom faith and begin to pray God's blessing for them. You may not feel like it, but take that first step and see how God's love will soften your own heart and open up a bridge of fellowship and communion with others.

Jesus and the Unclean Woman

Kenny Ly

READ MARK 5:21-34

OBSERVATION

A few years back a friend of mine gave me tickets to the Shanghai X-Games. But these weren't just any tickets—these were VIP (Very Important Person) tickets. Maybe I'd get a meet and greet with athletes, get their autographs, be on TV. In reality, all I got was to use a different entrance and they had coolers full of free Mountain Dew for me to drink. But I still felt cool. And the Mountain Dew was nice.

Famous people have limited amounts of time—everyone is clamoring for their attention. They generally will give it to other very important people—VIP's. Can you imagine what it must have been like for Jesus? The Bible says there were thousands of people following him, yearning to see him, touch him, to hear his teaching.

At the beginning of this story, Jesus is approached by a man named Jairus, asking for him to come and heal his daughter. Who was Jairus? What was his position? On a scale of 1-10, how much of a "VIP" do you think Jairus would have been? (Remember: Israel was a highly religious society at this time.)

What did Jesus do?

On the way, there's a woman who tries to get close to touch "even his garments." What was her problem?

In Jewish culture this sickness would have isolated her from society. Leviticus 15:25-27 describes how everything she slept or sat on was unclean, and everyone who touched one of these things would have become unclean as well and would have to go through a process of ceremonial cleansing. What would this have done to many of her relationships? On a scale of 1-10, how much of a "VIP" do you think she would she have been?

Jesus could have become unclean when this woman touched him. Instead of her uncleanness defiling Jesus, what happened?

How did Jesus respond to this lady? Did he "prioritize" the ruler of the synagogue?

INTERPRETATION

We can see that Jesus isn't just concerned with meeting famous people and VIP's. We can see that his heart is especially for the outcasts, the broken, the weak, the poor and the outsiders. Jesus said, "It's not the healthy that need a doctor, but the sick" (Matt 9:12).

Why do you think it is that Jesus showed the same amount of attention to the official's daughter and to the woman who was an outcast?

If Jesus were on the earth as a human today, where do you think you would find him? What would he be doing?

APPLICATION

Jesus said, "Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven" (Matt 5:16). Whatever Jesus would be doing in our communities, that's what we should be doing. When we act out the heart of Jesus, his light shines through us to the world around us!

If we, the church, are Jesus' body, then where should we be found today? What should we be doing?

In your school, who are you seeking to hang out with? The coolest, most popular people? Or those that others look down on? Are you being Christ to those who are outcasts in your school or community?

What's one way this week that you can demonstrate the heart of Jesus to someone in your school or community who is normally shunned by others? Ask God!

Take some time and pray by name for people in who are disliked and shunned in your community. Pray that God would reach them with his love and show you how you can carry it to them.

Love One Another

Rob Pritz

As a high school student, I had one goal in life. My goal was to become a wrestling state champion. Our coach would tell us to make this our goal and to work towards it. He encouraged us in many ways. If I was ever to become a state champion, I would need to live and breathe the sport. I would have to sacrifice anything that would hinder me from accomplishing this goal. As I committed to this and worked my hardest, I was able to reach the goal. Through wrestling, I learned the importance of goal setting. We all need to know where we are going and why. Goals give us direction... how and if we get there is often up to us.

Jesus had goals for himself and for others. He was a great teacher, encourager and coach. Jesus was TRULY COOL because what he taught he also lived out before us. Jesus lived a life that was marked by love. For example, Jesus looking at the adulterous woman in the face did not condemn her. He loved her and challenged those who wanted to stone her to consider their own sin. Jesus also, full of compassion and love, washed the feet of his disciples. Of course, the ultimate proof of Jesus' love was dying on the cross for the sins of all mankind! Jesus died for you and your friends- he died for the entire world, and because of this great love, it is his right to command us to Love one another. If you could use one word to sum up Jesus Christ, it would have to be LOVE. Jesus loved and he tells us to love. Jesus gave us a goal and it is to love one another.

While Jesus was on trial to be crucified, Peter, one of Jesus' closest disciples, denied Jesus three times. Jesus had shown Peter how to love and had encouraged him to be a loving disciple. As Peter denied Jesus, it seems that Peter lost sight of the goal to love. After the death of Jesus, Peter went back to his original work as a fisher-

man. Jesus rose from the grave, found Peter where he was fishing, prepared a place for breakfast, ate a meal with Peter and then began an amazing dialogue with Peter. Check it out:

WHEN THEY HAD FINISHED EATING, JESUS SAID TO SIMON PETER, "SIMON SON OF JOHN, DO YOU LOVE ME MORE THAN THESE?"

"YES, LORD," HE SAID, "YOU KNOW THAT I LOVE YOU."

JESUS SAID, "FEED MY LAMBS."

AGAIN JESUS SAID, "SIMON SON OF JOHN, DO YOU LOVE ME?"

HE ANSWERED, "YES, LORD, YOU KNOW THAT I LOVE YOU."

JESUS SAID, "TAKE CARE OF MY SHEEP."

THE THIRD TIME HE SAID TO HIM, "SIMON SON OF JOHN, DO YOU LOVE ME?"

PETER WAS HURT BECAUSE JESUS ASKED HIM THE THIRD TIME, "DO YOU LOVE ME?" HE SAID, "LORD, YOU KNOW ALL THINGS; YOU KNOW THAT I LOVE YOU."

JESUS SAID, "FEED MY SHEEP." -John 21: 15-17

Three times Jesus says, "Feed my sheep." Once again Jesus clarifies the goal for Peter. The scene right before this, Jesus had just provided a large catch of fish for Peter, prepared the eating place and enjoyed breakfast with him. Jesus first loved Peter, fed him and then told him to love and feed the sheep. The goal of the Christian and the message of Jesus is quite clear, it is to love one another. We are able to love others because He, Jesus, first loved us.

GOAL: LOVE ONE ANOTHER AND CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER.

1. Think about and list all of the ways Jesus has first loved and cared for you. If you'd like, use different creative ways to express the love you have known from Jesus, i.e.. paint, draw, write, music, etc...
2. In response to Jesus' love for you, how are you loving and caring for others?
3. How can you make this your goal and how will you accomplish it? Write down your plan of action.

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