

Finding Peace in a World of Panic

5-Day Devotional

Day 1: Standing on Solid Ground

Reading

Matthew 7:24-27 Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.

Devotional

Jesus concludes the Sermon on the Mount with a powerful image: building your house on rock versus sand. The rock represents hearing God's Word and putting it into practice. In our anxiety-filled world, we search for stability, yet often build on shifting foundations—career success, others' approval, or material security. These crumble when storms arrive. Christ is the unshakeable foundation. When we root our identity in Him, we find that peaceful, easy feeling that comes from standing on solid ground. Today, examine what foundation you're building on. Are you merely hearing God's Word, or are you actively living it? True peace comes not from perfect circumstances, but from an unshakeable foundation in Christ.

Day 2: Blessed Beyond Measure

Reading

Matthew 5:1-12 Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them. He said: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Devotional

Jesus begins His greatest sermon by declaring blessings—not on the powerful or wealthy, but on the meek, the mourning, and the persecuted. This revolutionary teaching reminds us that we live in a world of abundance, not scarcity. Even in difficulty, hunger, or persecution, you are blessed. God's kingdom operates on different economics than the world's. You are the light of the world, the salt of the earth. Before addressing what needs changing, Jesus wants you to know your belovedness. Today, resist the temptation to focus on what you lack.

Instead, count your blessings. Write down three ways you are blessed that you typically overlook. Let gratitude become the foundation for transformation.

Day 3: The Courage to Change What You Can

Reading

Matthew 5:21-26 You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca,' is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell. Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift. Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still together on the way, or your adversary may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. Truly I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.

Devotional

Jesus moves beyond external law-keeping to internal transformation: "You have heard it said, 'Do not murder,' but I tell you anyone angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment." This isn't about controlling others' behavior—it's about having courage to address our own anger, resentments, and unforgiveness. We cannot change others, but with God's help, we can change ourselves. This requires honest self-examination and humility. What anger are you harboring? What resentment are you nursing? These internal storms steal your peace. The serenity prayer reminds us to have "courage to change the things I can"—and that always begins within. Today, identify one internal attitude you can surrender to God. Confess it, release it, and experience the freedom that follows.

Day 4: Consider the Birds—Letting Go with Trust

Reading

Matthew 6:25-34 Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Devotional

Consider the birds of the air," Jesus invites us. This isn't academic theology—it's a call to be present. Stop. Listen to that mockingbird. Watch the sparrows. They live fully in this moment, not anxious about tomorrow. Your Heavenly Father feeds them; aren't you worth more? Jesus calls us to surrender what we cannot control. We carry burdens that aren't ours to carry, worrying about outcomes beyond our influence. There's profound peace in accepting what we cannot change. Like that intern pastor finding solace in the nature preserve after a painful meeting, we need moments to simply be present—to notice God's provision all around us. Today, take a walk without headphones. Be still. Notice creation. Let go of tomorrow's worries and receive today's peace.

Day 5: The Wisdom to Know the Difference

Reading

Matthew 7:7-12 Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! So, in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

Devotional

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened." Jesus concludes His sermon with an invitation to pray for wisdom—the discernment to know what we can change and what we must surrender. This wisdom doesn't come from human striving but from divine relationship. God gives good gifts to those who ask. The serenity prayer's final petition—"wisdom to know the difference"—is perhaps the most crucial. Without wisdom, we exhaust ourselves trying to control the uncontrollable or passively accept what we should courageously address. Today, ask God for wisdom about a situation troubling you. Is this yours to change or yours to release? Trust that when you ask, seek, and knock, your Heavenly Father will guide you into all truth and lasting peace.