

THE REVD CANON DR MARK'S DAILY DEVOTIONALS #304

11TH – 15TH MAY 2026

MONDAY

UNFORTUNATELY, I (MATTHEW) WILL NOT BE AT CONVOCATION THIS YEAR DUE TO A BUSY WEEK AT WORK WITH SEVERAL CORPORATE EVENTS AND PERFORMANCES OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S "A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM". IT'S THE SAME STORYLINE YOU WILL ALL BE FAMILIAR WITH, HOWEVER, THIS PRODUCTION, PRODUCED BY THE BIRMINGHAM REP THEATRE, IS SET IN A FANTASY LAND WHERE ALL THE CHARACTERS HAVE BIRMINGHAM ACCENTS! TODAY'S DEVOTIONAL IS A GOOD REMINDER THAT GOD CAN STILL MEET US AND BE WITH US IN DIFFERENT SEASONS AND UNEXPECTED PLACES — EVEN IF YOU ARE BEING TRANSPORTED TO A FANTASTICAL BRUMMIE LAND EVERYDAY!

11th May – Morning all... Today marks the start of a week of annual leave for me. Although, if I'm honest, "leave" feels slightly misleading because I'll still be busy in different ways, spending time away at Convocation with church. So, it's not exactly feet up, complete switch-off mode. More a change of pace. A change of responsibility. And that got me thinking this morning about how sometimes we assume rest only counts if everything completely stops. But often, rest isn't about doing nothing, it's about doing something different. Stepping out of the usual rhythm. Creating space to breathe again. Because the truth is, even good work can leave us tired. Even meaningful responsibilities can quietly drain us if we never step back long enough to notice. And sometimes we don't realise how much we needed a different rhythm until we finally slow down enough to hear ourselves think again. It reminded me of this invitation from Jesus: "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." (Mark 6:31) I love this verse because Jesus says it to people who had been busy doing good things. Ministry things. Helpful things. Necessary things. Yet even then, He recognised the need to pause. To step away for a moment. To be refilled. And maybe that's a reminder for some of us today. Rest isn't laziness. Reflection isn't wasted time. Sometimes the most productive thing for your soul is simply creating room for God to speak again beneath the noise of everyday life. So, whether this week feels restful, busy, spiritually refreshing, or somewhere in-between, I'm hoping to lean into a different rhythm and make space for what God might want to say in it all. How about you?

Revd Canon Mark Spiers

TUESDAY

ON SUNDAY, AT ST ANDREW'S, WE SANG A FAVOURITE OF OURS, "GOD WILL MAKE A WAY", WRITTEN BY DON MOEN. THIS DEVOTIONAL REMINDS US THAT GOD WILL ALWAYS GUIDE US ALONG HIS PATH THROUGH EVERY MOMENT IN OUR LIVES. CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR DOCTORATE, DAD! I'M GOING TO NEED TO CHANGE THE FORMATTING OF THE WEBSITES JUST TO FIT YOUR NAME ON.

12th May – Morning all... Last night was one of those moments that will probably sit with me for a while. I was incredibly honoured to receive a doctorate, and if I'm honest, it still feels slightly surreal saying that out loud. There were smiles, encouragement, celebration, and one or two moments where I quietly wondered how on earth I'd somehow found myself standing there. Because moments like that have a strange way of making you look backwards as much as forwards. While reflecting on it this morning, I found myself thinking about how easy it is to misunderstand achievement. Because the truth is, titles are wonderful, recognition is meaningful, and milestones matter, but they were never designed to define us. The apostle Paul writes: "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect." (1 Corinthians 15:10). What I find remarkable is that Paul doesn't dismiss the work, and he doesn't pretend effort doesn't matter. But he recognises something deeper underneath it all, grace. The thing is, none of us arrive anywhere entirely alone. Behind every achievement are unseen prayers, unexpected opportunities, difficult lessons, people who encouraged us, and moments where God quietly sustained us when we felt like giving up. And maybe that's the reminder for me today, and perhaps for all of us in different ways: celebrate the milestone, but stay grounded in the One who carried you there. Gratitude protects us from pride. Humility keeps success in perspective. The beautiful thing about God is that He's never been impressed merely by titles, qualifications, or recognition. He's always cared most about faithfulness. About hearts that remain teachable. About people who remember where the strength came from in the first place. So today, I'm thankful. Deeply thankful. Not just for the recognition, but for the reminder that God has been faithful. And whether your "milestone" today feels big, small, or unseen by everyone else, don't overlook how far God has already brought you. Some victories deserve a moment to stop and quietly say, "Thank You, Lord."

Revd Canon Dr Mark Spiers

WEDNESDAY

APOLOGIES THIS IS BEING SENT LATE! READ ON...

13th May – Morning all... Recently I came across this quote from C.S. Lewis which read: "You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending." The truth is most of us have

moments we'd rewrite if we could. Decisions we regret. Conversations we wish went differently. Opportunities missed. Words spoken too quickly. Silence we wish we'd broken. We replay things in our heads as though enough reflection, guilt, or overthinking might somehow let us rewrite history. I think many of us carry invisible "if onlys." If only I'd done that differently. If only I'd seen it sooner. If only I hadn't made that mistake. And before long, we can end up spending so much emotional energy revisiting old chapters that we forget God is still writing new ones. But unfortunately, life doesn't work like that. We don't get chapter edits. We only get the next page. Then I thought about Paul's words: "Forget what is behind and strain toward what is ahead." (Philippians 3:13) What strikes me about this verse is Paul isn't saying the past didn't matter. He isn't pretending painful memories disappear overnight or that regret magically stops hurting. He simply refuses to allow the past to become the permanent address of his identity. Now, if anyone had a complicated story, it was Paul. Before becoming one of the greatest voices for the Gospel, he actively persecuted Christians. He carried a history many would've assumed disqualified him from being used by God. Yet grace stepped into the story. Not excusing the past but redeeming it. I think that matters because sometimes we quietly believe our failures are final. That somehow we've missed our moment. Gone too far. Made too many mistakes. But Scripture tells a different story. God has always worked through imperfect people, people like Moses, David, Peter, Paul and yes even me. All because they were willing to surrender the broken pieces. Maybe today is a reminder not to keep rereading a chapter God is asking you to stop living in. Learn from it, yes. Grow through it, absolutely. But don't build a home there. Because your failures may be part of your story, but they are not the end of it. God still writes beautiful things with surrendered lives, and He's not finished with yours yet.

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THURSDAY

OUR BIBLES DON'T COME WITH TERMS & CONDITIONS, PASSWORD REQUIREMENTS OR HIDDEN SMALL PRINT. JUST A SIMPLE MESSAGE - JESUS SAVES! HAVE A GREAT DAY!

14th May - Morning all... This morning I was thinking about how complicated we make things sometimes. Have you ever tried signing up for something online and found yourself halfway through the document and thought, "Why is this so difficult?" Password requirements that somehow need a capital letter, a symbol, and ancient hieroglyphics just to continue. By the end, you're exhausted before you've even started. Personally, I think life can feel like that sometimes, especially when it comes to faith. We overcomplicate things. We wonder if we're good enough, spiritual enough, whether we've done enough, know enough, prayed enough. We can quietly begin believing salvation is something we have to somehow earn or achieve. Then I thought about these words from Paul: "If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." (Romans 10:9) There's something beautifully simple and profound about this verse. Paul doesn't point us towards perfection. He doesn't hand us an impossible checklist. Instead, he points us to faith. I think sometimes we need reminding that Christianity isn't about striving endlessly to prove ourselves worthy. It begins with grace. Always grace. We don't work for salvation; we respond to it. And maybe someone needs that reminder today. If faith has started feeling complicated, come back to the centre again. Jesus. Trusting Him. Following Him. Holding onto what He's already done for you. Because the Gospel, at its heart, isn't complicated. It's costly, life-changing, challenging even, but beautifully simple: Jesus saves.

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FRIDAY

A BIG THANK YOU TO MATTHEW FOR SENDING OUT THE DAILY DEVOTIONALS FOR ME, DURING THIS WEEK OF CONVOCATION. HAVE A WONDERFUL WEEKEND.

15th May – Morning all... This morning on the drive to work, I had one of those moments that happens to me far more often than I'd like to admit. I realised I'd driven almost all the way to the office with the radio on and hadn't actually heard a single thing that had been said. Not one song. Not one conversation. It was all just... there. Playing in the background while my mind was just on the task of getting to work. Honestly, this is a bit of a problem of mine. I'll get lost in thought, mentally planning the day, thinking about work, church, responsibilities, life in general, and before I know it, I've arrived somewhere with no memory of half the drive. The radio was on the whole time, but I wasn't really listening. And while driving this morning, I wondered how often I can unintentionally do the same thing with God. Not because I don't care. Not because faith doesn't matter. But because life gets full. Routines take over. Responsibilities pile up. And without even noticing, God becomes present in the background rather than someone I'm intentionally paying attention to. A.W. Tozer once said: "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us." That challenged me a little. Because what holds our attention eventually shapes us. Our worries shape us. Our priorities shape us. The voices we listen to shape us. And if we're honest, sometimes the loudest voice in our minds isn't God at all, its stress, pressure, or endless mental noise. Jesus says: "Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness." (Matthew 6:33) Maybe today isn't about trying harder spiritually. Maybe it's simply about noticing again. Refocusing. Choosing, even briefly, to quiet the noise enough to pay attention to God's presence in the middle of ordinary life. Because maybe the issue isn't that God stopped speaking. Maybe it's that life became noisy enough that we stopped really listening.

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