

## REVD MARK'S DAILY DEVOTIONALS #289 26<sup>TH</sup> – 30<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2026

### MONDAY

TODAY'S DEVOTIONAL INVITES US TO PAUSE AND CONSIDER HOW OFTEN WE RUSH AHEAD OF GOD'S GRACE, AND TO RELEARN THE QUIET TRUST OF RECEIVING ONLY THE STRENGTH AND PROVISION HE GIVES FOR TODAY.

26th January – Morning all... Why do I so often find myself living a day or two ahead of where I actually am? Why do I replay conversations that haven't happened yet, imagine outcomes I can't control, and quietly carry the weight of the week before it's even begun? Jesus teaches us to pray: "Give us today our daily bread." (Matthew 6:11) Daily bread. Not a week's supply. Not tomorrow's portion. I'm sure many of you can resonate with this, lying awake at night, mentally walking through the next day, waking up already tired before anything has actually happened. Nothing has gone wrong, but the emotional energy has already been spent. Remember, God never asks me, or you to carry the whole week at once. He doesn't give grace in advance for things that haven't arrived yet. He gives it daily, on purpose. Just like the manna in the wilderness, God's provision comes fresh each morning. When they tried to store it up, it spoiled. What was meant to sustain them became a burden, and I recognise how easily worry does the same in my own life. Corrie ten Boom once said, "Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow; it empties today of its strength." So, as this week unfolds, I'm choosing to stay here, not rushing ahead, not carrying tomorrow before it comes. I'll do what I can today. And I'll trust God with the rest. If you're feeling the weight of the week too, you're not alone. Today's grace is enough. And when tomorrow arrives, God will already be there.

Rev'd Mark Spiers

### TUESDAY

REVD MARK RECALLS A VIDEO THAT WE RECORDED DURING LOCK-DOWN.  
IF YOU WANT TO SEE IT, CLICK ON THE LINK BELOW:

<https://1drv.ms/v/c/29d1e65e95fa5b06/IQCLe1xDBj8ES74ysJHmvAQbAdsTCDyNY1dkcsLxyXTvGDw?e=SLdy4P>

27th January – Morning all... You know those days when your diary looks perfectly manageable... until you actually start living it? One meeting overruns. One email turns into three conversations. A quick task becomes unexpectedly complicated. And before you know it, you're glancing at the clock wondering how it's only mid-afternoon and why you already feel behind. It's easy in moments like this to slip into hurry, to push harder, move faster, and tell ourselves we'll slow down later. But God speaks into our rushing with a different invitation, "This is what the Lord says: 'Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths... and you will find rest for your souls.'" (Jeremiah 6:16) I love that image of a crossroads. During lockdown, we learned a new song at church called "Behold Our God." My son Matthew put together a video for it on YouTube - a bird's-eye view of a crossroads, slowly zooming in. It always amazes me every time I see it. From above, everything looks ordered, purposeful, and connected. But the closer you get, the more complex it becomes. Decisions. Directions. Movement. Choice. That's often how life feels. From a distance, it all looks manageable. But when you're standing in the middle of it, with noise and pressure coming from every direction, it's easy to rush through without really looking. Yet God doesn't urge us to hurry on. He invites us to stand. To pause long enough to see clearly. To choose the path that leads not just to progress, but to rest. I'm so glad God doesn't measure our days by how much we get through.

Rev'd Mark Spiers

### WEDNESDAY

I REMEMBER AMAZING CHURCH MEMBERS WITNESSING A BAPTISM FOLLOWING COVID'S DROUGHT. THERE'S A PRAYER FOLLOWING THE BAPTISM THAT I KNEW OFF-BY-HEART, AND STILL DID. (*WE RECEIVE THIS CHILD INTO THE CONGREGATION OF GOD'S FLOCK...*) I FELT THAT I NEEDED TO LEARN IT AS HOLDING A PRAYER BOOK AND A BABY WITHOUT DROPPING ONE OR THE OTHER WAS A CHALLENGE. ASK ME WHAT I HAD FOR MY DINNER LAST NIGHT, MIGHT BE A GREATER CHALLENGE!

28th January – Morning all... Why is it that there's a special kind of frustration reserved for forgetting a password you definitely knew yesterday. You try it once. Then again, just in case. Still wrong. Eventually your laptop gives up on you and tells you to reset your password. That always reminds me of a true moment many of us have experienced, walking into a room with complete confidence, only to stop and think, why am I in here? You stand there for a second, slightly confused, until you retrace

your steps back to where you came from... and suddenly you remember. Spiritually, that happens more often than we admit. We don't drift from God in one dramatic moment. It's usually slow and unintentional. Life fills up. Focus shifts. Before we know it, we feel a little disconnected, not lost, just out of sync. And God meets us there with this simple invitation, "Return to me," declares the Lord Almighty, "and I will return to you." (Zechariah 1:3) God doesn't ask for explanations. He doesn't demand we fix ourselves first. He simply invites us back. God doesn't lock us out for getting things wrong. He doesn't shame us for wandering. He waits, patiently, kindly, ready to restore our relationship the moment we turn back toward Him. So today, if you feel a little distant, distracted, or unsure how you got here, don't panic. Just return back to God. He hasn't moved. And He's ready to meet you again, exactly where you are.

Revd Mark Spiers

## THURSDAY

REVD MARK AND HIS TEAM IN CHILDREN'S SERVICES AT WOLVERHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL ARE COMING TO THE CONCLUDING STAGE OF A TWO-WEEK OFSTED VISIT. TOMORROW IS "D-DAY", WHEN THEY WILL LEARN THE FINAL OUTCOME.

WE GIVE THANKS THAT REVD MARK'S DAILY DEVOTIONALS ARE SHARED WITH AROUND 85 MEMBERS OF STAFF—OF ALL FAITHS AND NONE—AND REACH MANY HUNDREDS MORE ACROSS THE DENOMINATION AND AROUND THE WORLD. WHAT A BLESSING.

29th January – Morning all... What if today doesn't need you to be bigger, braver, or better than you already are? What if God isn't waiting for you to improve anything before He smiles, but is already pleased just because you're here? "The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you." (Zephaniah 3:17) I love how simple that is. God delights in you. Not in your achievements. Not in your productivity. In you. The way a child delights in being seen, known, and loved, without having to earn it. It reminds me of that gentle wisdom from Winnie the Pooh: "You're braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think." Children don't usually question whether they're worthy of love. They run toward it. They trust it. They rest in it. And that's the posture God invites us into, not complicated faith, not polished prayers, just honest hearts. God is with you today, in the small moments that feel ordinary and the ones that feel a bit wobbly. He's with you when you laugh, and when you sigh. He's with you when you feel confident, and when you feel unsure. And He delights in all of it. So today, let yourself be held by grace. Be gentle with yourself. You don't need to prove anything or get everything right. Whatever this day brings, walk into it knowing this: God is holding your hand, smiling, and saying, "I'm glad you're here."

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## FRIDAY

PERHAPS THE NEXT THREE WEEKS GIVES AN OPPORTUNITY TO STOP AND PREPARE OUR HEARTS FOR THE PERIOD OF LENT. THIS SUNDAY IS SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY - 'O LORD, WE BESEECH THEE, FAVOURABLY TO HEAR THE PRAYERS OF THY PEOPLE.... MAY BE MERCIFULLY DELIVERED BY THY GOODNESS.' AMEN.

30th January – Morning all... Here's something for the weekend. I don't know about you, but I often reach the end of the week and think, "I've been busy... but did I actually enjoy any of it?" I look back at my diary, and yes, things got done. Meetings happened, emails were answered, people were helped. But somewhere along the way, joy just slipped out of the day. The prophet Haggai speaks into moments like this with a simple but searching line: "Give careful thought to your ways." (Haggai 1:7) I love this because it's not a sharp rebuke. It's not God wagging a finger or telling me I've failed. It's more like a gentle pause, a nudge to stop, breathe, and ask, "How am I really living?" Not, how much did I tick off today? or how productive was I? But, where did my energy go? What did I give my heart to? What really shaped my mood this week? I've noticed that when I rush from one thing to the next, even doing good things, I can end up feeling empty. I can serve faithfully and still forget to receive rest. Haggai reminds me, and I hope this encourages you too, that God cares about alignment. Our lives aren't meant to just look full; they're meant to be rooted in Him. So as the weekend begins, I'm choosing to give myself permission to do something life-giving. Maybe that's a walk round the shops, a quiet cup of coffee, a proper laugh with someone I love, or just a moment to sit and breathe. I'm learning that God isn't only interested in what I do; He deeply cares about how I live. This weekend, let's notice the small joys, let's slow our pace, and let's live in a way that leaves our hearts rested, not just our diaries full.

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