

Almighty and everlasting God, you govern all things both in heaven and on earth: mercifully hear the supplications of your people, and in our time grant us your peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and ever.

Amen.

I guess that I will just stand over here after all there is a piece of paper that has words on it. Let's hear what it says. Willis has asked during his sabbatical that we read our meditations from zoom services on Wednesday night so here I am.

We all do things in life that we do not want to do. Things that have us so scared or concerned, that it is easier to put it off completely. We're so concerned that we do not want to even think about it, we do not want to think about having to do something that troubles us. We will gladly do something that we enjoy all day long, like spending time with family and friends. Or coming here to this nave and enjoying fellowship and asking for a stronger bond to Christ.

Here are a few examples of things that people do in their every day life that they may not want to do. For example, being a police officer and going into somebody's home, not knowing what to expect. Their gun drawn at the ready, but still unsure as to what might happen. Or, a fire fighter that goes into the front door of a house with flames coming out of the roof and smoke coming out of every window on every side of that house, unsure of what that fire fighter is going to experience. I enjoy to watch TV when it comes to Chicago fire or some of these other first responder TV shows, as you know, I'm a fire fighter myself and I look at and watch these TV shows because to me after my training they're hilarious. Why? Because they are just not true. I remember in one episode that I watched, there was a reference to blue sticky fire. If someone knows the definition of that, please see me after the service. If you want to know what it is like in a structure fire sit for a second right now, and close your eyes, I will wait. What you just experienced is exactly what any fire fighter sees minus the heat when they go into a structure fire and all they have to deal with is their own fear. Unlike the TV show you cannot see in a house fire as easily as the actors and actresses can. It is the same fear that we experience each and every day of our lives. I don't know about you, but when I hear somebody has pulled a fire alarm, I get a little upset and I think back to a certain individual that I have discussed this issue with, and advised this person to please not do it anymore. That is also an ongoing joke on Zoom. The fellowship that I experience on Zoom is much like coming here.

That being said every day we hear of people and how they go about their daily life and work. Just last week my boss told me after remodeling his bathroom and putting a shower wall over a window. He can still get out of that bathroom if his house catches fire. Sorry, that is never going to happen, and I would love to challenge him on that at a later date.

We must go to doctors appointments, dentists appointments, and all the specialists that one can think of that we would have to go to see. What are we going to be told?

There is one truth in all of this, that simple truth is this, God loves us, and has a desire and purpose

for us. Even today we hear the reading from exodus, and how the Israelites were unhappy because they were hungry. So God decided to feed them because he got tired of listening to them complain about their hunger. They woke up the next morning and there was a layer of dew on the grass. They were told that it was bread, they ate and we're full that morning. It was bread. We constantly think that God works in mysterious ways in all of our lives. In my opinion, just slow down and pay attention. Enjoy the ride.

I follow a gentleman named Tommy Williams on Instagram, and some of the inspirational quotes that he has shared are quite moving. He writes " We are not the masters of our fate. We think we control our lives-but we don't. In an instant life can radically change a car accident, a heart attack, a pink slip, a child's raging fever.

Frustrated researchers conquer one deadly virus, only to discover one even more lethal.... No book is more realistic about the human situation than the Bible. It won't let us get by with frothy platitudes or unsupported optimism. But it also gives us hope. It tells us Christ can change our lives, and He has prepared a perfect place for us in heaven. Even your next breath is a gift from God. Don't take life for granted, but "gain a heart of wisdom"

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves.

We are supposed to be joyous and complete, and do nothing from selfish things. We already know, that we cannot take anything with us when we are finally called home. I have asked this question in a previous meditation. Where is your faith, where is mine? Is that enough, is there still more faith to feel/receive? There's one thing that we all know to be true, you cannot escape mortality. But you can always embrace gods love and desires for you.

In one our previous readings we hear Paul admitted to his own weakness and was willing to get out of the way, then God could take over and work. If we try to do God's will in our own strength, then we can take the credit for whatever gets accomplished.... In the Old Testament God repeatedly told the leaders of Israel to reduce the size of their armies, or He announced in advance how their victory would be won. Why? So they would place their trust in him and not in there own strength?

We must exercise, not only discipline in gods will, but also in the fact that we cannot take what we have on this earth with us to Heaven.

Never forget that God has done all the work In carrying the burden of our sins before us. Never forget that he loves us until the day he calls us home, at which time, he will welcome us into his heavenly courts with praise and Thanksgiving.

Let us pray:

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

-- Walter Michael
9-24-2023