

10am Service Sunday 8th March 2026

Weekly Devotional Journey

Monday - The Plank in My Eye

Morning Devotion

Today's Verse

Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. (Matthew 7:3-5 NIV)

Devotional Thought

Jesus uses wonderfully absurd imagery here - imagine walking about with a wooden beam protruding from your eye, knocking everyone about whilst trying to help someone with a tiny speck of dust! The humour makes us sit up and take notice, but the truth cuts deep. We possess an almost supernatural ability to spot the faults in others whilst remaining blissfully unaware of our own failings. This isn't merely about hypocrisy; it's about the fundamental way we see ourselves versus others. We know our own context, our struggles, our good intentions. But we judge others by their actions alone, without understanding their story or struggles. Jesus calls us to radical self-examination first. The Greek word for 'hypocrite' originally meant an actor wearing a mask - someone pretending to be something they're not. When we judge others without examining ourselves, we're performing righteousness rather than living it. The pathway to clear sight begins with honest self-reflection, acknowledging that the very thing that irritates us in others often exists within us too. This isn't about becoming paralysed by self-condemnation, but about cultivating humility and grace. When we truly see our own need for mercy, we become far more generous in

extending it to others.

Reflection Question

What 'plank' might you be carrying in your own eye that affects how you see and judge others?

From Sunday's Sermon

"We all know that feeling of having a speck of dust in our eye. Horrible, painful, irritating. But a plank, a beam of wood. Clearly Jesus is exaggerating... We need to be hesitant. If we are very rarely judge, if at all, we need to stop and examine ourselves first. Am I guilty of the very thing I see my brother doing?"

Today's Application

Begin each day this week with a simple self-examination: before you critique someone else's behaviour, pause and ask, 'How might I be guilty of something similar?' Keep a small notebook and jot down moments when you catch yourself judging others. Notice patterns - do you judge people for being late when you struggle with punctuality? Criticise others for being distracted when you battle the same tendency? At work, before commenting on a colleague's mistake, consider your own recent errors. In relationships, before pointing out your partner's failings, reflect on areas where you need grace. This isn't about becoming a doormat or avoiding necessary conversations, but about approaching others from a place of humility rather than superiority. When you do need to address someone's behaviour, begin with phrases like 'I've struggled with this too' or 'I understand how challenging this can be.' This week, practise seeing others through the lens of your own need for mercy.

Morning Prayer

Gracious Father, forgive me for the ease with which I spot faults in others whilst overlooking my own failings. Give me eyes to see myself clearly - not with condemnation, but with honest humility. Help me to remember that I too am a work in progress, in desperate need of Your grace. Transform my heart so that when I look at others, I see fellow image-bearers rather than problems to fix. Grant me wisdom to know when to speak and when to remain silent, and let all my interactions flow from a heart that has been touched by Your mercy. Amen.

Evening Devotion

Generous Sight

Evening Reflection

As this day draws to a close, reflect on how you've seen others today. In Hebrew thought, having a 'good eye' meant being generous, whilst having a 'bad eye' meant being stingy. This applies not just to material generosity, but to how generously we view others. Did you look at people today with generous eyes, giving them the benefit of the doubt? Or did you view them through the lens of criticism and judgment? Perhaps you caught yourself mid-judgment and chose grace instead. Maybe you noticed your own 'plank' affecting how you saw someone else's 'speck.' These moments of awareness are gifts from God, opportunities to grow in Christlikeness. Tomorrow offers fresh chances to see others as God sees them - beloved, flawed, and in process, just like you.

Evening Reflection

How did God help you see others more generously today, and where do you need His grace for tomorrow?

Evening Prayer

Lord, thank You for the grace You've shown me today. Forgive me for the times I looked at others with stingy eyes rather than generous ones. Help me rest in Your love tonight, knowing that You see me with perfect grace. Prepare my heart for tomorrow's opportunities to love well. Amen.

Tuesday - Sacred Pearls and Holy Boundaries

Morning Devotion

Today's Verse

Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces. (Matthew 7:6 NIV)

Devotional Thought

This teaching initially sounds harsh to our modern ears, but Jesus is addressing the wisdom of discernment in relationships. In His time, dogs were not beloved pets but dangerous scavengers, and pigs were considered unclean. Jesus uses these images to illustrate that not everyone will treasure what we treasure. The 'pearls' represent the precious wisdom and truth of God's kingdom - truths that are sacred and valuable beyond measure. Jesus isn't advocating for elitism or suggesting some people are worthless. Rather, He's teaching us that there are times when sharing our deepest spiritual insights may not be received well, and could even provoke hostility. This requires discernment about timing, relationship, and receptivity. Sometimes our zealous attempts to share truth can actually damage both the message and the relationship. There's profound wisdom in recognising that not every person is ready to hear every truth at every moment. This doesn't mean we stop loving or serving others, but we learn to offer what people can receive. A close friend who knows our heart may receive correction as love, whilst an acquaintance might hear the same words as judgment. We need God's wisdom to know when to speak, when to wait, and when to simply love through our actions rather than our words.

Reflection Question

In which relationships do you need greater discernment about what to share and when?

From Sunday's Sermon

"We need God's wisdom to determine when to bear witness or not. We need God's wisdom to help us to create healthy boundaries. We can't expect everyone to treasure what we treasure... What I do think is that the way that we live our lives rather than the way we judge others is more likely to open doors to opportunities when it may be appropriate to share the good news with others."

Today's Application

This week, practise holy discernment in your conversations. Before sharing advice, spiritual insights, or corrections, pause and consider: Is this person ready to receive this? What is my motivation - love or frustration? Am I speaking from relationship or from distance? With family members, resist the urge to fix every problem with a Bible verse. Instead, ask questions and listen deeply. At work, let your character speak before your words do. Build trust through consistent kindness and integrity. In your church community, recognise that even fellow believers are at different stages of spiritual maturity. Offer truth wrapped in relationship and seasoned with grace. Create healthy boundaries with those who consistently respond to your care with hostility or manipulation. This isn't about withholding love, but about loving wisely. Remember that Jesus Himself didn't cast His pearls before those who would trample them, yet He never stopped loving or serving.

Morning Prayer

Heavenly Father, grant me wisdom to know when to speak and when to remain silent.

Help me treasure Your truth so deeply that I handle it with care and discernment. Teach me to love wisely, creating healthy boundaries whilst never withholding grace. May my life be a beautiful testimony that opens hearts to receive Your truth in Your perfect timing.

Guard my heart from bitterness when others don't treasure what I treasure, and help me trust Your work in their lives. Amen.

Evening Devotion

Wisdom in Restraint

Evening Reflection

Tonight, consider the conversations you've had today. Were there moments when you felt compelled to share advice or correction? How did you handle those impulses? Perhaps you chose to listen instead of lecture, or maybe you offered practical help rather than spiritual platitudes. Wisdom often looks like restraint - knowing that your pearls of insight are precious and should be offered thoughtfully. This doesn't make you less loving; it makes you more like Jesus, who knew when to speak boldly and when to remain silent. Even your restraint can be an act of love, protecting both the relationship and the sacred truths you carry. Trust that God is working in ways

you cannot see, and that sometimes the most powerful witness is simply a life well-lived.

Evening Reflection

Where did you practise wise restraint today, and how might this have been an act of love?

Evening Prayer

Lord, thank You for the wisdom You provided today in my relationships. Help me rest in knowing that You are at work even when I choose not to speak. Grant me peace about the conversations I didn't have and the advice I didn't give. Continue to shape me into someone who loves wisely and well. Amen.

Wednesday - Keep Asking, Keep Seeking

Morning Devotion

Today's Verse

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. (Matthew 7:7-8 NIV)

Devotional Thought

These familiar words about prayer appear right in the middle of Jesus' teaching about relationships, and that placement is no accident. The wisdom we need to love others well, to discern when to speak and when to listen, to see clearly past our own planks - this wisdom comes through persistent prayer. The Greek verbs here are in the present imperative: keep asking, keep seeking, keep knocking. This isn't about a single desperate prayer, but about a lifestyle of dependence on God. We long for a cosmic flowchart, a divine manual that tells us exactly what to do in every relational conflict. Instead, God invites us into relationship - into ongoing conversation where we bring our confusion, our hurt, our questions about how to love difficult people. This continuous seeking develops our spiritual muscles, deepening our intimacy with God and our sensitivity to His voice. The promise isn't that we'll get everything we want, but that our seeking will be met with God's response. Sometimes that response is yes, sometimes no, sometimes wait, and sometimes it's an invitation to see things differently. What we can be certain of is that God delights to give wisdom to those who ask for it, especially wisdom about how to love others well.

Reflection Question

What relational wisdom do you need to keep asking God for, and how might persistent prayer change your heart in the process?

From Sunday's Sermon

"These three previous teachings, not judging others, taking the plank out of my eye, not throwing pearls before pigs, don't tell me what to do, but instead they shape me into a person who loves others generously. If I'm going to know what to do as I negotiate relationships with people, I'm going to need wisdom from God. And that is why I'm asking and seeking and knocking."

Today's Application

Create a specific prayer practice around your relationships this week. Each morning, bring one challenging relationship before God. Don't just ask for that person to change, but ask for wisdom about how to love them well. Ask for eyes to see them as God sees them. Ask for grace to respond rather than react. Keep a prayer journal, noting both your requests and any insights or promptings you sense from God. When facing a difficult conversation, pause and pray first: 'Lord, give me Your

words and Your heart.' When someone irritates you, immediately turn it into prayer: 'God, help me see what You see in this person.' Before sending that difficult text or email, ask God if these are words that will build up or tear down. Throughout the day, practise quick arrow prayers: 'Help me love well here, Lord.' Notice how this ongoing conversation with God begins to shift your perspective on people and situations. The goal isn't to manipulate God into giving you what you want, but to align your heart with His heart for the people in your life.

Morning Prayer

Abba Father, I come to You like a child who needs wisdom beyond my years. You know the relationships that challenge me, the people I struggle to love well, the situations where I feel stuck. I choose to keep asking, keep seeking, keep knocking, trusting that You delight to give good gifts to Your children. Shape my heart through this ongoing conversation with You. Help me seek Your wisdom rather than grasping for answers on my own terms. Thank You that I can come to You with anything and everything. Amen.

Evening Devotion

Wrestling and Blessing

Evening Reflection

Perhaps today brought answers to prayer, or perhaps you're still waiting, still wrestling with God about relationships that remain difficult or prayers that seem unanswered. Remember that even Jacob wrestled with God and walked away blessed, though he carried a limp. Job questioned God intensely but encountered Him personally. David railed at God in the Psalms yet was called a man after God's own heart. Your wrestling isn't a sign of weak faith - it's a sign of real relationship. Even Jesus prayed in Gethsemane for the cup to pass from Him, yet trusted the Father's greater plan. God can handle your questions, your frustrations, your persistent knocking. He meets us in the wrestling, and often it's there that we discover not just answers, but a deeper knowledge of His heart.

Evening Reflection

What are you wrestling with God about, and how might He be inviting you to trust Him more deeply in this area?

Evening Prayer

Lord, I bring You my wrestling, my unanswered prayers, my confusion about how to love well. I choose to trust that You are good even when I don't understand Your ways. Meet me in this place of honest seeking, and help me rest in Your perfect love. Amen.

Thursday - Our Loving Heavenly Father

Morning Devotion

Today's Verse

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! (Matthew 7:9-11 NIV)

Devotional Thought

Jesus grounds His teaching on prayer in the most intimate of relationships - that between a loving parent and child. Even imperfect human parents instinctively want to provide good things for their children. They don't trick them with stones instead of bread or snakes instead of fish. How much more, Jesus argues, will our perfect heavenly Father give us what we need? This isn't a promise that we'll get everything we want, but an assurance that what we receive from God will always be good for us, even when it doesn't feel like it. The context matters enormously here. Jesus has been teaching about relationships - how to love others without judging them harshly, how to see clearly past our own faults, how to share truth wisely. The 'good gifts' our Father gives include the wisdom

to navigate these complex relational waters, the grace to forgive those who hurt us, and the strength to love difficult people. Sometimes the good gift is patience rather than immediate resolution. Sometimes it's the ability to set healthy boundaries rather than getting someone to change. Sometimes it's peace in the midst of conflict rather than the end of conflict itself. Our Father knows what we need before we ask, but He invites us to ask because He wants relationship with us. He has a 'you-shaped hole' in His heart and delights when His children come to Him with their needs, fears, and hopes.

Reflection Question

How has your heavenly Father given you 'good gifts' that you didn't initially recognise as such?

From Sunday's Sermon

"God is our loving heavenly father and he wants to give us good gifts, but he also wants us to ask. Not because he's holding out on us, but because he wants a relationship with us... just as we have a God-shaped hole in us, he has a Jackie shaped hole in him, a Chris shaped hole in him, a Victoria shaped hole in him."

Today's Application

This week, practise seeing God as your loving heavenly Father rather than a distant deity or cosmic vending machine. Begin your prayers with 'Abba, Father' or simply 'Dad,' allowing the intimacy to shape your requests. When you're struggling with someone, ask your Father for the specific relational gifts you need: patience for your irritating colleague, wisdom for your challenging teenager, grace for your difficult in-law. Notice how reframing your prayers in terms of receiving 'good gifts' from a loving Father changes your perspective. Instead of demanding that others change, ask for the gift of loving them as they are. Instead of insisting on your own way, ask for the gift of trusting God's better plan. When prayers seem unanswered, consider what good gifts God might be giving you instead: character development, deeper dependence on Him, or protection from something you cannot see. Share with a trusted friend about how you're learning to see God as Father, especially if earthly father relationships have been painful. Allow His perfect fatherly love to heal those wounds and reshape your understanding of what it means to be His beloved child.

Morning Prayer

Abba Father, thank You that You are not like earthly fathers who disappoint or abandon. You are the perfect Father who knows exactly what I need and delights to give me good gifts. Help me trust Your heart even when I don't understand Your ways. Heal any wounds from earthly fathers that make it hard for me to receive Your love. Teach me to come to You as a beloved child, confident in Your goodness and generous heart. Shape my prayers and my expectations around Your perfect love. Amen.

Evening Devotion

Held by Perfect Love

Evening Reflection

As you end this day, rest in the truth that you are held by perfect fatherly love. Whatever relationships challenged you today, whatever prayers seemed to go unanswered, whatever struggles you carried - your heavenly Father sees it all and loves you completely. He is not frustrated with your questions or disappointed by your failures. Like any good father, He delights simply in your presence and wants what is best for you. Even when His gifts don't look like what you expected, they flow from a heart of perfect love. You can trust Him with your deepest needs, your most difficult relationships, and your biggest fears. Rest tonight as a beloved child, secure in your Father's care.

Evening Reflection

How can you rest more fully in your identity as God's beloved child?

Evening Prayer

Abba Father, thank You for loving me perfectly and completely. I rest tonight knowing that I am Your beloved child, held securely in Your care. Whatever tomorrow brings, help me remember that I am loved, seen, and cherished by You. Amen.

Friday - The Golden Rule Lived Out

Morning Devotion

Today's Verse

So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 7:12 NIV)

Devotional Thought

After days of exploring the complexities of relationships - judging, planks and specks, pearls and pigs, persistent prayer - Jesus distils it all into this beautifully simple principle. The Golden Rule isn't merely about being nice; it's about radical empathy that transforms how we engage with every person we encounter. This isn't passive ('don't do to others what you wouldn't want done to you') but active - we are to proactively treat others as we long to be treated ourselves. What do you want when you make a mistake? Grace, not condemnation. What do you need when you're struggling? Patience, not judgment. What do you hope for when you're difficult? Love that persists despite your behaviour. This principle requires us to step outside our own perspective and truly consider the other person's experience. It means giving the benefit of the doubt because that's what we want when we're misunderstood. It means offering forgiveness because that's what we desperately need when we fail. It means speaking truth in love because that's how we want to receive difficult feedback. Jesus says this 'sums up the Law and the Prophets' - meaning this one principle captures the heart of how God wants us to live. It's the practical outworking of loving our neighbour as ourselves, and it transforms ordinary interactions into opportunities for Christ-like love.

Reflection Question

In which specific relationship do you need to apply the Golden Rule more intentionally?

From Sunday's Sermon

"And isn't that what we want? To be treated justly and fairly, to have others be gracious and generous towards us in the way that they deal with our faults and mistakes. We're very good at justifying our own errors whilst being hard on others when they inevitably let us down."

Today's Application

Make this your week of Golden Rule living. In every interaction, pause and ask: 'How would I want to be treated in this situation?' When your spouse forgets something important, respond with the grace you'd want if you had forgotten. When a colleague makes an error, offer the patience you'd hope for if you had made the mistake. When someone is running late, extend the understanding you'd want if you were the one delayed. At the checkout, treat the cashier with the kindness you'd appreciate if you were serving difficult customers all day. In traffic, give other drivers the courtesy you'd want when you're having a stressful day. With your children, discipline with the firm love you needed as a child. When someone disagrees with you, listen with the respect you'd want for your own opinions. This isn't about being a pushover - it's about leading with empathy. Sometimes what you'd want is honest feedback delivered with care, so offer that. Sometimes you'd want someone to hold you accountable with love, so do that. Keep a daily record of specific moments when you consciously applied the Golden Rule, noting how it changed the interaction and your own heart.

Morning Prayer

Lord Jesus, You perfectly lived out this Golden Rule, treating others with divine love even when they didn't deserve it. Fill me with Your heart for people, helping me see them as You see them. When I'm tempted to respond with irritation or judgment, remind me of how I long to be treated. Transform my natural self-centredness into Christ-like empathy. Use me as an instrument of Your grace in every relationship, and help me love others as You have loved me. Amen.

Evening Devotion

Love That Transforms

Evening Reflection

As this week of reflection draws to a close, consider how God has been shaping your heart for relationships. Perhaps you've caught yourself mid-judgment and chosen grace instead. Maybe you've practised wise restraint rather than offering unsolicited advice. You might have turned relational frustrations into prayers or extended the Golden Rule in a difficult situation. These small acts of Christ-like love are seeds that will bear fruit in ways you may never see. The goal isn't perfection but transformation - becoming the kind of person who loves others generously because

you know how generously you are loved. Every time you choose to see others through God's eyes rather than your own judgment, you participate in His kingdom work of restoration and healing. This is how the world will know we are His disciples - by our love for one another.

Evening Reflection

How has God been transforming your heart for relationships this week, and what will you carry forward?

Evening Prayer

Gracious God, thank You for this week of learning to love like Jesus. Continue the work You've started in my heart, making me more like You in all my relationships. Help me remember that every person I encounter is precious to You, deserving of the same grace I've received. May Your love flow through me tomorrow and always. Amen.