

Study Guide for the Week of August 28, 2005

Vision Day 2005

This study guide is designed to help you to become more familiar with the Bible. Study these passages on your own, with a friend, or with a group. If you or someone you know needs a Bible, please take one from under a chair in the Worship Center. They are there for you to take home and use! Sermon manuscripts are available at www.saintpauls-umc.com.

Monday

This week we'll be reading scriptures that have directly shaped the future vision of Saint Paul's. These are central passages that relate to what we believe about our purpose and direction and how we go about living out our vision for the future. Read **Matthew 28:18-20** in the New Testament. These are Jesus' final words in Matthew and they ring throughout all of history. They speak to all who would follow Jesus and tell us what Jesus would have us do. How are you to live out this passage individually? How well are you doing with this? How are we to live it out as a church? How well are we doing with this? One of our core values as a church is that we believe we're called to go where people are and reach them with the good news. Reread this passage for any new insights.

Tuesday

Read **Luke Chapter 15** in the New Testament. This chapter is Jesus' response when he was being criticized for associating with people who were considered unclean or non-religious. He tells three stories that all relate to the lost being found. These stories reveal Jesus' heart about people who are far from God. One of our core values at Saint Paul's is that all people matter to God whether or not they believe the same things we do, and whether or not they are living godly lives. All people mattered to Jesus, and we are called to see people as Jesus saw them and love them as he loved them. What are some ways we can do this?

Wednesday

Read **Mark 12:28-34** in the New Testament. This passage contains what is commonly called the Great Commandment. Jesus is asked what the most important command of God is and he responds with two commands that are of equal importance. We are to love God with all of who we are, and to love others. Notice that loving God is not a feeling, but an action—we are to love God with our heads, our hearts, and our hands. Love for others must be the same, not based on feelings, but love based in action. This also is central to our vision as a church. How are you individually doing with these two great commandments? How are we as a church living them out? What can we be doing better?

Thursday

Read **Luke 6:38** and **2 Corinthians 9:6-15** in the New Testament. These passages deal with giving of our time, talents and money. What are these passages teaching us? One of our beliefs is that you cannot out-give God, and that our giving is not about the church's need to receive, it is what happens in us when we are generous. When we are generous we begin to see the world differently and materialism loses its grip on us. What keeps you from giving generously? Do you view your resources as your own, or as belonging to God and entrusted to you to use wisely? How can you realign your priorities so that you do see your resources as belonging to God and entrusted to you to be used as God directs?

Friday

Read **Matthew 9:35-38** in the New Testament. This passage is also central to our vision as a church. Jesus went out to take good news to people, to heal them and have compassion on them. His mission is now our mission. Verse 38 is Jesus' plea to us to take up his mission, to say "Yes" to his invitation to join him in sharing good news, reaching and teaching as many as we can in the time we have in our one-and-only lives. What can you to be as much a part of this mission, this vision, as you can? What's stopping you from taking the next step?