

Study Guide for the Week of September 4, 2005

*The Life You've Always Wanted –
Interrupting Heaven*

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. Read Psalm 5:1-3 in the Old Testament. Notice the attitude of the writer of this Psalm. What kinds of things is the writer praying for? What does he expect from God? What about you? What kinds of things do you need to offer up in prayer? Be careful to search deep in your hearts. What do you expect God to do? Do you believe that your prayers are important to God?

Tuesday. Read Jonah chapter 2 in the Old Testament. Just knowing that Jonah can pray from the belly of a whale and be heard by God means that there is no place we can go that is beyond God's ability to hear us. What places do you like to go to for prayer? Where is the most unlikely place you would ever use to pray? Notice also the nature of Jonah's prayer, especially in verse 2. While he is still in the whale, his prayer is as if it has already been answered. Do you pray with this kind of boldness?

Wednesday. Read Matthew 5:5-13 in the New Testament. This is one of several passages of Jesus' teaching on prayer. Identify at least two ways Jesus is saying not to pray. What approaches to prayer is Jesus advocating? Jesus teaches his followers what we now call the Lord's Prayer in this passage. What words would you use to describe this prayer in verses 9-13? Does the model of prayer that Jesus gives us embody the approach to prayer he was teaching in the previous verses? Try practicing a prayer today that gives voice to your deepest thoughts, but does it simply.

Thursday. Read Romans 8:26-27 in the New Testament. Yesterday's reading was Jesus saying that it is not the number of words you use that makes a prayer. Today, Paul is talking about prayers we pray when words seem totally inadequate at all. When have you prayed this kind of prayer? In deep grief? In elation? How does it make you feel to know that God wants to relate to you so much that God helps you to pray? Try letting God help you pray today.

Friday. Read Philippians 4:4-7 in the New Testament. What a beautiful passage! Three big words are connected in this passage...joy, prayer and peace. Our prayer life is the conduit for God to bring joy and peace into our lives. Notice the aspects of prayer that Paul lists in verse 6, and that EVERYTHING can be brought to God in prayer. As you pray today, invite God to bring joy and peace into your life