

THE FIRST 15

Monday, February 3, 2025

By: Jan Davis

Today is Monday, February 3, and this week we are praying through the words of The Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition.

OPENING PRAYER

I am no longer my own, but Yours. Put me to what You will, rank me with whom You will. Put me to doing, put me to suffering. Let me be employed for You, or laid aside for You, exalted for You, or brought low for You. Let me be full, let me be empty. Let me have all things, let me have nothing. I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to Your pleasure and disposal. And now, glorious and blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, You are mine, and I am Yours. So be it. And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen. (The Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition)

SCRIPTURE

Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self? Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels." Luke 9:23-26

REFLECTION

At the beginning of a new year many Methodist congregations have the tradition to renew their covenant with God participating in a worship service called the Wesley Covenant Service. The custom at First Methodist Mansfield is to have this service on the first Sunday of every February. During worship we say the Covenant Prayer together at the close of worship and recommit ourselves to another year of life dedicated to God and our church.

John Wesley, the eighteenth century founder of the Methodist movement, adapted the Covenant Prayer from the Puritan tradition. The prayer was important to his parents, Samuel and Suzannah Wesley, and a part of his upbringing as the son of an Anglican priest in the Epworth rectory. The original prayer likely informed his relationship with God, his theology, leadership and preaching. He expected the people called "Methodist" to pray this prayer at the beginning of each new year as a way of remembering and renewing their covenant with God.

The Covenant Prayer describes our life as a servant of Jesus and our place in the mission of His church. It is a practical description of what Jesus was talking about when he said, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23). The prayer puts us on our knees to surrender to the will of Christ, ready to give up whatever is needed to follow him faithfully. Wesley's Covenant Prayer reminds us what the

Jesus-way of life looks like. What loving God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and loving our neighbor as ourself requires.

As our rhythm of spending daily time in prayer with The First 15 transfers to a new resource called Lectio 365, each day this week we will explore the lines of the Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition.

The prayer begins, "I am no longer my own, but Yours." With these opening words, we are reminded of who we are and whose we are. We belong to God. All claims we have on our own lives, we freely give over to the Lordship of Christ. Jesus is Lord of our lives, Shepherd of our souls, and Captain of our hearts. We belong to Him. As we vocalize the beginning of this prayer, "I am no longer my own, but Yours," we humbly take our place and remember Jesus is on the throne.

Ask: What does it mean for me to tell Jesus, "I am no longer my own, but Yours"? What would I need to let go of or give up for my life to fully belong to God?

Pause and Pray

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, I am no longer my own, but yours. I belong to You. You are the king of my soul, Lord of my life and You sit upon the throne of my heart. I want to be a true disciple and serve You faithfully. Show me what it means to deny myself, take up my cross daily and follow You. Teach me what it means to lose my life for You so that it may be saved by You. Reveal the things I need to let go of, set down and abandon so that I can better follow the path of discipleship. I surrender myself to You and long to dwell fully in Your love. Amen.