

## Daily Devotional Guide

**Monday** – Have you ever seen one of those road signs that say, “Get Right With God?” Well the truth is, there’s nothing that we can actually *do* that will make us right in God’s eyes. Read Philippians 3.9. What God wants is our faith. Take a few moments today to prayerfully confess your faith in God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit - our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.

**Tuesday** - How well do you know Jesus? In Philippians 3.10 Paul challenges us to get to know Jesus. Paul’s understanding, of course, is that as we really become best friends with Jesus, we will know God and in knowing God, we can even experience the mighty power of God that raised Jesus from the dead. How has God raised you from the death of old, worn out, unhealthy ways?

**Wednesday** – Are you someone who dwells on your past? Read Philippians 3.13. Paul is stressing the importance of forgetting the past, focusing on the present and looking forward to what lies ahead. That may be easier said than done, but the message is clear. By continuing to focus on the past, we discount God’s power to create and recreate us. Are you determined to let God help you live up to your potential?

**Thursday** - Imagine your life as a race and the victory as living your life as God calls you to live it. How comfortable are you with your pace? What kind of progress are you making toward the finish line? Read Philippians 3.14. What changes might you need to make in your racing strategy to win?

**Friday** - Read Philippians 3.16 over three times. How easy is it for you to maintain your momentum? You know, there will be times when stopping to take a break or simply slowing your pace seems to make sense. What matters, though, is that you stay in the race and keep your eyes focused on the goal.



### PASADENA COMMUNITY CHURCH

a United Methodist Congregation

227 - 70th Street South ~ St Petersburg, FL 33707  
(727) 381-2499 email: [pasadena@pccumc.org](mailto:pasadena@pccumc.org)  
[www.pasadenacommunitychurch.org](http://www.pasadenacommunitychurch.org)

## Pasadena Community Church

### ***I Dare You to Be Determined!***

Sunday, July 31, 2011

Sermon by: Dr. Charley Reeb, Senior Pastor

Scripture Lesson: Philippians 3: 14

I’m convinced that there is one quality that is more powerful than intelligence, education, skill, money, circumstances, and failure. That quality is determination. If you dare to be determined you can move mountains.

Many years ago there was a meeting at Universal Studios. At this meeting sat an executive and two young aspiring actors. The executive was dismissing both actors, telling them to try a different line of work. To one he said, "You have no talent." To the other he said, "You have a chip on your tooth, your Adam's apple sticks out too far, and you talk too slowly." Who were these actors? Burt Reynolds and Clint Eastwood. Why did they succeed? They were determined (“Chicken Soup for the Soul” by Jack Canfield).

When Thomas Edison invented the light bulb, he tried over two thousand experiments before he got it right. A young reporter asked him how it felt to have failed so many times. Edison said, "I didn't fail. I invented the light bulb. It just happened to be a two-thousand-step process" (Canfield).

In 1952, Edmund Hillary attempted and failed to climb Mt. Everest, the world's tallest mountain. Some time afterwards he was asked to address a group in England. At one side of the stage was a picture of Mt. Everest. As he stood up to begin his talk, he pointed to the mountain and said loudly, "You beat me the first time, but I'll beat you the next time. You have grown all that you're going to grow, and I am still growing." Within a year he had conquered Mt. Everest. When asked about his exploit later, he said, "You don't conquer the mountain; you conquer yourself" (Canfield).

There is power in determination. I'll give

you one more. I just finished reading one of the best novels I have ever read. It is entitled, “The Help.” I am sure many of you have read it. It has been on the New York Times Bestseller list. Millions of copies have been sold. It has been touted as the best book of its genre since “To Kill a Mockingbird.” The book has been made into a movie which comes out shortly. I predict it will win the Oscar.

The author of “The Help” is Kathryn Stockett. She lives in Atlanta and was speaking to a church group in the city some time ago. My mother in law attended the lecture. Stockett said something at that meeting which blew the audience away. She told the crowd how many times her manuscript was rejected by publishers before one decided to accept it. 60 times! Can you believe that? Now, that is determination! And aren't we glad she was determined? Mountains can be moved by those who, by faith, dare to be determined!

So what about you? Have you given up on your dreams? Have you given up on your goals? Have you given up on your relationships? Have you allowed your circumstances to determine your life? Have you allowed setbacks to determine your attitude? Have you quit on yourself and God’s plan for your life? Do you not like where you are but just haven't had the strength and courage to change? Well, you can change today if you dare to be determined!

One of the greatest examples of determination in the Bible is the Apostle Paul. Nothing would deter him from his mission to spread the gospel. We see his determination in our text for today: “This one thing I do. I forget what lies in the past and I stretch and strain forward to

what lies ahead. I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Jesus Christ.”

What was Paul saying? He was saying, "I have found a power that works! I turn my back on the past, which can drag me down and prevent me from growing. I forget all about it. Instead, I focus on the future. I stretch and strain toward to what is ahead. I press on with God's call on my life." In other words, "With God's power I am determined to be determined!" Paul had discovered that God would never give up on him, so he was determined never to give up on himself!

Paul's words remind me of a great saying I came across – a Christian mantra if you will. I am not sure of the source of these words, but in any case, we all would do well to repeat them every day:

**“God believes in me; therefore, my situation is never hopeless.  
God walks with me; therefore, I am never alone.  
God is on my side; therefore, I cannot lose.”**

Those are powerful words. We must allow them to saturate our minds. There is healing in them. You compare them to what Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote in “Uncle Tom's Cabin.” As you know, Stowe was deeply involved in the struggle to win freedom for all slaves:

**“When you get into a tight place and everything seems to go against you, hang on for one minute longer. Never give up then, for that is just the place and time for the tide to turn.”**

These words remind me what the Bible says: “God's power is perfected in our weakness.” This is a spiritual truth.

So, how do we access God's power? How do we find God's strength to help us be determined in life? The best explanation for accessing God's power for living comes through the 12 step program. The 12 steps have helped millions of people change their lives. Now, it is important to understand that you don't have to be in AA or addicted to anything to use the power of these steps. They apply to every human being.

The first three steps teach us vital lessons about how we can use God's power to transform our lives. The first step of the Twelve-Step Program is to say, "I've got a problem. I can't manage it. It's bigger than I am." So, what is your problem today? Is it a challenge at work or home? Is it a personal problem you don't like to talk

about? Admit to God you can't handle it on your own.

The second step is to say, "There is a power greater than I am, and it is willing and present and ready to help me. This power can restore me. It can make all the difference in the world. It can heal me. It can empower me." This power, of course, is God. God can help you overcome any obstacle or problem you have.

The third step is, "I turn my will and my life over to this power," which is really saying, "I surrender my life to God. I give it over to Him. I trust God with my life" (I am grateful to Arthur Caliendo's insights on the 12 steps).

When you use the first three steps and call on God, by faith, to give you the strength and courage to change and to be determined in life, something powerful begins to happen inside of you. Faith gives God permission to work in your life.

You have the ability to do anything, to overcome any challenge! The power is in you! It is God. All you have to do is set it loose with faith. I dare you to be determined in life with God's power!

I want you to remember the name of a man and never forget it - Roger Crawford. He was born with severe birth defects. Both arms were shorter than usual. The left arm had a projection which looked like a thumb. The right arm had a thumb and finger. The left leg was withered and eventually had to be amputated. The right leg was shorter than usual and had three toes. His hands had no palms. The doctor told his mother and father he would never walk or care for himself, but the Crawfords refused to believe this.

Roger said his parents taught him that the amount of his handicap would depend on how much he wanted to be handicapped. They had two absolutely mandatory rules. One, he was not to feel sorry for himself. And the other, he was not to use his handicap to manipulate other people. And so Roger began to grow up. Once when he was behind at school he asked his father for a note explaining that he had to write more slowly than the other children, but his father refused, instead teaching him to start his work earlier so he could finish it on time.

His parents also encouraged him to participate in athletics. He could bat a volleyball,

and sometimes he was able to catch a football. One of his dreams was to score a touchdown. One day his dream came true while playing football in school. The ball came to him and he caught it. He started running as fast as he could for the goal, while the coach and the other kids and everybody watching cried out, "Go Roger! Go Roger! Go!" When he got to the ten-yard line, an opposing player, trying to tackle him, grabbed his left ankle. Roger pulled so hard that he pulled himself loose from his artificial leg, and hopped down the field to the goal line on his good leg. Everybody cheered as the referee put a hand up for the touchdown. The only thing greater than the touchdown, he said, was seeing the expression on the other player's face as he looked at the artificial leg in his hand.

This is what Roger had to say about handicaps:

**“The only difference between you and me is that you can see my handicap but I can't see yours... When people ask me how I have overcome my physical handicaps I tell them that I haven't overcome anything. I simply have learned what I can't do -- like play the piano or eat with chopsticks. But most important, I have learned what I can do. Then I do what I can do with all my heart and all my soul”** (quoted in “Undefeatable” by Arthur Caliendo).

Remember that you have more power, strength and ability than you realize. God's power lives within you. Don't give up on yourself. Don't give up on your dreams. Don't give up on life! Press on with God's call on your life!

One of the things that helps me to rely on God's power to be determined in life is to remember a prayer called “The Jesus Prayer.” Arthur Caliendo, long time minister of Marble Collegiate Church, prescribed this ancient prayer to people with amazing results:

**“Lord Jesus Christ,  
Have mercy on me.  
Rescue me and save me.  
Do your will in my life.”**

The prayer pretty much sums it up! Say this prayer over and over again. Try to say it every day. It will center you and God will begin to direct you. The prayer forms you by helping your soul yield to the power of Christ. When we surrender our problems and lives to Christ, we receive the power we need for living.

One of the greatest stories in the Bible is the story of the woman who suffered from a hemorrhage (Matthew 9). She went to healers and nothing worked. Then she heard about Jesus, a healer unlike any other. She thought that if she could just touch the hem of his garment she would be healed. When she finally reached Jesus, he was surrounded by a mob of people, but she was determined to get to him.

She managed to push her way through the crowd. She got close enough to Jesus to reach out and touch him. She reached out and touched the hem of his garment. At that moment, she knew she had been healed because she felt the power come through her whole body.

Jesus stopped and said something interesting. He said, "Who touched me?" Peter replied, "Uh, Jesus. You are surrounded by people. Everybody's touching you! What do you mean?" Jesus said, "No. Somebody touched me. I felt the power go out." And the woman, who was shy, finally came over and said, "I touched you. It was me." And Jesus said to her:

**“Go in peace, my good and faithful servant. You are healed by your faith.”**

When she finally reached out and allowed the power to come into her, she was healed! That's how it works! It can work for you! All the power you need for life is available to you. Just reach out to God and open your heart to him and trust him.

There is a great hymn that is based on a psalm. It is called, "The Strength of the Lord":

**“It's not in trying, but in trusting,  
It's not in running, but in resting,  
It's not in wondering, but in praying,  
That we find the strength of the Lord.”**

When you stop trying and begin to trust, stop running and begin to rest, and stop wondering and begin to pray, then you will discover the secret of determination: relying on God's power. Amen