



## God's Good Work in Us

### DEVOTIONS FOR STUDENTS:

- Give Me Jesus
- The Beginning of Wisdom
- Jesus is My Friend

### DEVOTIONS FOR TEACHERS:

- A Giver of Light
- Equipping Others
- Prayer, Meditation and Trial

### STUDENT DEVOTION #1

**Title: Give Me Jesus**

**Scripture: 1 Peter 1:8-9**

Things were not easy when Rosa J. Young was a girl. Just decades before she was born, Rosa's people had been slaves. But conditions for blacks living in the rural South had improved very little since the days of slavery as the 19th century drew to a close.

Whole families, including young children, worked long hours in the cotton field just to provide the family with the necessities of food, clothing and shelter. Rosa knew not only poverty but also a sickness, called rheumatism, which kept her from going to school. At one point, doctors thought that Rosa would never walk again.

But Rosa trusted in Jesus as her Savior. She prayed to Him, asking God to heal her and to give her the strength to serve Him. As Rosa prayed, the words of an old song came to her mind. It was a song the slaves sang as they worked in the cotton fields. Rosa sang it as a prayer. The words of the song remind us, as they did Rosa, that Jesus our Savior is the most important possession any of us can have. And He wants each of us to know and believe in Him.

God answered Rosa's prayer for the health and strength to serve Him. Jesus gave Rosa's life direction and meaning. He made her a powerful servant of the Gospel and teacher of the faith. As you begin each new day, you can pray the words "Give me Jesus" just as Rosa did. In these words, you ask God to give you strength and the direction in life to serve both God and others, in the day ahead and in the days and years to follow. And you can trust in God to hear and answer every prayer.

#### To Talk About:

Why is "Give me Jesus" a good prayer to have on your mind throughout the day? What does it mean to you to have Jesus as your Savior?

#### Prayer:

In the morning when I rise, In the morning when I rise  
In the morning when I rise, Give me Jesus.  
Give me Jesus, Give me Jesus.  
You can have all this world, Give me Jesus. Amen.

### STUDENT DEVOTION #2

**Title: The Beginning of Wisdom**

**Scripture: Prov. 9:10**

Although it may be hard for us to imagine, children did not always have the opportunity to go to school. When Rosa Young was a girl, for example, black children were needed to work in the fields, picking cotton to help support the family.

We might think it would be fun to not have to go to school. If you didn't go to school, you would not have to sit at a desk, do assignments or do homework after school. These things are true. But think also about having to get up early in the morning not to go to school but to go to work all day in the hot sun. Rather than being with friends and learning about how to read and write in a comfortable school desk, imagine having to fill bags of cotton all day, bending over to pick one cotton ball after another, all day long.

Rosa wanted to go to school to learn to read and write. As Rosa grew up, she wanted other children to have the same opportunity. More important, she wanted the children in her community to learn that Jesus was their Savior. She wanted them be able to go to a school where children could learn from capable teachers who loved Jesus. She wanted them to be able to learn all subjects in classrooms dedicated to Jesus and what it means to live in Him.

Rosa believed the words of the Bible, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight” (PROV. 9:10 ESV). The most important lesson anyone can learn is that God sent Jesus to save us from our sins and to earn for us forgiveness and a new and eternal life in Him. Knowing this, the other things we learn simply fall into place. We can use everything we learn in school in the new life God gives us to live in Jesus.

#### **To Talk About:**

What specific things are you learning today? How can you use this knowledge in the life you live for Jesus?

#### **Prayer:**

Jesus, thank You for loving me and for coming to earth to be my Savior. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me a life to live for You. Thank You for those who teach me about You. Help me to learn the lesson You would have me learn. Help me to live for You. Amen.

### **STUDENT DEVOTION #3**

**Title: Jesus is My Friend**

**Scripture: John 15:14-16**

Have you ever felt alone, friendless, picked on by those who are supposed to be your friends? On the face of it, we might wonder why the others didn't accept Rosa. She was the same age and race as they. She went to their school. Still Rosa was different. She came from the country and the others grew up in town. These differences distanced Rosa from the others.

Rosa talked to God about her problem. God is always ready to listen because He loves people. He loved us so much that He sent Jesus to save us and all people, including those who reject or otherwise hurt us. Rosa knew that Jesus was her friend and she talked to Him with the ease with which she would talk to any other friend. She told Him about her loneliness and asked Him to help her.

Jesus listened. Jesus helped. In the days and weeks that followed, Rosa began to make friends. Though things weren't easy for her at first, eventually Rosa became a leader in her school. Her classmates even elected Rosa president of the class!

Each of us faces struggles and challenges at one time or another. Each of us knows the feeling that no one else

really understands or cares about us. Especially during these times, we can remember that Jesus knows us and loves us better than anyone else does. We can count on His friendship, even when we feel like He is our only one!

#### **To Talk About:**

What is it about Jesus that makes Him such a good friend? Why is it helpful to have friends who are also friends with Jesus?

#### **Prayer:**

Dear Jesus, thank You for being my Savior. Thank You for being my friend. Help me to be a good friend to all others, including those who do not yet know and believe in You. Amen.

### **TEACHER DEVOTION #1**

**Title: A Giver of Light**

**Scripture: Luke 1:77-79**

*This devotion is designed for use by individuals or a group of teachers.*

Read Luke 1:77-79. Think about how these words, used to describe John the Baptist, apply also to you.

As teachers of the faith, we have a high calling. Standing before those God has given us to teach, we face the enemies of apathy, ignorance and darkness in its various forms. But if serving others is the greatest of aspirations, bringing the Good News of Jesus' forgiveness and salvation is the most noble service anyone can provide. The Gospel brings a light that chases away the darkness of sin, bringing a new life that changes our view of the world around us and a warmth and glow that extends to all eternity.

Think about your work as a teacher as you view the 11:46-15:50 segment of The First Rosa. As you reflect on Rosa's description her life's goals and the type of school she wanted to build, think about your personal and professional goals as a Christian educator.

#### **For Reflection and Discussion:**

What qualities and characteristics describe the type of teacher you aspire to be?

How does the light of the Gospel influence the way you approach the teaching of religion?

How does the light of the Gospel influence the way you manage the classroom and deal with issues of misbehavior?

How does the light of the Gospel influence your approach to teaching reading, math and all other subjects?

What does Rosa's desire to provide an education of head, heart and hands mean to you?

If we dwell too much on challenges and struggles that seek to pull us away from the light and back into darkness, we rob ourselves of the joy and satisfaction we can have in our calling. Instead of dwelling on these things, God would have us bring them before His throne of grace in the name of Jesus. He will hear and answer our prayers just as He heard and answered the prayers of Rosa Young. Talk to God right now about the things that bring joy to you and those around you as well as the things that challenge and concern you. Conclude your prayer in Jesus' name.

Thank God for the opportunity for Christian service He has provided as you reflect upon and sing the words of "Drawn to the Cross, which Thou Hast Blessed," found in Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 560. Note especially the description of work done for Jesus in stanza 4.

## TEACHER DEVOTION #2

**Title: Equipping Others**

**Scripture: John 4:35-38**

*This devotion is designed for use by individuals or a group of teachers.*

Imagine Rosa Young surveying the blanket of white cotton all around her as she worked in the fields. Imagine her thinking about the passage of Scripture that says, "Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest" (JOHN 4:35 ESV).

Like Rosa, we live in a world that desperately needs the Gospel. And, as teachers of the faith, we have the opportunity to share the Good News with students and their families in the work we have been led to do. As the Holy Spirit works through the Word of God it allows for us to have a part in the most important labor God has given anyone to do—bringing the Gospel to souls whose heart God has prepared for harvest.

The work of bringing in the harvest is important. But it's not a one-time event. Sharing the Good News of Jesus and His gift of forgiveness and salvation is ongoing. It doesn't stop with us and with our generation. As farmers, gardeners and others familiar with growing and harvesting crops remind us, the pattern of planting, nurturing and harvesting repeats year after year, season after season. Some plant and others harvest "so that sower and reaper may rejoice together" (JOHN 4:36 ESV).

Teachers of the faith look to the harvest of many seasons ahead by actively recruiting others for work in God's kingdom. We do this not only by suggesting to groups of students that perhaps God is calling some of them into full-time church work, but also by talking individually with students who possess the gifts associated with ministry and encouraging them. All the while, remembering that while God has not called everyone into full-time church work, He has called all believers into a life of service to God and others.

After viewing the film *The First Rosa*, play again section 37:37–40:55.

## For Reflection and Discussion:

The life of Christian teacher-pioneer Dr. Rosa J. Young could be called an adventure. How might her story inspire and encourage young people in living their life for Jesus regardless of the career path they choose?

How might the life story of Dr. Rosa Young inspire young people to consider the possibility that God might be calling them to full-time church work?

In what way did Rosa intentionally recruit individuals for work in God's kingdom?

Which individuals come to mind when you think about those whose heart God might be preparing, even now, to service as full-time workers in His kingdom?

Rosa Young sought God's will and direction in prayer. Bring before God now, either silently or aloud in the company of others, the concerns of your heart.

- Thank God for the new life He has given us to live through Jesus' life, death and resurrection and for the privilege of serving Him as a teacher of the Christian faith.
- Ask for His gifts of discernment and direction in your life and work.
- Ask God to help you recruit and encourage others for work in His kingdom.
- Pray in Jesus' name.

Conclude your devotion with the black spiritual, "There Is a Balm in Gilead," LSB 749.

## TEACHER DEVOTION #3

**Title: Prayer, Meditation, and Trial**

**Scripture: Ps. 42:1-11**

*This devotion is designed for use by individuals or by a group of teachers.*

After viewing the film, *The First Rosa*, review the words of LCMS President, Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison located at 2:42–5:02 and 37:35–40:55. Harrison's comments introduce and conclude the story of Christian educator, Dr. Rosa Young.

Like all sincere and dedicated workers in God's kingdom, Young met many challenges and threats to her work. Often she struggled and felt unworthy, disillusioned and adrift, wondering what the next day would bring. But Young never lost hope. She knew and believed that the One who redeemed her would never abandon her. Reflecting on God's grace as revealed to her in the Bible, Rosa trusted that God would provide her with the opportunities, resources and encouragement necessary



for her to continue in the work she had undertaken for Him. And so, Rosa was a woman of prayer. Often she prayed herself to sleep, talking with God about the issues and concerns that surrounded her and seeking His help.

Recalling the words of Martin Luther, Harrison refers to Rosa Young as a theologian—a follower of Jesus who studies God’s Word and seeks to apply it in every aspect of his or her life. Rosa knew firsthand the marks of a theologian—prayer (*oratio*), meditation (*meditatio*) and trial (*tentatio*). Like Rosa, you are a teacher of the faith—a person concerned about sharing the Good News of Jesus. Like Rosa, you probably have your share of obstacles and struggles confronting you in your life and work. But also like Rosa, you have the forgiveness, love and power of God’s Spirit to uplift and encourage you.

Either alone or with a group of peers, consider the words of Psalm 42 as you reflect on the important role of prayer, meditation and trials at this point in your life.

### Prayer

Think about the privilege we have to come to God in prayer on behalf of yourself and others in the name of Jesus. List the needs you recognize in your life and in the lives of others. Read verses 1 through 6a of Psalm 42 printed below. Then talk with God. Begin by confessing your sins and thanking Him for the forgiveness Jesus freely offers and the opportunity to begin again, renewed and refreshed with His forgiving love. Then talk with Him about the concerns you have identified. Ask Him for His help and direction.

### Why Are You Cast Down, O My Soul? To the choirmaster. A Maskil of the Sons of Korah.

42 As a deer pants for flowing streams,  
so pants my soul for you, O God.

<sup>2</sup> My soul thirsts for God,  
for the living God.

When shall I come and appear before God?

<sup>3</sup> My tears have been my food  
day and night,

while they say to me all the day long,  
“Where is your God?”

<sup>4</sup> These things I remember,  
as I pour out my soul:

how I would go with the throng  
and lead them in procession to the house of God  
with glad shouts and songs of praise,  
a multitude keeping festival.

<sup>5</sup> Why are you cast down, O my soul,  
and why are you in turmoil within me?

Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,  
my salvation and my God.

### Meditation

Now read verses 6b through 8 of Psalm 42, then pause to reflect on God’s grace in your life. Thank Him for the blessings of family, friends, and the opportunities you have to serve Him in your life and work. Meditate on His mighty creative, recreating powers and perpetual love and presence.

<sup>6</sup> My soul is cast down within me;

therefore I remember You  
from the land of Jordan and of Hermon,  
from Mount Mizar.

<sup>7</sup> Deep calls to deep

at the roar of your waterfalls;  
all Your breakers and Your waves  
have gone over me.

<sup>8</sup> By day the LORD commands His steadfast love,  
and at night His song is with me,  
a prayer to the God of my life.

### Trial

Identify the struggles, frustrations and difficulties that try your patience and diminish or delete the joy in your life and work. Bring these also before the Lord in prayer. Conclude your prayer in Jesus’ name. Then read the remainder of the Psalm, praising God for the hope and salvation we have in Him.

<sup>9</sup> I say to God, my rock:

“Why have you forgotten me?  
Why do I go mourning  
because of the oppression of the enemy?”

<sup>10</sup> As with a deadly wound in my bones,  
my adversaries taunt me,

while they say to me all the day long,  
“Where is your God?”

<sup>11</sup> Why are you cast down, O my soul,  
and why are you in turmoil within me?

Hope in God; for I shall again praise Him,  
my salvation and my God.

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