

**Daily God Walk**

**Life of Christ Series**

**Birth and Early  
Life of Jesus**

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(KJV) – King James Version  
(NKJV) – New King James Version  
(TLB) – The Living Bible  
(TM) – The Message

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# The Life of Christ

The *Daily God Walk* theme for this series is Jesus, His Life and Teachings. We will also look at how his followers interpreted his teachings, and how his teachings have affected the world. Our goal is to present a realistic view of Jesus, the Christ of Redemption.

For this devotional we are looking at the birth and early life of Jesus who became known as the Christ and who we call The Christ of Redemption.

Week one will take a look at the circumstances of his birth, those in his historical lineage, and John the Baptist. Week two will look at his early life up to teaching in the temple at 12 years of age. Week three will look at his training and trial in the wilderness. Week four will look at his early ministry including his mission statement. Finally, the last few days of the month we will summarize what we have seen this month.

This devotional promises to be an exciting adventure as we take this journey of discovery together.

Day One

## *Jesus - The Son of the Most High*

The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. - Luke 1:30-32

We tell the story often, usually around Christmas, about the young girl who had not yet been with a man, becoming pregnant by the Holy Spirit. When we tell the story the focus is usually upon Jesus, whose birth we celebrate annually. But there is another aspect to this story.

Have you considered the impact this event had on this young girls life? Just seeing the angel appear would cause concern, but the message the angel brought would create anxiety in any of us.

“A child? Me? How could that be, I’m not married and I’ve never sinned with a man.” We can only imagine the look of alarm young Mary must have given the angel. The angel’s response to her concern was, “He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.”

As the message began to register in her mind and heart, Mary began to realize that this was indeed an angel, and that God had indeed chosen her to be the one to bear the child that the world would call Christ, the Son of the Most High.

From that moment this young girl became a mighty woman of faith. None of us have had that impactful an experience with God, but most of us can identify on some level. Can you remember a time when God gave you a special word, or a

confirmation of his love, in such an extraordinary way that it changed your life?

God chose a young woman, a virgin, through whom to enter the world. It is through this one, born by supernatural means, that we have become beneficiaries of a supernatural relationship with God. This Son of the Most High, has not only lived among men he now lives within man.

This Jesus, the Christ of Redemption, has given access to the kingdom of God to all who will believe upon him.

**Prayer:** Lord, thank you for coming to earth in order for man to have access to your kingdom. Thank you Son of the Most High. Amen.

**Message:** The Lord himself will give you a sigh: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14).

**Affirmation:** I affirm my faith in the Christ, Jesus, the child born by a miraculous conception and whose life, ultimate death and resurrection, has opened heavens' door to all who believe.

**Reflection:** Today we are giving thought to how the news of the miraculous conception affected the life of the young girl who would be the mother of Jesus. We are also considering how Jesus has impacted the lives of those who believe in him.

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Two

## *Call Him Jesus, Savior*

After he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said... “Do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins. - Matthew 1:20-21

Put yourself in Joseph’s shoes. You are engaged to the love of your life and she comes up pregnant, and you know you are not the father. Then she comes up with this wild story about some angel and God and being overshadowed and conceiving. You set there, broken hearted, asking yourself, “How can I ever believe that story?”

He went to bed thinking on these things and trying to decide what he would do. In his sleep an angel appeared to him and said, “Do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.” Then he understood. Mary was telling the truth and this child would be born of the Holy Spirit.

The message from the angel to Joseph was two-fold. First, it was to confirm that he was to be married to Mary. The second was that the name he was to give the child was Jesus. He was to be called Jesus because he would save his people from their sins.

Jesus, just the sound of the name brings comfort to those who believe. The name simply means “The Lord has become my salvation.” Jesus brought with him the hope all men have; that they can be lifted up from the morass that life has become and be reconciled to peace with the God of heaven.

The prophecy given by Isaiah some 700 years before his birth was coming to pass. "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" - Which means, "God with us" (v23). God himself became man so that man could be reconciled to God. The hope of the world was carried in the womb of a virgin.

Who is this one who dared to let others call him Lord? Who is this one who, without force, has established his kingdom in every corner of the globe? He is Jesus and he rescues us from our sins. Hallelujah!

**Prayer:** Lord, I have heard, I have believed, and I have received Jesus the Christ of Redemption. Thank You for the opportunity. Amen.

**Message:** The name "Jesus" simply means "The Lord has become my salvation." Jesus brought with him the hope that all men have; that they can be lifted up from the morass that life has become and be reconciled to peace with the God of heaven.

**Affirmation:** Jesus, my Lord, my Savior has lifted me out of the life I once had and has given me a brand new life; eternal life. I've been born again.

**Reflection:** "The Lord has become my salvation." What a promise! Every time we speak his name we are affirming that the Lord God himself has become our salvation. Give some thought to what that actually means to you.

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Three

## *Supernatural Birth*

The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! ... You will give birth to a son" ... "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God." - Luke 1:28-35

The kingdom of God is supernatural in every respect. Jesus was born of a virgin; John was born to a barren woman in her old age; people are born into the kingdom supernaturally. The message of Christ is that the best efforts of man could not do what God alone could do.

I have noticed a common thread among the major religions of the world. They tend to teach that man in his natural state is not good enough to merit favor with God. Then, nearly all, if not all, except Christianity, teach a system by which they feel man can become good enough to merit a better life in the hereafter.

Even Judaism, and Islam, the two other major religions that look back to Abraham as the father of their faith, teach practicing good works to gain favor with God. Christianity stands alone in declaring, "There is no one who does good, not even one" (Psalm 14:3)... For all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

Jesus, the Christ of Redemption, came to break down the wall of sin that separated God from man and remove every obstacle that prevented man from being reconciled to God.

It is through the inability of the law to make men righteous that we come to understand that

through faith in Christ we are freed from the bondage of sin so that we can live the righteousness of God.

Jesus not only opened the door to right relationship with God but because the door was opened the Holy Spirit was released to give life to the spirit of man and to place in him the hope to become. As John wrote, "As many as believed upon him to them he gave the power to become the sons of God."

**Prayer:** Lord, I know that religion has confused the message of Christ. Grant me grace to trust Christ for my redemption. In Jesus name, amen.

**Message:** It is through the inability of the law to make men righteous we come to understand that through faith in Christ we are freed from the bondage of sin so that we can live the righteousness of God.

**Affirmation:** I have put my trust in the God who chose to reveal himself through supernatural circumstances and he has honored that trust by setting me free from sin.

**Reflection:** What is the biggest difference between Christianity and the other major religions of the world? Is it fatalism to believe that man cannot truly be righteous on his own, or is it just conceding the truth?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Four

## *Promised Hope Fulfilled in Christ*

It is because of my hope in what God has promised our fathers that I am on trial today. This is the promise our twelve tribes are hoping to see fulfilled as they earnestly serve God day and night. - Acts 26:6-7

Sometimes people forget that the Bible is not the story of world history. There are peoples of the earth whose history is not mentioned, except to the extent that their history is intertwined with the history of Israel, God's chosen people. The history of those peoples is important, but it is not relevant to the hope carried in the bosom of Abraham.

We are told the story of how the Jews went from mountains of glory to valleys of gloom and despair. They would conquer and be conquered. Ten of the 12 tribes was captured and disbursed to the nations by the Assyrians. Two of the tribes were captured and taken to Babylon, leaving only a remnant. Even in their greatest despair they still had hope.

The greatest trials of this people, the people chosen by God to bear the seed of the Christ who would be redemption for all of mankind, could not dampen the hope that they carried. This is the hope Paul was explaining to king Agrippa.

The last phrase of verse seven in our reading is, "It is because of this hope that the Jews are accusing me." He was in conflict with the Jews because their hope was in one who would come as a warrior and conquer the world with a sword and Paul preached a Christ whose war was in the realm of the Spirit and whose kingdom was in the hearts of men.

The Jews saw the Messiah as hope only for the Jews, but Paul understood that Christ offered hope to all the world. This hope hidden in the prophecies of old told of a Messiah and this hidden hope was fulfilled in Jesus, the Christ of Redemption.

Jesus came to bring the hope of redemption, not to a particular people group, but to the whole world. “*For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son so that whoever believed upon him would not perish but would have everlasting life*” (John 3:16).

***Prayer:*** Lord, help me to see beyond my trials and cling to the hope that is in Jesus, the Christ of Redemption. In Jesus name, amen.

***Message:*** Paul understood that Christ offered hope to all the world. This hope, hidden in the prophecies of old, told of a Messiah and this hidden hope was fulfilled in Jesus, the Christ of Redemption.

***Affirmation:*** My faith and hope are anchored in the Jesus, the Christ of redemption.

***Reflection:*** It is interesting that from Abraham to the Christ the Jews looked for a Messiah, but when their Messiah came they didn't accept him. Why do you think they didn't receive Jesus as the Messiah?

***My Thoughts:***

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Day Five

## *John - A Man With a Message*

It is written in Isaiah the prophet: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way" - "A voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.' And so John came. - Mark 1:2-4

John, called the Baptist, presents an interesting story to us. The first thing about him that is observed is his appearance. He seemed to be a wild man from the desert dressed in camel skins eating locusts and wild honey. He not only looked different but his message was different.

Over the years there had been several powerful leaders who had come to the people declaring themselves to be Messiah, the deliverer of the Jews. These men had gained a following among the people, and the result was many graves as their rebellion was dispelled by Rome.

John was an anomaly. He did not declare himself to be anything other than one crying in the wilderness calling people to prepare for the one who would come after him. In preparation for the coming one he called people to repentance and offered them baptism to confirm that they were indeed repentant and they were turning from their sins.

The power of John's message was in his anointing to preach the message. He was chosen by God and filled with the Holy Spirit from birth (Luke 1:15). John was a man with a mission and his mission was to prepare the Jews to receive the Christ.

John's job was to soften the ground and prepare it to receive the seed of Christ. He called people to get their hearts right so that they could

hear the message of the kingdom when the king appeared.

There are people today who are not anointed and their confidence is in their eloquence and doctrine; but they do not move the hearts of the people to repentance. John fulfilled his purpose as the one who went before the Christ declaring, "One is coming." Jesus fulfilled his purpose declaring, "I have arrived." It is now up to us to fulfill our purpose by pointing men back to Jesus, the Christ.

*Prayer:* I thank you Lord for Jesus, the Christ of Redemption. Grant me the grace and courage to declare him among men. In Jesus name, amen.

*Message:* John fulfilled his purpose as the one who went before the Christ declaring, "One is coming." Jesus fulfilled his purpose declaring, "I have arrived." It is now up to us to fulfill our purpose by pointing men back to Jesus, the Christ.

*Affirmation:* I am committed to the task of pointing people to Jesus the Christ of redemption and the only hope for all of mankind.

*Reflection:* Give some thought to the call of John the Baptist and how he fulfilled that call. Then think about the call that every follower of Christ has and ask yourself how well you are doing at fulfilling your call.

*My Thoughts:*

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Day Six

*The Lineage of Christ:  
A message to the Fallen*

A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ.. Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar... Salmon, the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab... Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth... David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife... and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. - Matthew 1:1-16

Five women are mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus. Four of them, according to the law, were disqualified from being a part of the chosen race, but the fifth, his mother, conceived a child in a supernatural manner. It was the child conceived in her that sanctified all the failures of the past.

There is no greater message to those whose lifestyle declares, "I am unworthy" than the message of the four women who were mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus. Let's look at them:

○ The first is Tamar, who posed as a prostitute and seduced her father-in-law, Judah, in order to bear a child.

○ The second is Rahab, the one called "harlot" in the book of Joshua. She is the one who hid the spies in Jericho.

○ The third is Ruth, king David's grandmother. She was the Moabite daughter-in-law of Naomi.

○ The fourth is Bathsheba, Solomon's mother. She is the one whose husband David had killed to cover his sin with her.

All four of these women, under Jewish law, would not have been qualified to be mentioned as in the lineage of Christ, but they were mentioned. What does that tell us about the nature of God and the purpose of Jesus, the Son of God?

Even before the fall of man God had a plan to restore him. No one has fallen so far, or sinned so grievously that the love of God and the blood of Christ cannot reach them. A passage in Romans tells it more plainly than any other: "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

**Prayer:** Thank you for grace. I was fallen, but in my fallen state I reached out and you reached down to me. Thank you. In Jesus name, amen.

**Message:** No one has fallen so far, or sinned so grievously, that the love of God and the blood of Christ cannot reach them. Romans 5:8, "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners Christ died for us."

**Affirmation:** The love of God reaches through all of my sin to grant me the opportunity to be reconciled to God, renewed, restored.

**Reflection:** Today gives some thought to the idea that God has shown himself to be the giver of second chances then think about how that applies to you.

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Seven

## *The God of Second Chances*

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus... If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. - Galatians 3:26-29

Being an heir in the Old Testament economy was a very important position to hold. It virtually meant that all of the power and possessions of the father would be passed to the heir, and the heir was the first born of the father. The first born received the authority of the father and the responsibility of family leadership. All of his siblings were to serve the family under his authority. Such was their economy.

There is however an oddity that seems to stand out in the Bible. Generation after generation records the spiritual strength of the family, and the chosen line through which God would bless his people, falling upon the shoulders of those born later in the family.

Have you heard the term, "Abraham, Isaac and Jacob?" Even though Isaac was the second born of Abraham he was the child of promise. Also Esau was elder brother to Jacob and Jacob secured the birthright through deception, yet he is mentioned in the succession of faith.

There are others; David was the seventh son of Jesse; Solomon was not David's eldest and he was also the son of Bathsheba.

Can you see a pattern here? It isn't just a matter of who was chosen, it is why he was chosen. I have concluded that this is just one more sign that we serve a God of second chances.

In the life and ministry of Jesus the God of second chances was made obvious many times. There were the tax collectors that he called to follow him. There was the woman who had been set free from many demons who became an avid follower. He seemed to surround himself with those who needed a second chance.

We who are believers in the Christ of second chances have become heirs of God; yes, even joint heirs with Christ himself.

***Prayer:*** Lord, thank you for the inheritance I have in you. Grant me the grace to accept the responsibility of being an heir. Amen.

***Message:*** By looking at many of the ones God chose to follow him and to become leaders in his kingdom we can see that he is a God of second chances.

***Affirmation:*** I am glad He is a God of second chances because I have been a recipient of that grace.

***Reflection:*** It is very interesting when looking at the lineage of Abraham which lead to the birth of Jesus to see that there are many who we would consider not worthy, yet God called them. God has the same qualifications today as he did then. Just as with David, God is looking for people who are after his heart.

***My Thoughts:***

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Day Eight

## *Bethlehem - Village of Destiny*

When the king heard this he was disturbed... When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written: 'But you, Bethlehem, in the Land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judea, for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.'" - Matthew 2:3-6

According to the prophecy he would be born in Bethlehem, the city of David. That fact added to the questions Joseph and Mary were asking about how they could bring forth the Messiah; they lived in Galilee, a different country, and in a very unimportant village called Nazareth. How could all of this really be from God?

They did not know, but God knew, that Caesar was about to order a census and that the head of every family was to go to his birth town to register. What a coincidence; Just at the right time the order was sent out that everyone must return to their birth town.

David the shepherd king was born here, now the one who would forever fill the throne of David would be born here. He would be called the Son of David, the Son of Man, and ultimately, the Son of God.

David was discovered by the prophet when he was but a shepherd boy; Jesus, the very son of God, was discovered by shepherd boys. David's brothers scoffed at him, but when Jesus, son of David was born angels heralded his birth.

There was no room for him in the inn, but he had created a special room for himself in the heart of every person on earth. Born in a manger, he would never have a throne in a palace, but he would forever sit upon a throne in the hearts of those who would receive him. Kingdoms would fall and palaces would be destroyed, but his throne in the hearts of believers would endure it all.

The tragedy that would soon befall Bethlehem could not nullify the birth of one destined to change the world; Jesus, the Christ.

***Prayer:*** Lord, grant me the grace to accept the significance of the humble birth of Jesus, and to allow that humility to rule in me. Amen.

***Message:*** Born in a manger, he would never have a throne in a palace, but he would forever sit upon a throne in the hearts of those who would receive him.

***Affirmation:*** He is enthroned in my heart and I live as the palace and habitation of the Lord God.

***Reflection:*** Give some thought to the choice for Jesus to be born in humble surroundings in a village of no particular note. If his purpose was to establish a kingdom, why wasn't he born into a royal family? Why would he choose to establish the hearts of mankind as his throne?

***My Thoughts:***

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Day Nine

## *The Will Of God Made Flesh*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. - John 1:1-2

The *logos*, the expression of the mind of God, has been with God from before the beginning, and in fact is God. The thought of God can no more be separated from God than our own thought can be separated from ourselves. No one better explains this than Bishop Fulton Sheen in his book, "Life of Christ." Read what he has written:

Whatever there is in the world, is made according to the thought of God, for all things postulate thought. Every bird, every flower, every tree was made according to an idea existing in the Divine Mind... Prior to his earthly existence, Jesus Christ is eternally God, the Wisdom, the Thought of the Father.. In His earthly existence, He is that Thought or Word of God speaking to men. (Sheen, Life of Christ, Image Books, p25).

Throughout the history of God dealing with man he has revealed his will. On Mount Sinai he revealed his will through the law he gave to Moses. His will for man was in opposition to the will of man. Man's will was all about how he could be fulfilled. God's will was to bring man to ultimate fullness through being restored in right relationship to him.

This conflict of wills continued for centuries. Then God sent forth his word in the flesh of Jesus. "The word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (John 1:14). All that Jesus said and did was a direct expression of the will of

God. He came to earth to reveal the will of the Father.

The purpose of Christ was not to bring upon man the bondage of buckling to the law, but it was to change the will of man to reflect the will of God. In that way he would change the world.

Jesus, in the flesh was the word of God manifest. Holy Spirit in the heart of man is the word of God reiterated. Reconciled, renewed and restored man is the word of God manifest in the earth.

***Prayer:*** Father, in my natural stat my will is to fulfill the desires of my flesh; grant me the grace of having your will in my heart. Amen.

***Message:*** Jesus, in the flesh was the word of God manifest. Holy Spirit in the heart of man is the word of God reiterated. Reconciled, renewed and restored man is the word of God manifest in the earth.

***Affirmation:*** As I submit to Holy Spirit, God's word in me, I am becoming the word of God manifest in the earth.

***Reflection:*** This is a powerful concept. If in fact Jesus the Christ is the Logos, the manifest word or thought, of God, and that same Christ, or Logos, dwells in us, then does it follow that as we live the Christ life we are to be the manifest word of God on earth today? Give some thought to this.

***My Thoughts:***

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Day Ten

## *A Righteous Man Waits For The Lord's Christ*

Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. - Luke 2:25-26

He was probably not a priest and he may not have even been a religious leader, but he was anointed of the Holy Spirit. This otherwise obscure man who is mentioned only in the context of his expectancy of seeing the Christ of God in his lifetime, epitomizes the hope of the common person in Israel.

The Jews were not sure of the kind of savior they needed, they only knew that life had become so difficult that they needed God to do something. They were a harassed and helpless people whose hope had dimmed. They had leaders, but they had no shepherds. They needed a deliverer but they knew not who.

Simeon was a man among those who hoped, and he had heard the word of the Lord. Daily he went to the temple expecting at any time to see the Christ. Then it happened. The Spirit in him recognized the child being brought in as the Christ of promise. Simeon took the child into his arms and said:

“Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel” (Luke 2:29-32).

Yes, this child would indeed be a light of revelation to the Gentiles and he would be the glory of Israel, yet, there would be those who would not listen to his message and who would not respond to his call. But, to those who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave their right to become children of God (John 1:12).

He is the glory of Israel and the light of the world, but more particularly, he is savior to those who believe upon him.

**Prayer:** Father, I am grateful that you heard the cry of Israel and sent your Christ. I am also grateful that he is the light this Gentile saw. Amen.

**Message:** to those who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave their right to become children of God (John 1:12). He is the glory of Israel and the light of the world, but more particularly, he is savior to those who believe upon him.

**Affirmation:** I have the right to become a child of God because I have received and believed upon Jesus, the Christ. I now live with the realization that I am a child of God.

**Reflection:** Only Simeon and Anna were mentioned as looking for Messiah to come and who recognized him. Why do you think that was?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Eleven

## *Jesus Affirms The Covenant*

On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise him, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he had been conceived. When the time of their purification according to the Law of Moses had been completed, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. - Luke 2:21-23

When Jesus was eight days old he was brought to the temple to receive the rite of circumcision. As God he did not need to do this; but as man he needed to fulfill the righteous requirements of the law.

Circumcision is the sign of the covenant God made with Abraham. All Jews were to bear the mark of the covenant. If they were not circumcised they were not considered a Jew and they were not considered as people of the covenant. Jesus must be circumcised or he would not have a voice among the Jews.

There was a second act of consecration that must be made concerning the firstborn into a family. The law required that every first-born male be given to God. In lieu of a child actually being given God made provision for a lamb to be offered as a substitute.

Forty days after birth the firstborn male was to be brought to the temple to be consecrated. For those who could afford to offer a lamb that was the requirement. But for those who could not afford a lamb then "a pair of doves or two young pigeons" (Luke 2:24) would suffice.

Mary and Joseph did not have a lamb so they offered the lesser at the presentation of Jesus at the temple. They knew they were offering their

son to God, but they did not know that they didn't need to be worried about offering a lamb because the child they offered was himself the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

Jesus, the righteous expression of Almighty God, bore in his body the marks of sin in circumcision and finally crucifixion so that we might be able to stand before the Father covered in his righteousness. What the law could not do with its ordinances Christ has done for us as the lamb that was slain from the foundations of the world (Revelation 13:8).

**Prayer:** Thank you Lord Jesus for the gift of yourself that you have given to mankind and the hope we have in you. Amen.

**Message:** The lamb Mary and Joseph offered was Jesus himself, the Lamb of God, whose eventual sacrifice would offer atonement for the entire world.

**Affirmation:** My faith in Christ as the Lamb of God make it possible for me to be reconciled to God, renewed in the Holy Spirit and restored to the person God intended me to become.

**Reflection:** Acts of consecration performed by Jesus and his family; Circumcision, sacrifice of 2 doves, baptism of Jesus. What significance does this have to us today?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Twelve

## *Evil Men Fear His Purposes*

Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him." When King Herod heard this he was disturbed... and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under. - Matthew 2:2-3, 16

At no time has the war against good and evil been more evident than in this period. The king was wicked and insecure with his position; the Jewish religious leaders too were afraid that their power base would be affected by the birth of this child some were calling king of the Jews.

Matthew records that not only was King Herod disturbed by the news of the birth of Jesus, but so was all of Jerusalem. Herod called together all of the priests and teachers of the law to find out where this child would be born (v4). It appears that he conspired with the religious leaders to eliminate this threat before it got out of hand.

The average person in the cities and countryside of Judea were not aware of the war that was being waged in the heavenlies. The world of man may not have known the significance of the birth of this child, but the enemies of God in the spirit realm certainly knew.

The enemy of the souls of man knew the purposes of the Christ child and declared war on him from the beginning. We must always remember that when God has a righteous purpose evil will be there trying to destroy the effect of righteousness.

Evil is still the enemy of good and the war in the heavenlies still rages. Those among us who resist the Christ and his purposes will continue to be manipulated by the desire of the flesh and the influence of evil, but those who accept Jesus as the Christ of Redemption will be born into a new realm of life.

At his birth many children died that he might live. Later he would die that millions might live. The war in the heavenlies is still raging, but Jesus, the Christ of Redemption has already won the battle.

**Prayer:** I can see how evil was at work at the time of his birth, grant me the grace to be aware of the words of evil today. In Jesus name, amen.

**Message:** We must always remember that when God has a righteous purpose evil will be there trying to destroy the effect of righteousness.

**Affirmation:** God has a righteous purpose for my life and I must be diligent and aware that the enemy of my soul seeks to defeat God's purposes for me.

**Reflection:** Give some thought to the following statement taken from this devotion, "Those among us who resist the Christ and his purposes will continue to be manipulated by the desire of the flesh and the influence of evil, but those who accept Jesus as the Christ of Redemption will be born into a new realm of life."

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Thirteen

## *Growing in Grace*

The child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.

- Luke 2:40

We picture Jesus as the baby in the manger then our next picture of him is a man teaching and healing people. But there was nearly 30 years between his birth and his ministry. What happened in those years?

Those are years that are summarized in this simple sentence, "The child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him." Besides that statement we know nothing except speculation.

There are some traditions of him performing childhood miracles like restoring life to a bird. Those are traditions and stories that cannot be confirmed and so are left at just that, traditions and stories.

We do know this though; he did not stay in the manger. In the process of time Joseph and Mary went back to Nazareth and we can assume that Joseph resumed the family business of being a carpenter.

As a child Jesus was not a superhero, he was just a normal human child. He was experiencing the same things that all humans experience. As he grew he became strong, probably from working in the carpenter shop with Joseph. He gained wisdom by observing and by performing the tasks he was being trained to do.

It is important to realize that though he was the son of God he was also the son of man. If he was to fulfill what one writer would say of him,

“Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted” (Hebrews 2:18), then he must experience life as all of mankind experiences life.

Jesus loved the world so much that he not only died for mankind in an instant, but he lived for mankind. As a human Jesus went through the same fear of rejection, feeling loss at the death of those he loved, being tempted to succumb to desires of the flesh; yet he prevailed.

He was victorious and we who trust him can be victorious too.

***Prayer:*** Thank you Father for the example of Christ in overcoming the world; grant me the grace to follow his example. Amen.

***Message:*** As a human Jesus went through the same fear of rejection, feeling loss at the death of those he loved, being tempted to succumb to desires of the flesh; yet he prevailed. He grew in wisdom and grace becoming strong, even unto death.

***Affirmation:*** I know Christ grew in wisdom and grace and if I am to be who God has called me to become I too must grow in wisdom and grace.

***Reflection:*** According to the writer of Hebrews the suffering and temptation of Jesus gives hope to those of us who also suffer and face temptations. How does that apply to our life?

***My Thoughts:***

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Day Fourteen

## *About His Father's Business*

“Why were you searching for me?” he asked. “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house” But they did not understand what he was saying to them. - Luke 2:49-50

Most of us heard this story as children in Sunday School. It was Passover and, as was the custom, Joseph and Mary made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. After the feast was finished they were returning to Nazareth with their friends and relatives when they discovered that Jesus wasn’t with them. Hurriedly they returned to Jerusalem to find him.

They searched for him for three days before they found him in the temple. Where do you think they were trying to find him for those three days? There weren’t any game arcades, and there wasn’t a YMCA, so, where would they look? The last place they thought to look was the temple.

Finally, they went to the temple and there he was. He was sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers (v48). The boy was becoming a man.

He had grown in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men (v52). He was young, but he was emerging as one who had the favor of God upon him and who had wisdom beyond his years. Some today would call him a child prodigy, a genius.

I once saw a news segment about a nine year old boy who was number two among children in the world of chess. It is hard to imagine a chess master at the age of nine. We have also seen

concert pianists at that age. There are those among us today who perform amazing feats, and in his day, Jesus was one who amazed the teachers and lawyers.

It seems to be the way of those who are especially gifted that as they grow in their gift they tend to become arrogant and proud. They are seduced by the power their gift gives them over others - Jesus was just the opposite. As he grew in understanding he also grew in grace.

**Prayer:** Lord, I need to grow in wisdom as I grow in grace. Help me to ever turn to you and hear your wisdom. In Jesus name, amen.

**Message:** “Why were you searching for me?” he asked. “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house” But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

**Affirmation:** Just as Jesus was about the Father's business, so we must be about the Father's business, even when others do not understand our purpose.

**Reflection:** It should be remembered that Jesus, though gifted to be God-man, was submitted to the purposes for which he came to earth. He is our example of commitment, humility and grace.

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Fifteen

## *Jesus Fulfills All Righteousness*

Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." - Matthew 3:13-15

Two things to see here. First, though John was the better known of the two at the time, he deferred to Jesus. In fact at another time he said, "I must decrease that he might increase." John knew that his value was the message he carried and that when his mission was complete he would no longer be needed. John is an example of a mission driven servant of God. John was very popular among the people, yet when it was time he was willing to surrender all of that for his mission.

The second thing to see is that Jesus was being careful to complete all the acts of righteousness that others were expected to do. He was circumcised at the age of eight days according to the prescription of the law. Now, he was being baptized as a sign of righteousness.

Just as circumcision is a sign of the old covenant, baptism is a sign of the new covenant. Circumcision is the sign of the covenant made between Abraham and God. It was a covenant of blessing and prosperity and was connected to the land of promise. Baptism is the sign of the covenant between God and believers of all ages. This is a covenant of blessing and prosperity and is connected to eternal life.

Jesus did not need to be baptized to identify with eternal life - he is eternal life. He needed

to be baptized to identify with mankind in every age who seek eternal life. Jesus set the pattern of baptism for all who have believed upon his name.

When we are baptized we are identified with Christ. According to Romans 6 we are identified with his death in dying to sin, in his burial by being “buried” in water and we are identified with his resurrection by rising from the waters of baptism to walk in newness of life (v3-5).

Jesus, the Christ is our example in all things and as we walk in faith with him we too are called to fulfill righteousness.

***Prayer:*** Thank you for the example of righteousness and the hope of new life that is in Christ. Amen.

***Message:*** Jesus was circumcised to fulfill the law and he was baptized to fulfill righteousness. Law is the command, righteousness is the result and grace is the vehicle which fulfills them both.

***Affirmation:*** It is because I have, in faith, followed the righteous example of Christ in baptism that God's grace has fulfilled his righteousness in me.

***Reflection:*** Ponder this: We are agreed that we are saved by grace alone through faith in Christ and works have nothing to do with that. However, some say obedience itself is a work and when we receive Christ as an act of faith we have performed the work of appropriating salvation. What do you think?

***My Thoughts:***

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Day Sixteen

## *Jesus Prepared for Ministry in the Wilderness*

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him. - Matthew 2:1-3

Jesus had just been baptized and immediately the Holy Spirit led him into the wilderness to be tested. It is not a new thing that God will call one to service then put them into a testing and trying period to prepare them for the trials that lay ahead.

Jesus wasn't the first to be anointed for a task then placed in the fire of preparation before his purposes could be fulfilled. Moses spent many years in the desert before God called him from the burning bush. David was anointed by Samuel to be king, but he spent years on the run from king Saul before he ascended to the throne. The Apostle Paul spent a few years in the desert being prepared for the ministry to which he had been called.

The one who was Son of God and Son of Man would also be tested. We don't know much about the forty days and nights he spent in the desert, all we can do is speculate. We do know he got hungry. We must also believe that he was in communion with the Spirit as the Spirit had led him into this time of preparation.

Over the years we have known many believers whom God had called to service, who readily responded, only to meet failure. Why did they fail? It could be that they were so anxious to be about the work that they didn't take the time to

go into the desert of testing to be prepared for the difficult trials that would be ahead.

Jesus was just as human as you or I and he could have opted out of this desert experience, but he didn't. What if he had opted out? Would he have been able to resist the temptations of the flesh that the tempter offered? Would he have been able to go to the cross if he had not endured the desert?

If Jesus had to go through the desert, we can expect no less. Just as night comes after day, so the desert of trials comes; and just as morning follows the night so victory follows the trial.

***Prayer:*** Thank you Lord for enduring the desert. Grant me the grace to endure my own time of testing. In Jesus name, amen.

***Message:*** Just as night comes after day, so the desert of trials comes; and just as morning follows the night so victory follows the trial.

***Affirmation:*** I can endure the night because I know that victory comes in the morning.

***Reflection:*** This devotion brings out the fact that many great men and women of God have gone through severe trials and troubles in their service to God, but it seems those trials were equipping them to persevere for great victory. Can you see this principle working in your life?

***My Thoughts:***

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Day Seventeen

## *Tell These Stones to Become Bread*

The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” - Matthew 2:3-4

The previous verse says, “he was hungry.” He was hungry because he had just completed a forty day consecration of fasting. The tempter knew he would be hungry and tempted him to answer his hunger by turning stones to bread. The test had prepared him for the temptation.

It is easy to see that this temptation appealed to the desires of the flesh. Yes he was hungry, but he had also prepared for the inevitable temptation that would come out of the test. He could resist the trial of temptation because he had prepared in the desert of testing.

We all struggle with the desires of the flesh. If we don't settle the issue of whether we will surrender to those temptations we will not be strong enough in the Spirit to resist them when they come.

The response of Jesus to this temptation was to quote from Deuteronomy eight. Moses was reminding Israel that they must “be careful to follow every command” (v1). He reminded them of the forty years they had spent in the desert being fed daily with manna from heaven. His message was that God humbled Israel by bringing them to dependence upon him so that they would know the value of his word.

It was not just the manna that sustained Israel in the desert, but it was obedience to the word of

the Lord that made the manna available. Jesus reminded the tempter that it would do little good for him to fall to this temptation and in so doing disrespect the word of the Lord.

We must expect the tempter to appeal to our fleshly desires and we must be prepared to resist that temptation with the word of the Lord. There are many good things we could have that of themselves would not be bad for us, but in the end those good things would draw us away from God's best for us.

***Prayer:*** Lord, it is not easy to endure the test. Grant me the grace to accept the test so that I can overcome temptation. In Jesus name, amen.

***Message:*** We must expect the tempter to appeal to our fleshly desires and we must be prepared to resist that temptation with the word of the Lord.

***Affirmation:*** I know that I must daily deal with the desires of my flesh, but I am strengthened by immersing myself in God's Word.

***Reflection:*** Jesus answered every temptation with the word of God. In effect, in this temptation, Jesus said, "It is not fulfilling the desires of my flesh which sustains me but it is the Word of God spoken in promise for me and all who will follow God." Think about it.

***My Thoughts:***

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Day Eighteen

## *Jesus Didn't Have to Prove Himself*

Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down,.. for it is written... - Matthew 4:5-6

This was quite an ingenious temptation offered by the tempter. He was rebuffed easily in the first temptation by Jesus quoting scripture. Now he is preempting that move by quoting scripture himself: "For it is written: He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone." How would Jesus respond to this?

The question was not whether God would send angels to rescue Jesus; the question was, "If you are the Son of God." If it had been me I would have been quick to come to the defense of my sonship. I probably would have tried to argue that point and would finally have been pressed to prove my deity. Jesus didn't take the bait.

Satan was appealing to the pride of self esteem. Ego was on the line: are you the Son of God or not? Jesus proved he was the Son of God. An honorable son is devoted to the will of the Father. Jesus did not come to the world to promote himself but to bring glory to the Father. In another place he told the people that he did not say anything the Father had not said and he didn't do anything he had not seen the Father do.

Many Christian ministries have fallen by the wayside because the leaders felt they had to prove their authority. Good men who have given themselves to ministry have become victim of their own press releases and have felt that they

must prove themselves to their constituency. Then they have tumbled into disgrace wondering why they fell.

Jesus was our example. When his ego was challenged it had no effect on him because his will was submitted to the Father. Instead of defending himself he responded, "It is also written: Do not put the Lord your God to the test."

We are consistently being tested by the tempter to prove ourselves worthy by works and God has said you are worthy only by grace.

**Prayer:** Lord, help me to live with my will submitted to you and to trust you to show the world who you are. In Jesus name, amen.

**Message:** Jesus was our example. When his ego was challenged it had no effect on him because his will was submitted to the Father. Everything we say or do should be put to the test of, "Is this what my heavenly Father would do or say?"

**Affirmation:** I daily submit my will to the Father so that my ego doesn't take back the throne of my life and my Father gives me grace to resist the temptation to please my ego.

**Reflection:** How could Jesus live so committed to doing the will of the Father? He only said what he heard the Father say and he only did what he saw the Father do. That is the example we are challenged to follow.

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Nineteen

## *Let's Make A Deal*

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. He said, "All this I will give you if you will bow down and worship me."

- Matthew 4:8-9

Think about it. Jesus had come to influence the world to serve God. He was being offered an opportunity to literally be the ruler of the world. He would be able to demand all of mankind, in every kingdom of the world, to bow down and worship him.

No more suffering, no cross, and all he had to do was compromise on this one little issue. All he had to do was bow before the devil and his mission on earth would be accomplished without having to suffer.

All of us are saying, "Anyone can see that this is a lie from the devil and it is just another of his attempts to overthrow the throne of God." And we do see that, however, can we see the same thing in our own lives? Can we see how that bowing before little compromises along the way is in effect helping the devil to supplant the place of God in our lives?

We declare ourselves blessed of the Lord but we seek pleasure in the world rather submit to the discipline of the cross. We have been influenced by prosperity and have called it the blessing of the Lord, yet just keeping this prosperity flowing requires us to pay our dues to the devil. We are more concerned about political correctness than we are about spiritual righteousness.

Jesus saw through the offer being made and responded, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: Worship the Lord your God, and serve

him only.” He would not surrender his call and purpose for the shortcut to fame and success being offered by the tempter.

Jesus was committed to the purpose for which he came to earth. He could see the cross, the tomb and the resurrection, but beyond that he saw the effect of the kingdom he established upon the face of the world. He knew it would cost him all, but in the end he would have blessed all who came to him in faith.

Purpose today to be faithful to the Father without compromise.

***Prayer:*** Lord, protect me from the deception of evil. Grant me the grace to endure hardship without compromise. In Jesus name, amen.

***Message:*** Jesus rejected the offer even though he knew it would mean horrible suffering and death, but he also knew that beyond the suffering was incredible joy, and for the joy set before him he endured the cross.

***Affirmation:*** I am willing to endure suffering for the sake of Christ rather than sell out to the ways of this world.

***Reflection:*** Give some thought to what many have been willing to compromise in order to appear pleasing to the world. Have we replaced righteousness with political correctness? Has the world offered peace if we just tone it down a little? Something to think about.

***My Thoughts:***

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Day Twenty

## *There is Comfort After the Trial*

Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him. - Matthew 4:11

The devil was done. He was defeated. He had thrown everything at Jesus that he could imagine; he appealed to his fleshly appetite, he appealed to his ego, he appealed to his greed, and in all of this he failed. There was nothing left for him to do so he departed.

These past few days we have seen the value of being prepared for the trials that would come. We have also seen that the word of the Lord is a powerful tool to be used in spiritual warfare. The enemy of our soul cannot stand up against the word of the Lord.

We have also seen how that Satan will twist the word of God to fit his purposes. We must be aware of that and become so familiar with the word ourselves that we will be able to recognize the devil's deception.

For the first time I noticed something interesting in the verse of our text for today. It is this: Satan tempted the humanity of Christ attempting to get Jesus to serve him, but when Christ was victorious the Father sent angels to minister to his needs. Can you see the contrast there?

Satan came to "rob, kill and destroy" (John 10:10), but the purpose of God is to give life abundantly. Temptation comes from the evil one but comfort and strength come from the Holy One.

All of us are going to go through times of trial and we may be tempted to take a shortcut and

compromise our convictions just to get free from the pressure, but don't do it; that is a trap. Satan would like nothing better than to bless us with guilt when he has seduced us into compromise. He would love to convince us that the journey is too difficult and we'll never make it.

The hope we have is that when the trial is over God will send ministering spirits to attend to our needs. The Holy Spirit will be our comfort and we will have peace. The message to us today is be prepared, endure the trial, and God will reward you with abundant life.

***Prayer:*** Lord, resisting temptation is work. Grant me the wisdom to trust your word for victory and the grace to stand firm. In Jesus name.

***Message:*** Satan will twist the word of God to fit his purposes. We must be aware of that and become so familiar with the word ourselves that we will be able to recognize the devil's deception.

***Affirmation:*** I am consistently looking into the Word of God so that I am familiar with its truth and so I won't be deceived by Satan twisting it to fit his purposes.

***Reflection:*** There are two points to ponder in this devotion. The first is Satan will continue to pressure us to compromise offering us relief from the pressure if we do. The second is when we have endured God will send angels to minister to us and we will be victorious over the enemy.

***My Thoughts:***

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Day Twenty One

## *Look, The Lamb Of God*

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" - John 1:29

There is no title that more aptly describes the purpose of the coming of Jesus, the Christ of Redemption, than "The Lamb of God."

In Genesis 22 God asked Abraham to offer his son Isaac, the son of promise, as sacrifice to him. Abraham took Isaac to the place God had designated and built an altar. Isaac commented, "Father, we have an altar, and we have wood, but we do not have a lamb to sacrifice." Abraham answered, "The Lord will provide himself a lamb." Abraham had no idea of the significance of that statement.

At the time of sacrifice Abraham placed Isaac on the altar and raised his knife to slay him. Just at that moment an angel stayed his hand and said, "Do not lay a hand on the boy. Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son."

Just at that moment Abraham saw a ram caught in a thicket. He put the ram on the altar and offered him to the Lord. Notice this; God provided a ram for Abraham to sacrifice. Abraham had told Isaac, "God himself will provide the lamb." Was this ram which Abraham found the lamb that God would provide?

Abraham called that place *The Lord Will Provide* (Jehovah Jireh). "And to this day it is said, On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided" (Genesis 22:14). The mountain upon which Abraham made this sacrifice was in the region of

another mountain, and some believe it was the same mountain, where another sacrifice would be made.

Many believe that the place where Abraham offered the ram is the same area where the Lamb of God was later offered on a cross. From his birth in a manger, he was the Lamb of God and his destiny was to be the sacrifice which would atone for the sins of the world.

God did provide himself a lamb; he was the lamb.

***Prayer:*** Lord, I can only say "Thank you for the Lamb," and honor your sacrifice by submitting my life to you. Thank you Jehovah Jireh. Amen.

***Message:*** There is no title that more aptly describes the purpose of the coming of Jesus, the Christ of Redemption, than "The Lamb of God."

***Affirmation:*** God has provided the sacrifice which was needed to reconcile mankind to himself and that sacrifice was the Lamb of God.

***Reflection:*** Consider these points: Abraham prophesied to his worried son, "The Lord will provide himself a lamb." But the sacrifice he provided for that time was a ram, not a lamb. The second is the place where the sacrifice was offered. Many believe it was on, or near the place where the Lamb of God was offered for the sins of the world.

***My Thoughts:***

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Day Twenty Two

## *A Miracle Before the Time*

A wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." "Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come."

- John 2:1-4

There is much significance to this miracle. The first is that Mary expected her son to do something which would indicate that she was anxious for him to "begin his ministry." Many of us can remember a mother who knew we were called to serve and were anxious to see us fill a pulpit.

Another significant point to notice is that the first public miracle of Jesus would occur at a wedding. In Old Testament lore Israel is looked at as the bride of Jehovah as in the book of Hosea. In the New Testament the church is looked at as the bride of Christ.

Another aspect of this initial miracle to consider is that he turned common water into wine. Many see this as a sign of the new wine that would be a type of the Holy Spirit. Jesus would take the common and make it suitable for an uncommon purpose. He would take a life that had nothing notable about it and entuse it with the Holy Spirit and it become alive with supernatural expression.

Even though Jesus said that his time had not yet come, it in fact had arrived. From that moment on the world would see a Jesus who used the supernatural to open the door to

understanding the truths of God and to restore right relationship between God and man.

For just over three years Jesus spoke to the common man about the kingdom that had been promised. His words were not carefully couched in religious terms they were straight from the heart of God to the heart of man.

At Cana Jesus began his journey to the cross. He preached and confirmed his preaching with signs and wonders. Those who were listening for hope found it in him, those who were filtering what he said through their preconceived ideas and doctrines missed the import of what he said.

***Prayer:*** Lord, I am humbled to think of the one who could turn the water into wine willingly going to the cross for me. Thank you. Amen.

***Message:*** Those who were listening for hope found it in Christ, those who were filtering what he said through their preconceived ideas and doctrines missed the import of what he said.

***Affirmation:*** Christ has given me hope for today, tomorrow and for eternity. I listened, I heard, I believed and I received.

***Reflection:*** Jesus used the supernatural to open the door to understanding the truths of God and to restore relationship between God and man. Why didn't the religious leaders acknowledge his miracles and this message? Why is it so difficult today to get people to hear the message of hope in Christ?

***My Thoughts:***

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Day Twenty Three

*Jesus Cleansed the Temple of  
Merchandisers*

In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So he made a whip out of cords and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables.

- John 2:13-16

The first mention we have of Jesus going into the temple he was twelve years old. He sat in the temple courts and discussed the law with the teachers and they were amazed at his understanding. The next record we have of him visiting the temple he clears it of merchandisers.

Instead of heralding him as a reformer who was trying to restore the sacredness of the place of worship the leaders questioned his authority to cleanse the temple of merchandisers.

All of Israel was to bring sacrifice to the temple on Passover. Provision was made in the law for those who lived some distance from the temple to sell their sacrifice in their home area, bring the money to Jerusalem and there buy the animal for sacrifice. Knowing that, what was wrong with what the Jews were doing?

Religion has a tendency to demand that the letter of the law be observed while desecrating the spirit of the law. The leaders realized the profit potential of this clause in the law and set up business in the temple. They offered everything that was necessary for the Passover sacrifice, at a healthy profit of course.

It was never the intention of God to turn the temple into a market place. There were merchants and farmers who would have gladly sold animals of sacrifice to the pilgrims who journeyed to Jerusalem, they did not need to be sold in the temple courts.

We would all do well to realize that the house of God is not to be a house of merchandise but it is to be a house of prayer. We must be careful that we are not overcome with the spirit of the world and forget that the place set aside for worship is to be a sacred place, a house of prayer not a house of profit.

It would be good to invite God to cleanse the temple of our heart from worldly desire and recommit ourselves to prayer and service.

***Prayer:*** Help me keep my heart free of worldly desire. Amen.

***Message:*** We would all do well to realize that the house of God is not to be a house of merchandise but it is to be a house of prayer.

***Affirmation:*** God's house shall be known as a house of prayer for all nations. All peoples are welcome to come freely to the house of God to pray and receive hope.

***Reflection:*** Have you noticed any ministries which prey on the needy to gain profit for their own ministry? Trusting God is not manipulating others. Think about it.

***My Thoughts:***

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Day Twenty Four

*God Dwells in Temples  
Not Made With Hands*

Then the Jews demanded of him, “What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?” Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.” - John 2:18-19

Jesus made a very serious political blunder. In one minute he managed to offend the priests, the Levites, the Pharisees and the merchandisers. It was not a smooth move. He should have taken his concerns to the council and let them decide what was best to do in a situation like this.

He sidestepped protocol taking the direct route to resolve the issue. The leaders were desecrating the house of prayer by turning it into a profit center. If Jesus had gone to the council to complain they would have reminded him that they were only following the law by enabling pilgrims to make sacrifice for the Passover.

Jesus was not politically correct, neither was he motivated by popularity. He was motivated by a love of truth and righteousness. His purpose was to restore righteousness, not to appease men.

When he was asked to explain his authority to cleanse the temple he had an interesting reply. “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.” How did that relate to what they had asked? His message was clear: I am the Lord of the temple and the temple is here at my pleasure.

Jesus had come to establish a new order. God would no longer dwell in a house built by men but he would from that time forward dwell in a place where only he could dwell - in the heart of man.

His permanent home would be the house he had created in man.

It was hard for the religious leaders to accept the new order because it would require a renovation of their entire belief system and way of life, but the common people were ready for the change. They saw the miracles, heard his teaching and accepted him.

It was not until after his resurrection that the disciples realized he was talking about a new order established by his resurrection. They accepted him but didn't understand the new order until later.

***Prayer:*** Lord, grant me the grace to accept you fully as my Lord and to open the door of my heart to allow you to dwell there. Amen.

***Message:*** Jesus had come to establish a new order. God would no longer dwell in a house built by men but he would from that time forward dwell in a place where only he could dwell - in the heart of man. His home would be the house he had created in man.

***Affirmation:*** God has moved from the temple made by men to the temple he created in man. His temple now is in the hearts of those who receive him as Lord of their lives.

***Reflection:*** What did Jesus mean when he said, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days?" Jesus had come to establish a new order, what do you understand about that?

***My Thoughts:***

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Day Twenty Five

## *Nicodemus, A Man of the Night*

There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him." - John 3:1-2

Nicodemus had all day to visit with Jesus, why did he come at night? We can only speculate, but it was probably because he didn't want his fellow Pharisees to know he was considering the possibility that Jesus just might be the Christ.

He gives us some insight into the discussions the Pharisees were having about Jesus when he said, "We know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him." They could see he was from God, but they weren't prepared to go public with their opinions.

The Pharisees, like many today, were afraid of anything that was outside of their doctrinal comfort zone. They thought Jesus was probably from God, but they weren't ready to take the risk of disturbing their power base as the leaders of the faith.

They weren't so different from religious leaders today. Far too many are more interested in preserving their influence base than they are in pursuing the best that God has to offer.

Jesus was indeed a man sent from God. More correctly, he was God who became man to change men. The message he brought to the world was that religion is not enough. He came with signs

and wonders, not because the people wanted to see those things but because they were irrefutable evidences that what he said was true.

In one place he told those who questioned him that if they do not believe the truth he spoke then they should believe on the basis of the miracles he had done (John 10:32-38).

We are given a choice; accept him because of what he has said is true, or reject him. Many accept Jesus as a good man, or a prophet, but if that is all he was then he was a fraud for he claimed to be the Son of God, the I Am who was before Abraham.

***Prayer:*** Lord, grant me the grace to approach you with confidence and not be influenced by the fear of men. In Jesus name, amen.

***Message:*** Jesus was indeed a man sent from God. More correctly, he was God who became man to change men. The message he brought to the world was that religion is not enough.

***Affirmation:*** I know that religion and doctrine alone is not enough to change mankind. For mankind to change requires an encounter with Jesus, the Christ of Redemption.

***Reflection:*** Why did Jesus come with signs and wonders? Jesus taught truth about the kingdom of God, then affirmed that truth with signs and wonders. Should we expect to see signs and wonders today to confirm God's word?

***My Thoughts:***

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Day Twenty Six

## *Formula for Entering the Kingdom*

Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."

- John 3:3

Nicodemus came as a religious leader seeking enlightenment. He believed that Jesus was special, and probably was sent from God, but he wasn't sure of what that would mean to him and the other leaders. Jesus met Nicodemus head on with the statement, "You must be born again."

The New Birth had very great significance to those who would believe. The Jews thought themselves to have been born into the highest order, the people most favored by God. Jesus directly approached their arrogant attitude; You must be born again. No birth in the flesh qualifies a person for the kingdom of God. Only those born of the Spirit can be a part of this new kingdom. New Birth for a new kingdom.

The message was clear; If you are going to go where God wants you to go then you must be willing to surrender all of your preconceived ideas and traditions. You must step out in faith declaring, "Here I am Lord, use me in whatever way you choose."

Jesus is heralded among most religions of the world as being a prophet, a teacher, and some say he is an "ascended master," but most of those religions do not understand the core of his message. His message was not, "Do good and be good." His message was, "You must be born again!"

Jesus taught a radical lifestyle that cannot be lived by simply believing a certain religious doctrine. The only way a person can live out the

way Jesus taught us to live is to be born again - changed from the inside out. If it could be done any other way he would have told us so.

Every religion in the world teaches the principles Jesus taught. Love your neighbor and the golden rule are commonly taught. But these are taught as disciplines that are learned or by being changed through meditation or enlightenment. There is only one way to live what Jesus taught: You must be born again.

***Prayer:*** Lord, Help me to continue in your grace so that the life in me is your life. Help me to live out the Christ life. In Jesus name, amen.

***Message:*** Jesus taught a radical lifestyle that cannot be lived by simply believing a certain religious doctrine. The only way a person can live out the way Jesus taught us to live is to be born again - changed from the inside out.

***Affirmation:*** I am changed from the inside out because I have been born again.

***Reflection:*** What does it mean to be born again? What is wrong with mankind that we must be born one more time in order to be in God's kingdom? The Jews had religion, the truth about one God, and a good set of rules to live by, Why did they need to be born again?

***My Thoughts:***

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Day Twenty Seven

*I Want to Believe - But This Doesn't  
Make Sense*

“How can a man be born when he is old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb to be born!”

- John 3:4

Nicodemus had been impressed by what he heard Jesus say and what he saw him do. He believed that Jesus had been sent from God, but he didn’t know what implications that would have for him and the rest of the religious leaders. Then Jesus dropped a bomb shell.

Jesus told Nicodemus, “You must be born again.” Now he’s really confused. First there is the talk that the kingdom of heaven is at hand, and there is much confusion as to what that means. Now, an entirely new concept is being introduced. How can a person be born when he is old?

With Nicodemus still trying to find the meaning of being born again Jesus begins to explain, “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit” (v5-6).

The kingdom of peace, of turning the other cheek, of loving our neighbor, even the difficult ones, as ourselves, cannot ever be received through knowledge and understanding alone. There must be an inner conversion, an enlightenment, a change from inside out; You must be born again.

All of the major religions of the world recognize the need for man to live according to a

set of moral standards so they set up the rules for people to follow. Then they realize that even the most basic rules are very difficult to follow consistently so they devise formulas for self-improvement and self-realization.

When the formulas have little success then they place hope in another chance. They teach that we are enlightened in this life and given the opportunity to gain even more insight in the next life with the hope that after of succession of lives one might finally reach eternal peace.

Jesus offered a more simple formula: You must be born again!

***Prayer:*** Lord, thank you for the new birth I have experienced through faith in Christ. Grant me the grace to walk faithfully. Amen.

***Message:*** Many religions teach that each life one is successively born into (re-incarnated) one becomes more enlightened until the eternal state of divine consciousness is achieved. Jesus offered a simple truth with a simple solution: You must be born again.

***Affirmation:*** I have reached a state of divine consciousness, that is, I have been born again, and I don't have to wait until another life to have the peace and joy of God. I have it now.

***Reflection:*** Give some thought to the core idea which makes Christianity different than any other religion. Meditate on this until you feel comfortable explaining to others that our faith is more than a religion - it is a new birth.

***My Thoughts:***

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Day Twenty Eight

## *For God So Loved The World*

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. - John 3:16

Many people miss the whole message of Christ because they don't understand his purpose for coming to man. In the beginning God had intended that he and man would continue in close relationship. Creation, and particularly man, is the opportunity God was seeking to express his nature, which is love.

Love demands an object of affection, and man was created to be an opportunity for God to express his love. Everything was perfect in the garden; the flowers were beautiful, the edible plants were abundant, the animals were docile, and God had sweet communion with his creation.

Then man messed it up. He wanted more than he should have gotten at his experience level. The man and the woman were not prepared for the sudden awareness of evil that the forbidden fruit gave them. They became separated from God and the garden.

Mankind was not the only one hurt in the fall. All of creation was affected and God was left without fellowship with the man who had been created to be his object of affection.

One consequence of the fall of man was that man would continually try to find a way to reestablish relationship with the divine. They invented gods and made images to represent the gods of their own imagination. These gods were a reflection of all the sin that was now in man. They were menacing, demanding and offered only disappointment when trusted.

Finally, the love of God drove him to take extreme action. When man was still reveling in his sin God chose to offer a solution to his emptiness. Paul writes, "In the fullness of time God sent his son" (Galatians 4:4). And, "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

His greatest expression of love: For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. - John 3:16

**Prayer:** Lord, thank you for the gift of Christ. Grant me the grace to continue in faith and in your love. In Jesus name, amen.

**Message:** Finally the love of God drove him to take extreme action. When man was still reveling in his sin God chose to offer a solution to his emptiness. "In the fullness of time God sent his son" (Galatians 4:4). And, "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

**Affirmation:** Embracing the love of God means that we accept the love driven gift of Christ who died for us while we were yet sinners.

**Reflection:** God created mankind as an expression of love and his desire for mankind is to be in close relationship with them. Mankind was created to be in fellowship with God. Give some thought to how man has tried to answer his inner "God need" through the ages and how God answered that need.

**My Thoughts:**

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# Who You Are As A Child Of God

Perhaps among the greatest disappointments to God has been our lack of understanding who we are. We very well know that we are sinners. Our faults, failures and limitations are glaringly before us. We have come to believe what the world has said we must be. Our environment, family, socio-economic level, and psychologists have all told us what we are and what we are to become. All of this is based upon the limited knowledge and reason of man. What follows is a gathering of scripture based ideas of what and who we are to God.

We have been held captive in a box that defines who we are as a person without God, and too often we carry that definition over into our life as a Christian. We forget that when we come to God we are “born again” and we become “new creations.” We are no longer held captive by the circumstances that have formed us into the person we have been; *Who we are is now defined by the revelation of God’s will to us.*

These next few pages contain much of what God has revealed to us concerning who we are in him as a new creation. Throughout his word he is encouraging us to believe his plan is to bless us and not to harm us and to give us a hope for tomorrow (Jeremiah 29:11).

Many followers of Christ live far below their position in Christ and they are not availing themselves of the benefits of following him. It is time for all believers to wake up to the many gifts and benefits God offers those who will dare to believe him.

Jesus said, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has anointed me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor"(Luke 4:18-19).

Are you poor? Jesus has good news for you. Are you held in a prison of unwanted addictive behavior? Jesus has good news for you. Are you suffering from some physical malady like blindness, or debilitating disease? Jesus has good news for you. Are you oppressed by the circumstances of your life? Jesus has good news for you. Do you feel unloved and out of favor with God? Jesus has good news for you.

If any of the circumstances given above are affecting your life then the following pages offer you hope.

I encourage you to carefully read each of the "I am" confessions in the next few pages. Pray over them and meditate upon them. Memorize them.

These Scripture based confessions will open to you a new and deeper understanding of who you are in Christ. When you fully embrace them you find your life filled with righteousness, joy and peace (Romans 14:17).

Having received Christ in my heart and life through Faith, repentance and Confession- I acknowledge who I am (my identity):

1. I am His most wonderful Creation.

- ❖ **Ephesians 2:10** - For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

I am God's creation, God doesn't make any trash; I am made in his image for his glory

- ❖ **Psalm 139:13-14** - For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

The hand of the almighty has created me a unique specimen of his creative love - I will not cease to praise him for what he has done.

2. I am in Christ, and Christ is in me

- ❖ **John 14:20** - "On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you."

We have become one with Christ. If I can accept it, I am Christ to those in my world.

### 3. I am a Child of God.

- ❖ **John 1:12** - "Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."

God has given me the right to become anything that a child of divine lineage can become.

- ❖ **1 John 3:1** - "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!"

We are both born and adopted by our Father; every promise he has given and is recorded in his word, is ours.

### 4. I am a living Temple of God.

- ❖ **1 Corinthians 3:16** - "Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?"

Religions around the world have built temples to house their gods and God has chosen to take up residence on the inside of his people; we are not only the people of God, we are the house of God.

- ❖ **1 Corinthians 6:19** - "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own."



We made a trade. We were living in a house of decay with no eternal hope; God chose to give us a house not made by the will of man, or the hand of man, one that is eternal. As the temple of God we are blessed with eternal life.

5. **I am a Partaker of His Divine Nature.**

- ❖ **2 Peter 1:4** - "Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires."

As children of God we participate in the divine nature. We have been given access to the resources of divinity - to the extent that it is possible in the flesh, we have divine power.

6. **I am an extremely significant as a person.**

- ❖ **Ephesians 2:10** - "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus..."

All of the creative craftsmanship of God has been brought to bear in the creation of man, in his very image.

- ❖ **Psalm 139:14** - "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made..."

Not only was the hand of God evident in the original man, he watches over the formation, birth and life of every person who comes into this world; there are no insignificant no-bodies to God.

**7. I am a joint-heir with Him of the Glory of the Father.**

- ❖ **Romans 8:17** - "Now if we are children, then we are heirs - heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory."

In this becoming process as the children of God we are also becoming heirs and co-heirs with Christ. As we grow into the fullness of the stature of Christ God releases more of his glorious inheritance into our lives.

**8. I am a new person.**

- ❖ **2 Corinthians 5:17** - "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come."

Thank God I am a new creation; I am not what I want to be, neither am I what I was and I am not what I am going to be. I am a new creation that is becoming like him.

- ❖ **Ephesians 4:24** "You were taught, with regard to your former way of life: to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds;

and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”

The only way we can progress in this journey of becoming is to “put off” and “put on.” As we put off the old attitude, and adopt a new attitude we are becoming righteous and holy.

**9. I am dead to sin.**

- ❖ **Romans 6:8-11** - “Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”

Just as Christ through his death defeated the hold of sin, so we through

**10. I am victorious over fear.**

- ❖ **2 Timothy 1:7** - “For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.”

My confidence is in the power of God and I am not intimidated by this world

**11. I am full of goodness, knowledge and able to counsel.**

- ❖ **Romans 15:14** - "I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another."

God's word rests in me, therefore it is has made me good and complete and able to counsel others.

**12. I am being conformed to His image. I am a prince in life.**

- ❖ **Romans 5:17** - "For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in and through the one man, Jesus Christ."

**13. I am justified by faith.**

- ❖ **Romans 5:1** - "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Justified: just as if I'd not sinned. What a thought.

**14. I am not ashamed of the gospel.**

- ❖ **Romans 1:16** - "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for

the salvation of everyone who believes:  
first for the Jew, then for the Gentile”

God’s grace and power in me has taken  
shame and fear out of my life. I am  
confident in him.

**15. I am born again.**

❖ **John 3:3,5** - “I tell you the truth, unless  
a man is born of water and the Spirit, he  
cannot enter the kingdom of God.”

**16. I am His Ambassador.**

❖ **2 Corinthians 5:20** - “We are therefore  
Christ’s ambassadors, as though God  
were making his appeal through us. We  
implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be  
reconciled to God.”

**17. I am an earthen vessel of God's treasure.  
(II Corinthians 4:7)**

❖ **2 Corinthians 4:7** - “For our light and  
momentary troubles are achieving for us an  
eternal glory that far outweighs them all.”

**18. I am a servant of the new covenant. (II  
Corinthians 3:6)**

❖ **2 Corinthians 3:6** - “He has made us  
competent as ministers of a new covenant  
- not of the letter but of the Spirit; for  
the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”

# Promises From the Scripture

## Anger

**Psalm 145:8 (NIV):** The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.

**Ephesians 4:31-32 (NIV):** Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

## Courage

**Psalm 27:14 (King James Version):** Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.

**Phil 4:12-13 (NIV):** I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

**Psalm 31:24 (King James Version):** Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.

## Comfort

**Psalm 138:7 (NIV):** Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life; you stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes, with your right hand you save me.

**Psalm 18:2 (NIV):** The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

**Matthew 11:28-30 (NIV):** "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

**Psalm 46:1-3 (NIV):** God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.

## **Doubts & Fear**

**Psalm 23 (NIV):** The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

**Psalm 34:15 (NIV):** The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their cry.

**Matthew 7:9-11 (NIV):** Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

**Luke 12:29-31 (NIV):** Do not set your heart on what you shall eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

## Eternal Life

**1 John 5:13 (NIV):** I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

**1 Corinthians 15:51-54 (NIV):** Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."

## Faith

**Hebrews 11:1 (NIV):** Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

**Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV):** For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.

**2 Corinthians 5:7 (NIV):** We live by faith, not by sight.



## Family Blessings

**Deut. 4:40 (NIV):** Keep His decrees and commands, which I am giving you today, so that it may go well with you and your children after you and that you may live long in the land the Lord your God gives you for all time.

**Deut. 26:11 (NIV):** You shall rejoice in all the good things the Lord your God has given to you and your household.

**Proverbs 14:26 (NIV):** He who fears the Lord has a secure fortress, and for his children it will be a refuge.

**Proverbs 22:6 (NIV):** Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.

## Fear and Fearfulness

**1 John 4:18:** There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

**Psalm 118:6:** The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?

## Forgiveness

**Mark 11:25 (NIV):** And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."

**Matthew 6:14 (NIV):** For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

**Luke 6:36-37 (NIV):** Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

## Guidance

**Isaiah 30:21:** Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it."

**Psalms 48:14:** For this GOD is our GOD for ever and ever; he will be our guide even to the end.

**Proverbs 3:6:** In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

**Psalms 32:8:** I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.

## Help

**Psalms 32:7:** You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs or deliverance.

**Psalms 91:10,11:** Then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.

**Psalms 138:7:** Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life; you stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes, with your right hand you save me.

## Hope

**Psalms 42:11 (NIV):** Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

**Psalm 71:5 (NIV):** For you have been my hope, O Sovereign LORD, my confidence since my youth.

**1 Peter 1:3 (NIV):** Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

## Joy

**John 15:11:** I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

**Psalm 89:15-16** - Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you, who walk in the light of your presence, O LORD. They rejoice in your name all day long; they exult in your righteousness.

**Isaiah 51:11** - The ransomed of the LORD will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

**Psalms 30:5** - Weeping may endure for a night, But joy comes in the morning.

**Psalms 16: 11** - You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

## Loneliness

**John 14:18** - I will not leave you as orphans ; I will come to you.

**Isaiah 58:9** - Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.

**2 Corinthians 6:18** - "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty."

## Peace

**2 Thessalonians 3:16** - Now may the LORD of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way...

**John 14:27** - Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

**Philippians 4:7** - And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

## Prayer

**Psalms 55:16,17** - But I call to God, and the Lord saves me. Evening, morning and noon I cry out in distress, and he hears my voice.

**Matthew 6:5,6** - And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men... But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

**Matthew 18:19** - Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.

**1 John 5:14,15** - This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us - whatever we ask - we know that we have what we asked of him.

## Protection

**Psalm 32:7** - You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.

**Psalm 37:3-4** - Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.

**Proverbs 18:10** - The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.

**1 Corinthians 13:7** - Love... it always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

**Psalms 121:7,8** - The Lord will keep you from all harm - he will watch over your life; the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forever more.

## Security

**Psalm 28:15 (LB)** - I will lie down in peace and sleep, for though I am alone, O lord, you will keep me safe.

**Psalm 31:7** - You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.

**Isaiah 43:2** - When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they will not sweep over you.

When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.

**John 10:29** - My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all. No one is able to snatch them out of my Father's hand.

**Romans 8:37-39** - No, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## Seeking God

**Deuteronomy 4:29** - But if from there you seek the LORD your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul.

**Psalm 9:10** - Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you.

**Jeremiah 29:11-13** - For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

## Strength

**Psalm 68:35**- The God of Israel gives power and strength to his people.

**Isaiah 40:31**- But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

**Job 17:9** - The righteous shall move onward and forward; those with pure hearts shall become stronger and stronger.

**2 Corinthians 12:9 (KJV)** - And he said to unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.

**Philippians 4:13 (NASB)** -I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

## Trust

**Psalms 37:3-5** - Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this.

**Proverbs 3:5,6** - Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your path straight.

**Psalms 46:1,2** = God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea.

**1 Peter 5:7** - Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

## Word of God

**Romans 1:16 (NIV)** - I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

**2 Timothy 3:15-16 (NIV)** - The holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

**1 Peter 1:23 (NIV)** - For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

**Acts 20:32 (NIV)** - "Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

Find out just how good life can become when you realize who you are when you are born into the family of God by the power of God through faith in the Son of God. And you fully realize the power of his word and promises.

If you would like to visit about these things, please give me a call. My phone is 707-349-9890 - Paul Smith