

A rustic wooden structure is the central focus, built from natural logs and branches. At the top, a weathered wooden birdhouse with a circular entrance hole is perched on a vertical post. Below it, a horizontal log beam crosses the post. A diagonal branch forms a triangular support. In the foreground, a woven wicker basket filled with vibrant orange and pink flowers sits atop a grey, cylindrical metal tin can. The entire structure is positioned next to a large, textured tree trunk. The background is a lush green lawn and dense foliage.

Daily God Walk
Life of Christ

Ministry — 3

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His Ministry - 3

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All Scripture quotations are taken from the New International Version (NIV). All other translations used will be credited using these abbreviations:

(KJV) – King James Version

(NKJV) – New King James Version

(TLB) – The Living Bible

(TM) – The Message

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Promises From the Scripture

Anger

Psalm 145:8 (NIV)

The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.

Nehemiah 9:17 (NIV)

.....But you are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love. Therefore you did not desert them...

Ephesians 4:26 (NIV)

"In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry,

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.

Isaiah 40:29 (NIV)

He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.

Isaiah 43:1

... "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine."

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.

Psalms 55:22

Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall.

Hebrews 13:5

..."I will never leave you or forsake you."

Isaiah 41:10

Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you. I will help you. I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.

Matthew 5:4

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

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: 7,8 (NIV)

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find' knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

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.

Philippians 4:13 (NIV)

I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

1 Thessalonians 5:24 (NASB)

Faithful is he who calls you, and he also will bring it to pass.

2 Timothy 1:7 (NIV)

For God did not give us a spirit of timidity (fear), but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

James 5:16 (NASV)

The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

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.

Revelations 21:4 (NIV)

He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

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."

Revelations 7:15-17 (NIV)

Therefore, "they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

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.

Hebrews 12:1-2 (NIV)

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Galatians 3:26

You are all sons of GOD through faith in Christ Jesus.

1 Corinthians 16:13

Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong.

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.

Psalms 115:12-15 (NIV)

The Lord remembers us and will bless us... he will bless those who fear the Lord - small and great alike. May the Lord make you increase, both you and your children. May you be blessed by the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.

Psalms 127:3 (NIV)

Sons are a heritage from the Lord, children a reward from Him.

Proverbs 14:26 (NIV)

He who fears the Lord has a secure fortress, and for his children it will be a refuge.

Proverbs 20:7 (NIV)

The righteous man leads a blameless life; blessed are his children after him.

Proverbs 22:6 (NIV)

Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.

Proverbs 31:28-31 (NIV)

The Proverbs 31 Woman - ...Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all. Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.

Ephesians 6:1-4 (NIV)

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother" - which is the first commandment with a promise - "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

James 1:12 (NIV)

Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

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 42:11

Why are you downcast, O my soul? why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in GOD, for I will yet praise him, my Saviour and my GOD.

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 31:24 (NIV)

Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the LORD.

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 (NIV)

I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that
your joy may be complete.

Psalm 89:15-16 (NIV)

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 (NIV)

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 33:21-22 (NIV)

In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. May your unfailing love rest upon us, O LORD, even as we put our hope in you.

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

Psalms 85:8

I will listen to what God the LORD will say; he promises peace to his people his saints...

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.

Isaiah 32:17

The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever.

Prayer

Psalm 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. I tell you the truth, they have

received their reward in full. 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 6:7,8

And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

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.

Philippians 4:6

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with Thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Hebrews 4:16

Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Hebrews 11:6

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek 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 2:11-12

Discretion will protect you, and understanding will guard you. Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men.

Proverbs 18:10

The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.

Daniel 3:17

If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and He will rescue us from your hand, O king.

John 3:16-18

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. For God did not send his Son into the world to

condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

John 17:11

I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name - the names you gave me - so that they may be one as we are one.

1 Corinthians 13:7

Love... it always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Psalms 112:7

He will have no fear of bad news; his heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD.

Psalms 27:1

The LORD is my light and my salvation - whom shall I fear?

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 (NIV)

You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.

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.

Isaiah 40:26 (NIV)

Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens; Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.

Isaiah 43:2 (NIV)

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.

Habakkuk 3:19a (NIV)

The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights.

John 10:29 (NIV)

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 (NIV)

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.

Philippians 1:6 (NIV)

Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:11b-13 (NIV)

For 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.

Jude 1:24-25 (NIV)

Now to him who is able to keep them from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory in great joy, to God our Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.

Seeking God

2 Chronicles 15:2 (NIV)

... The LORD is with you when you are with him. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will forsake you.

Deuteronomy 4:29 (NIV)

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.

Psalms 9:10 (NIV)

Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you.

Jeremiah 29:11-13 (NIV)

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 (NIV)

The God of Israel gives power and strength to his people.

Isaiah 40:31(KJV)

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 (LB)

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.

Day One

The Logos of God

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

“In the beginning” at least implies that time is involved. Whenever we speak of a beginning we are referring to a point in time when something began. This is not addressing the beginning of the Word because it says that in the beginning the Word already existed.

To help us understand the meaning of this passage we must step through it bit by bit and we are starting with “In the beginning.” What is it that is beginning? Evidence seems to point toward the beginning of time and of creation.

Verse 2 tells us that he (the Word) was with God in the beginning. When we couple that with verse 3 which says, “Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made,” we can conclude that the beginning being referred to is the beginning of creation which was also the beginning of time.

Next let’s look at the “Word.” The Greek word used here is *Logos*. Vines dictionary of New Testament words defines *logos* as the expression of thought with the idea of the embodiment of a conception or idea. However, *logos* takes on a little different connotation when it is a defining word for Jesus the Christ who is the *Logos* of God.

When we consider the *Logos*, the Son of God, as the expression of God’s ideas, or plans and his expression existed with him from even before the beginning, we

can catch a glimpse of the power present in Christ from the beginning.

We do not fully understand the distinct, yet interconnected relationship between God, who is Father, and *Logos* God, who is Son of God, but we do understand that when God began to express his glory in creation he did so through the *Logos*.

We also know that the entire thought process of the creation of man, the fall of man, and the redemption of man, is embodied in the person of the *Logos*, Jesus, the Son of God, the Christ..

Prayer: Father, I am thankful that we do not need full understanding to receive grace. We just need to believe in and trust the Christ. Amen.

Message: The entire thought process of the creation of man, the fall of man, and the redemption of man, is embodied in the person of the *Logos*, Jesus, the Son of God, the Christ.

Affirmation: Christ, as the *Logos*, or expression of God's thoughts and purposes, now indwells believers. Therefore, we can now become the expression of God's purposes on the earth.

Reflection: One of the great mysteries within the being of God is the relationship of Jesus, the *Logos*, and God, who is father of all. Give some thought to the idea of Jesus as *Logos* and what that means to us today.

My Thoughts:

Day Two

The Logos Is Very God

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

Volumes have been written trying to define exactly what it means that the Word, or *Logos*, was with God and was God. We are certainly not going to be definitive in these few words, rather, we are focusing on what it means to us that the Word is God.

In earlier devotions we have looked at the authority that Jesus exhibited over sickness, demons and even the elements. What was the source of that authority? The answer is obvious when the whole picture is considered in the light of John 1:1. His authority comes from God because he is very God.

Hebrews 1:3 declares, "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word." I like how the Amplified Bible phrases this passage, "He is the sole expression of the glory of God [the Light-being, the out -raying or radiance of the divine], and he is the perfect imprint and very image of [God's] nature."

In Colossians 2:9 Paul simply states, "In Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form."

What this means to us is that the full essence, glory, power and authority of the eternal, almighty God are invested in Jesus. As the sole bodily expression of God, Jesus is the embodiment of all that God is and all that he has revealed himself to be to mankind.

Jesus not only has the power, but he also has the authority to fulfill every promise he made while he ministered on earth. The word of John 1:12 is true; As many as believed upon him he gave the right to become the children of God. His promise to never leave us is true; his promise to empower believers and to give them authority is true; his promise to return to believers as the comforter is true.

It's all true. Everything he taught. As the very image of God himself, and as the expression of the glory of God, his word is God's word. When *Logos* speaks it is God speaking.

Prayer: Father, help me to fully realize the power of God in Christ and power of Christ in me. In Jesus name, amen.

Message: The full essence, glory, power and authority of the eternal, almighty God are invested in Jesus. As the sole bodily expression of God, Jesus is the embodiment of all that God is and all that he has revealed himself to be to mankind.

Affirmation: I embrace the words of Christ because they are the words of God and carry the full authority of God.

Reflection: Mediate upon John 1:1, Colossians 2:9, and Hebrews 1:3. What is the picture it is giving us of Christ and his relationship to the godhead?

My Thoughts:

Day Three

Jesus Is The Creator of All Things

Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. - John 1:3

God begins revealing himself to man with these simple words, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). With these words God began revealing himself to man as the creator. It is interesting that he did not begin by trying to convince man of his existence - probably because it is inherent in man to believe in deity.

God did need to reveal to man who he was and his sovereign reign over creation. So, he gave man a test. He told the man that he could enjoy the whole creation, except the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Man had been granted life and had been given the opportunity to have everlasting life by partaking of the tree of life.

We well know how miserably man failed the test and the result of this fall from grace. All of the sickness, misery and malcontent in the world come from the failure of man to honor God as the sovereign Lord of the universe.

Since the fall man has never stopped trying to regain what he lost in the garden, but his attempts have always fallen short because he tries from his own ability and his own imagination. Man tries to regain his innocence without having to return to God, but that hasn't worked out so well.

Then, Jesus, the Son of God, the Christ of Reconciliation, is born into the human race. This one called the Word of God, the one through whom the entire universe was created, very God himself, Jesus, came as the creator to recreate what man had lost.

The only one who could restore man was the creator of man. The only one who could restore all of creation was the one who created it in the first place. The creator himself surrendered the throne of heaven, robed himself in flesh and committed himself to the destiny of making provision for man to be re-born into his eternal kingdom.

Jesus is the creator of all that has been and the creator of all that shall be - He is the creator and giver of new birth into eternal life.

Prayer: Thank you Lord for revealing yourself, first in creation, then in the person of Jesus, the Christ of Reconciliation. Amen.

Message: The creator himself surrendered the throne of heaven, robed himself in flesh and committed himself to the destiny of making provision for man to be re-born into his eternal kingdom.

Affirmation: God became man in the person of Jesus Christ to give me and all believers access to eternal life in his kingdom.

Reflection: Man had perfect peace with God in the garden of Eden, but when he disobeyed God that all changed. What has man done since that time to regain that peace with God? What has God done to give man that opportunity?

My Thoughts:

Day Four

His Life is the Light of Men

In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. - John 1:4-5

Life and light seem to be linked together just as death and darkness are often linked together. In the beginning of creation as God was speaking the worlds into existence, "The earth was formless and empty... and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters" (Genesis 1:2).

Darkness covered the heavens and the earth as God was preparing to breathe life into his creation. Suddenly, as life emanated from God he declared, "Let there be light," and there was light (v3).

As God spoke light came into creation then he began to create living things to exist in the light. There was plant life, sea life, birds of the air and all kinds of animal life that covered the face of the earth.

In one final act of creation he scooped up a handful of dirt and fashioned it into the shape of a man and knelt beside this lump of clay and breathed life into it. Not just any life but the very breath and life of Almighty God was breathed into the nostrils of man.

And man became a living soul. God placed the human race in the garden to live in his light. Man chose the illumination of his own path rather than the light of God's truth and subsequently man became subject to the consequence of being his own light.

The result of man's quest for his own way and to live in his own light led mankind into darkness. That darkness has been pervasive in the soul of man for

millennia. Jesus declared that the reason man has lived in darkness is because his heart has been darkened by evil.

Christ was born to be a new manifestation of life and light. He came as a human to show that even a human could be a light bearer if that light emanated from the life of the Father. The life that was in Him was the light which gives life to the world.

He who was light to the world declared that those who would follow him would continue the legacy of light. The life in us is light to the world around us which stumbles in the morass of darkness.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for your life and light. Grant me the grace to always walk in your life so that the world may see your light. Amen.

Message: Christ was born to be a new manifestation of life and light. He came as a human to show that even a human could be a light bearer if that light emanated from the life of the Father. The life that was in Him was the light which gives life to the world.

Affirmation: The life of Christ is light to the world. The life of Christ in me makes me light to the world.

Reflection: Can you see the relationship between light and life? How has the light, which is Christ, become life to those who trust him? How have we who are believers in Christ become light to the world around us?

My Thoughts:

Day Five

Jesus Was the Unrecognized Redeemer

He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. – John 1:10-11

Some time ago I was speaking before a group of people and I wanted to introduce them to the Daily God Walk. I had walked up with several things in my hands and set them all down. As I introduced the other items to the group I began to look for the current Daily God Walk, but I couldn't find it. I looked left and right. I looked everywhere, and I couldn't find it.

Then someone said, "It's in your hand." I looked down at my hand and saw that I held my Bible and on top of my Bible was the book I had lost. I had lost it, but it was there all the time waiting to be discovered.

Jesus is just like that little book. He was right there all the time. John the Baptist preached, "The kingdom of God is at hand." Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is near." He was right there just waiting to be discovered, but as this passage says, "his own did not receive him."

People were thrilled at the miracles, they loved to hear him teach, but so very few recognized him for who he was. They not only didn't recognize who he was, they didn't understand what he was offering. He offered the kingdom that only God could offer.

He was offering them the kingdom of God. He was offering them abundant life, not just in the eternal kingdom but a life of abundant blessing today, in this lifetime. Yet, the religious leaders rejected him.

I find it so very incredible today that life through faith in Christ is offered to people and their response is, “I can’t, not yet, I haven’t lived enough yet. I’m young and I want to have fun.”

Hello! What do you think he is offering? He isn’t asking you to join a monastery and live in seclusion for the rest of your life. He is inviting you to have a life filled with peace and joy. His goal for you is to see hope restored, your hurts healed and your dreams fulfilled.

Prayer: Lord, open my eyes to the fullness that Christ wants to pour into my life. Help me to fully recognize him and his message. Amen.

Message: Not only did the religious leaders not recognize who Jesus was, they didn’t understand what he was offering. He offered the kingdom that only God could offer.

Affirmation: I have recognized Jesus as the Christ of redemption and I have received the kingdom he offered.

Reflection: What do you think are the major reasons people don't receive Jesus and the kingdom he offers today? If Jesus really is offering a kingdom of peace and joy why do you suppose people do not readily receive him?

My Thoughts:

Day Six

The Right to Become

To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God - children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

- John 1:12-13

We are all striving to become. Society teaches us to work hard to make something out of our life. A military recruitment slogan is, "Be all that you can be." Our parents tell us to go to school and learn so that we can become something special. We are consumed with becoming.

The challenge is that our efforts are limited to what we can do ourselves. We have bought in to the human potential idea and we are trying to become superhuman with human effort. I believe in the human potential, but it is just that, human potential.

All a human can do on his own is reach the ultimate in human achievement. That is never enough to become what God has planned for us to become. Jesus was offering so much more than human potential; he was offering God potential. He offered the opportunity to be born again, to be born into the family of God.

At our first birth we are born into the human race. We know that the human race is a fallen race. We are a fallen race in that we were created in the very image of our creator to live forever with him in his kingdom. When man sinned he separated himself from God and began to build his own kingdom. God created the first man as a son, but that son rejected his Father's plan.

Then God sent another son. This son was (and is) the only begotten son. He is the very manifestation of God himself - God incarnate. God become flesh. And why was God, now flesh, walking on earth? Because he was offering man something new. God, through Christ, was offering for man to exceed human potential by becoming sons of God.

Jesus was not offering for you to become all that you can be - he was offering for you to become more than you could ever become. He offered those who believed to become the sons of God.

Prayer: I thank you for allowing me to be born into your family. And thank you for the power to become. In Jesus name, Amen.

Message: Jesus was not offering for you to become all that you can be - he was offering for you to become more than you could ever become. He offered those who believed to become the sons of God.

Affirmation: I have become a son of God because He is the God of many sons. I have believed in the only begotten Son of God and having believed I have become a son of God.

Reflection: Explore the idea of human potential comparing that with the potential that rests in those who have exceeded human potential and now, as sons of God, have potential beyond human.

My Thoughts:

Day Seven

Believers Are Born of God

To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

- John 1:12-13

Many people in other religions respect the teachings of Jesus. In fact, we see those teachings reflected in most major religions. To love God and love our neighbors is the basis of much religious teaching, but there is a very great difference between our faith and others.

Religions of the world point to a spiritual guide, including Jesus, who teach that there is a way to live that is righteous. They agree that the state of man is suffering caused by sin and they teach that we must abandon sin and pursue righteousness. We must forsake pleasing ourselves and seek the happiness of our neighbor.

The problem is that after millennia of teaching, mankind is still suffering because of his sin and, as a general rule, man seeks himself first then with what is left he may help his neighbor.

There are two great distinctions between Christianity and other religions. First, our faith teaches that it is not in man to overcome sin and its effects on his own. The second is that if man is to be righteous he is going to have to be born again and that is only offered in Christianity.

Just as man is first born of the flesh and his driving desire is to please the flesh, so he must be born of the Spirit so that his driving desire is to please the Spirit.

Christianity stands alone in leading mankind into the world of the kingdom of God through a birth that takes place in the spirit of man. This birth is supernatural and cannot be attained through practicing religious principles.

When we quit practicing religion and trust God to birth in us a new Spirit then we become children of God. We are born into his family. This concept separates us from the rest of the worlds religions. Our faith is not just a set of religious principles that we practice, it is a relationship with God which comes by being born of his Spirit through faith in Christ.

Prayer: Thank you Father for your Spirit that is born in me. Amen.

Message: Our faith is not just a set of religious principles that we practice, it is a relationship with God which comes by being born of his Spirit through faith in Christ.

Affirmation: I was first born to please my fleshly desires, but now I have been born to please God. I was driven by my flesh, but now I am driven by the Spirit of God.

Reflection: Give some thought to the two points mentioned in the devotion which separate Christianity from other religions. What does that say about what our ambitions should be?

My Thoughts:

Day Eight

*The Word of God
Became the Flesh of God*

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father full of grace and truth. - John 1:14

We understand the Word, Logos, to be the expression of the thought of God. From John 1:1 we know that the word was with God from the beginning and that the word was God himself. If the Logos was the expression of the thought of God, then what was the essence of the thought? Another way to ask that question is: what was revealed about God through the incarnate word, Jesus the Christ?

We see in the passage today that Jesus is spoken of as the glory of the Father. How was he the glory of the Father? He is the glory of the Father in many ways, but we get a glimpse of what the Father was trying to reveal about himself to the world in the statement that Jesus gave as to the purpose for his coming.

In Luke Jesus declared, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent 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."

In another place Jesus said that he came to do the will of the Father. If his purpose in coming was to do the will of the Father, and he states the purposes of his ministry as quoted above, then it would seem that the glory of the Father is to reveal himself to man as a

loving benefactor who seeks to restore prosperity, restore health, release people from bondage and oppression, and to bestow on man his grace, his favor.

Jesus was not only the personification of the Word, he was the manifestation of God's glory. God is glorified in the work of restoration released through Jesus the Christ, the manifest Word.

We who have become children of God through faith in his Word, Jesus, have been given the glory of God. Those in whom Christ dwells become the manifest glory of God (2 Corinthians 4:18).

Prayer: Lord, I thank you for allowing me to see your glory in Christ and to receive your glory through receiving Christ. In Christ's name, amen.

Message: Jesus was not only the personification of the Word, he was the manifestation of God's glory. God is glorified in the work of restoration released through Jesus the Christ, the manifest Word.

Affirmation: Jesus was the manifest glory of God while on earth. Now, we who are in Christ and Christ in us are becoming the manifest glory of God (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Reflection: Give some thought to the question of how Jesus was the glory of God. As you think on that then reflect on how we, as believers in the Christ, are becoming the glory of God.

My Thoughts:

Day Nine

I Am the Messiah

The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.” Then Jesus declared, “I who speak to you am he.” - John 4:25-26

Jesus was having an interesting conversation with the woman at the well. The subject had turned from her to religion and the differences between the faith of the Samaritans and the Jews.

As Jesus spoke of things that were beyond her ability to comprehend she told him that she was looking for the Messiah, just as the Jews did, and when he came he would reveal all of these things.

Jesus replied, “I am He.” Suddenly, her eyes were opened and she realized that Jesus was the Messiah and he had come to her.

She ran back into the village crying, “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” She was asking as she ran through the city, but she already knew. He had revealed himself to her.

When the people of the village came out to hear Jesus they were so impressed with him that they asked him to stay awhile and teach them. After two days of ministering to this village the people said, “We know that this man really is the Savior of the world” (v42).

Jesus has been revealing himself to people for 2000 years now and it usually produces the same response. When people realize that Jesus is indeed the savior of the world and they have participated in his salvation they want others to know what they have discovered.

Through Christ we are offered entry into the kingdom of God and the salvation that is included in the package. He offers Joy, peace and righteousness to all those who believe in him and receive him into their hearts.

The Jews, and Samaritans, looked for a man of peace to arise who would free them from oppression and establish a new kingdom. Jesus in fact did establish a kingdom of peace, but his kingdom is in the hearts of men and his peace cannot be affected by political rule or oppression.

Prayer: Lord, I thank you for revealing yourself to me. Grant me the grace to be faithful to the gift of peace you have given me. Amen.

Message: Jesus established a kingdom of peace, but his kingdom is in the hearts of men and his peace cannot be affected by political rule or oppression.

Affirmation: I am committed to the kingdom of peace because I have embraced the prince of peace.

Reflection: There will not be peace among nations and governments in this world, but the kingdom of God offers peace that is not of this world. We who are in the world, yet not of this world, have received the Messiah of God, the Christ of God and he has established his kingdom of peace in our hearts. Think about it.

My Thoughts:

Day Ten

I Am From Above

You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins.

- John 8:23-24

The mistake that many make concerning Jesus is that they see him as a man who was a good teacher and they see his teachings as something we should pattern our lives after. Those things are true, but he is so much more than just a man who was a good teacher.

Many religions outside of Christianity herald Jesus as a great teacher. In fact, the basic message of loving your neighbor and being kind to others is taught around the world by leaders in many different religions. They all see Jesus as a great teacher.

In fact, they see Jesus as the example of goodness that we all should aspire to be. If Jesus, a man, can become that good, then we too who are men can become that good. That is why all of the world's major religions have a system of belief that encourages people to be good.

The flaw in their view is that they just see Jesus as a good man who had great wisdom. They also see mankind as good and that he just needs education, he just needs to learn the right way and he will become wise as Jesus is wise.

In this passage Jesus was drawing a distinction between himself and the average man. All of mankind is born from mankind. All of us share at least some common threads in our DNA. Jesus was telling those who were questioning him that they were of the earth

but he was from heaven. He was not just a man - he was God-man; he was from above.

Man cannot become wise as Christ is wise without becoming born of the nature that Jesus was born of. Religion and discipline of self are good, but they are not salvation from the sin which keeps man in bondage. That can only come through faith in Jesus who is the Christ.

We are from the earth but he is from heaven - we can become free from our sinfulness, but only through faith in him.

Prayer: Jesus, the one from above, thank you for receiving me. Amen.

Message: Man cannot become wise as Christ is wise without becoming born of the nature that Jesus was born of. Religion and discipline of self are good, but they are not salvation from the sin which keeps man in bondage. That only comes through faith in Christ.

Affirmation: I follow Christ, not because he was a good teacher, but because he was from above and his teaching came from God himself.

Reflection: Give some thought to the idea that because Christ was from above his teachings also came from God. Ask yourself how the teachings of Christ differ from the teaching of other religions then explain that to someone.

My Thoughts:

Day Eleven

I Am The Eternal One

“I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!” At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself slipping away from the temple grounds. – John 8:58-59

I have visited with many people with a variety of religious beliefs and most of them herald Jesus as a good man, a good teacher and perhaps a prophet; but they don't believe he is God and that is the dividing point. When we deny the eternal existence, the deity, of Christ we have denied who he is.

Jesus was a good man, he was a good teacher and he was a prophet, but he was and is so much more. It was the fact that Jesus claimed the “I Am” title that so inflamed the religious leaders.

The Pharisees and other religious leaders saw Jesus as arrogant and above the law, but they had no idea that he was the law giver himself. Their perception of God did not allow for him to humble himself, become a man and minister to men. In their mind there was no way Jesus could be who he claimed to be.

It was Josh McDowell, the author of the Evidence That Demands A Verdict books, who first made the statement; Jesus is either Lord, lunatic or liar. If he was who he claimed to be he was and is Lord, If he wasn't he was a liar. If he just thought he was Lord, but wasn't, he was delusional and a lunatic.

Jesus could not have been both a good man and a liar; he could not have been a wise teacher and a lunatic. If indeed he was a good man, a good teacher

and a prophet then he was who he claimed to be: Christ, the incarnate God.

It was Jesus, the Christ, very God in flesh, who has offered himself as the eternal answer to man's broken relationship with God. Paul writes of Jesus and says that God reconciled us to himself through Christ. God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them (2 Corinthians 5:18-19). God, in Christ, answered man's sin problem. A good teacher or prophet could not do that - Only God himself could do what Jesus did.

Prayer: Thank you Father God for the grace and hope you have given to man through Christ.

Message: God, in Christ, answered man's sin problem. A good teacher or prophet could not do that - Only God himself could do what Jesus did.

Affirmation: Jesus was a good man, but he is more. Jesus was a good teacher, but he is more. Jesus was a prophet, but he is more. He is the Christ, the Son of God, the Eternal One, the great I AM.

Reflection: Why is it so important to believe that Jesus is the I Am, the Eternal One? The religions who teach that Jesus was a good teacher and a prophet, but not God, miss the very purpose for which Jesus came. What was that purpose?

My Thoughts:

Day Twelve

I Am The Light of the World

As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

- John 9:5

Scripture often uses the contrast between the light and darkness to illustrate the difference between truth and error. Isaiah 9:2 says, "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned."

For centuries and millennia before Christ man wandered in darkness trying to find his way, and trying to find God. It is the way of man to seek the light, but it is also the way of man to follow darkness and the deceit of false teachers who claim to be light.

The light man finds outside of the truth of Christ is but a flickering candle offering a dying hope. Any flicker of light which falls short of recognizing Jesus as the Christ of God and very God himself, cannot offer any lasting hope.

Many years ago we took a spur of the moment camping trip. It was about 1 AM when we decided to go to the lake and camp. We threw a few things in the car, stopped by an all night market to get some supplies, and we were off to the lake in the mountains.

We got to the lake at about 3 AM and my friend found a place to pull off the road and walk down to the lake. It was a dark night with no moon and we used a flashlight to guide us. About 100 feet from the car the flashlight went dead, it was dark but we decided to go on.

We didn't know how far it was to the lake but we figured we would see it before we actually fell into it. Finally, afraid we would fall into the lake we stopped to sleep until daylight. We were on a steep hill and had to put our feet against a tree to keep from sliding downhill. When we awoke at daybreak we saw that the next thing past the tree was the lake.

We had a light but our light had died out on us. So it is with many in the world today who have placed their hope in a dying light that cannot lead them to life. Jesus is the light which never grows dim.

Prayer: Lord, grant me the grace to forsake all that is darkness and to embrace the light wholeheartedly. In Jesus name, amen.

Message: Many in the world today have placed their hope in a dying light that cannot lead them to life. Jesus is the light which never grows dim. He is the Light of the World.

Affirmation: Jesus the Christ, the life of God who is light to the world, has become my guiding light. Jesus is the light of my life.

Reflection: If Jesus is the light of the world, then where does that leave those whose faith is placed in another religion? Give some thought to the idea of the effect of following others who claim to be a light, yet their message does not lead to the one who has said, "*I am the light of the world.*"

My Thoughts:

Day Thirteen

I Am The Good Shepherd

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep... I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me. - John 10:11-13

We know very little about the shepherds' life in our country. Our focus is on agriculture and beef, but there are places where sheep are a mainstay of the economy. People in the day Jesus ministered knew well the relationship between the shepherd and his sheep.

It is the job of the shepherd to care for the sheep and to protect them from danger. Whether it is the weather or wild animals the shepherd has the responsibility to protect and care for his sheep.

Once Jesus told the story of the shepherd who had 100 sheep but in the evening when he put them in the pen he counted only 99. He secured the 99 and went back into the night to find the one which was lost.

Jesus said that the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep and this shepherd was willing to risk his own safety to rescue his sheep. Jesus is that kind of shepherd. He does all he can do to protect his sheep, those who follow him. He will push us in a direction we may not want to go, but he directs us because he knows that it is best for us.

Sometimes there will be one sheep which is wayward and it will try to lead others astray. Have you noticed that in the pictures of shepherds the staff, or long stick, that they carry has a curved end which looks like a hook? It is a hook! The purpose of the hook is to reach out to a wayward sheep, slip the hook around the neck of the sheep and pull him back into the fold.

Jesus is that kind of shepherd. When he sees us going astray he will draw us back to himself.

The good shepherd was not only willing to lay down his life for the sheep, but he literally did lay down his life. It is because he was willing to make the supreme sacrifice that we are given access to him today. Jesus, the good shepherd, has made the way for us to enter the sheepfold and to be partakers in his kingdom.

Prayer: Thank you Jesus for laying down your life for the sheep. Help me to yield to your gentle staff which guides me. In your name, amen.

Message: It is because Jesus was willing to make the supreme sacrifice that we are given access to him today. Jesus, the good shepherd, has made the way for us to enter the sheepfold and to be partakers in his kingdom.

Affirmation: I am grateful that Jesus, the good shepherd, gave himself for all the sheep who would hear his voice and come with him into the sheepfold.

Reflection: David said, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." Does that describe Jesus? Make a list of the ways that Jesus has shown himself to be a good shepherd, then share those ways with someone who needs to hear them.

My Thoughts:

Day Fourteen

I Am The Gate

I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. - John 10:7-8

Some today believe that all roads lead to heaven and it doesn't make a lot of difference what you believe as long as you believe in something. I don't think I can fully agree with that statement, but here's one I can believe: All roads lead to eternity, but the road you take determines where you will be in eternity.

There have been many who have claimed to be the way to salvation, but Jesus says, "All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers." Jesus is using the analogy of the pen where the sheep are kept as being the security of our hope for heaven. He is telling us that this pen has only one gate and we must pass through that gate if we are going to be safe.

Far too many people have fallen victim to the concept of relative truth. If you believe it then it is your truth, even if it contradicts my truth, it is still true to you. I have a friend who has argued this point with me. He doesn't believe that we can declare another person wrong because that person is right to believe in the truth he espouses.

That concept is very confusing because it literally is saying that Hitler was right in his belief because it was true to him. If all truth is relative to the one who believes it then we would have no basis for science because truth in science is based in absolutes which do not change.

If that is true in science, then why wouldn't it be true in the belief of God? If in fact there is a creator, which we Christians do believe, or if there was a grand designer, which many scientists believe, then doesn't it make sense that the one who established the laws of science would also establish laws of conduct and relationship?

Indeed, there is but one true door which leads to the secure pen which holds the sheep and Jesus is that door.

Prayer: Lord, grant me the grace of continue to believe the truth regardless of how attractive the teaching of the false gates. Amen

Message: If in fact there is a creator, which we Christians do believe, or if there was a grand designer, which many scientists believe, then doesn't it make sense that the one who established the laws of science would also establish laws of conduct and relationship?

Affirmation: He who is both the Architect and Creator of all that is also has become the gate to heaven. I have, in faith, embraced Christ, who is the gateway to salvation.

Reflection: What do you think Jesus meant when he said, "All who ever came before me [implying those who claimed to be the way] were thieves and robbers?" Is he really saying that he is the only way to salvation?

My Thoughts:

Day Fifteen

I Am God's Son

Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, "I am God's Son?" Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father. - John 10:36-38

It was the time of Hanukkah and Jesus was at the temple in Solomon's Colonnade. There, in that hotbed of Jewish legalism the Jews gathered around him asking, "If you are the Christ why don't you tell us plainly?"

Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep." They followed him hearing his words and seeing the miracles, yet they did not "hear" his message.

It intrigues me that people could sit in the ministry of Jesus and watch him heal all manner of diseases, including delivering people from demons, yet they did not believe who he was. He spoke, they heard the words, but they did not hear the message of the kingdom of God on the earth now.

Jesus came as an emissary from the Father, but he was much more than just an emissary; he was the only begotten son of the Father sent to earth to redeem mankind from the morass of sin and the hopelessness of life in a world dominated by wickedness.

Jesus, God's Son, came to earth with all the authority and power of heaven at his disposal. Yet, he

did not come to display his power or to use his authority to control, he came to offer mankind another life. Jesus came to redeem man from sin and sorrow and the mess that man himself had gotten into; and the religious leaders did not hear his message.

Jesus still offers redemption and reconciliation to God for those who will receive it. As God's Son he has full authority and power to redeem us from our old life and birth us into the life of the kingdom of God.

Prayer: Lord, I thank you for the love you have shown for us in coming to earth in the person of God's Son. Thank you for reconciliation. Amen.

Message: Jesus offers redemption and reconciliation to God for those who will receive it. As God's Son he has full authority and power to redeem us from our old life and birth us into the life of the kingdom of God.

Affirmation: I have placed my faith in Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God and I have been born into his kingdom.

Reflection: Many have accepted Jesus as a good man and a good teacher. They have responded to his miracles with admiration. Yet, so many of those who have believed the facts have not put their trust in him. Why is that? Give that question some thought.

My Thoughts:

Day Sixteen

I Am Your Teacher And Your Lord

You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. - John 13:13-15

Where the New International Version translates the Greek word *didaskalos* as teacher, the King James Version translates it master. The reference to master is not a reference to one who dominates or subdues another as we commonly think of master, but rather it is in reference to one who has followers who submit to his guidance and teaching.

As teacher Jesus carefully explained the principles of the kingdom to his disciples, or students. They listened carefully as he explained to them the way of kingdom life and how they were to serve in the kingdom.

As Lord he held a unique position among them. They were accustomed to lordship, but in an entirely different context than that which Jesus used it. As Lord he had power and authority, but he did not use his position to dominate, rather, he used his authority to teach and to demonstrate how masters and lords should conduct themselves in the kingdom of God.

Jesus was teaching his disciples a very important lesson in leadership. He was teaching them that leaders, or masters and lords if you will, in the kingdom of God must demonstrate their leadership through servanthood. He said, “Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.”

The lesson Jesus was teaching is that we who are believers and followers of the Christ must follow his example as a servant. We are not to be lords in the classic sense, but we are to be servant lords in the kingdom. We should have a heart that hears the faintest cry for help, we should see the needy around us and respond as servants.

Jesus, our Teacher and Lord is our example.

Prayer: Lord, grant me a spirit of servanthood when I find myself wanting to be recognized in a position when my desire should be to serve the needs of others. In Jesus name, amen.

Message: The lesson Jesus was teaching is that we who are believers and followers of the Christ must follow his example as a servant. We are not to be lords in the classic sense, but we are to be servant lords in the kingdom.

Affirmation: I am committed to following the example of Jesus, my teacher and my Lord. I will serve those whom God has brought into my life as Jesus served his disciples.

Reflection: We are sometimes confused about how we can lead others while serving them, but it isn't that hard to figure out. Jesus saw the disciples needed their feet washed so he washed them. Serving others is just that simple. Figure out what they need and serve them by answering their need.

My Thoughts:

Day Seventeen

I Am The Way, The Truth and The Life

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

- John 14:6

Far too many Christians do not fully realize the hope that we have in Christ. Casual Christians look at other belief systems and conclude that if it works for others that is OK, but they are Christians. It's almost as if they think that any path of faith leads to God, but they have just chosen Christianity as their path.

Have you ever made an appointment to meet someone at a shopping mall at a particular store and they misunderstood and thought you were to meet at a different store? You then walked the mall for hours trying to find someone who was in an entirely different place. You may have done a lot of shopping along the way, and you may even have seen other friends to visit, but you didn't find the friend you were supposed to meet.

That is also true of religion. We may be on a path of discovery and we may meet some wonderful people along the way; we may even find some wisdom and enlightenment, but in the end, if we haven't found Christ we haven't found the one who would actually guide us to God.

Jesus was spending his last evening before his trial giving some very important final instructions to his disciples. Among his teaching that evening was this; "I am the way, the truth and the life - there is no other way to God except through me."

As beautiful, and filled with wisdom, other religious cultures may be, they will not lead us to God. There is no other way to be birthed into the kingdom of God than through faith in Jesus, the Christ of God.

Judaism looks for a Messiah that has already come. Islam looks for a Messiah to redeem them. Buddhism looks to reincarnation to perfect one. Only Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth and the life."

Truth and life are released to those who trust Jesus the Christ.

Prayer: Lord, I pray that you will open the eyes of honest seekers so that they may see Jesus, the way, the truth and the life. Amen.

Message: Judaism looks for a Messiah that has already come. Islam looks for a Messiah to redeem them. Buddhism looks to a succession of reincarnations that perfect one. Only Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth and the life."

Affirmation: Jesus is the logos of God, the very truth of God made manifest among men. He is the way which leads to life. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Reflection: Think about the analogy of meeting someone at a shopping mall. How do you see that relating to people who are on a religious quest but never coming to the truth of Christ?

My Thoughts:

Day Eighteen

I Am The True Vine

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.” - John 15:1-4

I live in an area where there are many vineyards. It is interesting to see the way the vines are affected by the seasons. After harvest, in the fall, leaves on the vines turn brown and begin to fall off. Later, in the winter, the vine dressers will go from vine to vine cutting off the unnecessary branches. When they are done the vine looks bare and spindly, but the pruning is necessary to be a productive vine for the harvest.

In spring formerly bare vines begin to grow new branches and leaves begin to appear. Before long small clusters of grapes can be seen growing on the vines. By the time of harvest the clusters are full and ready to be harvested.

Jesus is telling us that he is the “true” vine and we are the branches. The true vine is the part of the vine that stays, regardless of what happens to the branches. It is this part of the vine through which nourishment flows to the rest of the branches. Growth in the branches can only occur as they stay connected to the vine and receive nourishment from it.

There are too many comparisons to be made to explore them all in these few words, but I want to look at the spindly branches of winter. When the useless branches have been cut off and the vine seems dead

and useless, it is really storing up energy for the spring. It is gaining strength to be productive.

When the Holy Spirit has been doing some pruning on us we may go through a period of feeling empty and useless. We may even feel like giving up. We may even feel like God is finished with us, but it is at that time that we must keep the faith and stay in the vine. It may be winter, but spring is coming.

We will be productive again if we stay in the vine.

Prayer: Lord, it is easy to become discouraged in times of pruning. Grant me the grace of endurance in my journey. In Jesus name, amen.

Message: The true vine is the part of the vine that stays, regardless of what happens to the branches. It is this part of the vine through which nourishment flows to the rest of the branches. Growth in the branches can only occur as they stay connected to the vine and receive nourishment from it.

Affirmation: There is but one true vine and that is Jesus. I am a branch on the true vine. I am a productive branch because He prunes away the unnecessary parts of my life.

Reflection: Metaphors like Jesus being a vine carry many good applications. Think of the ways that our relationship with Jesus is similar to a vine and its branches.

My Thoughts:

Day Nineteen

I Am the Alpha and the Omega

I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. - Revelation 1:8 (KJV)

He is not only the beginning, but he is also the ending. He is Alpha, the first letter in the Greek alphabet; and he is Omega the last letter in the Greek alphabet. Only one can declare himself to be the first and the last and that is the one who gave life and allows life to all that are between the first and the last.

There can only be one first and there can only be one last. When the first and the last are the same we can only conclude that he is the Almighty. The irresistible, incomparable, undefeatable, eternally existent Almighty God has revealed himself to us through Jesus the Christ of Redemption.

In the beginning there was nothing but God, then God began to reveal himself in creation. This God, the Almighty, just spoke and the universe was formed. He spoke and light appeared. He simply said, "Let there be..." and there was.

It is no accident that Revelation uses letters of the alphabet to reflect on the eternity of God. Alpha is the first letter used to form words; God is the first to speak words; Jesus is the eternal Word who was with God and who was/is God (John 1:1). Omega is the final letter and God Almighty is the final word.

The Revelation gives us insight into the nature of the one who is both first and last as he gives hope to the persecuted church. In these first chapters of the

book God addresses the seven churches of Asia Minor. To each he gives a warning and to each he gives hope.

I find a parallel in the church today. There is plenty to warn the church about, but there is also much hope given to us by the Almighty.

Take heed of the warnings and grasp hold of the hope offered by he who is Alpha and Omega - The Almighty.

Prayer: Lord, I am grateful that you have given us the understanding of Christ as the revelation of yourself. You have shown yourself to be Almighty in the world and in my life. Thank you. Amen.

Message: Alpha is the first letter used to form words; God is the first to speak words; Jesus is the eternal Word who was with God and who was/is God (John 1:1). Omega is the final letter and God Almighty is the final word.

Affirmation: I have found the one who is Alpha and Omega to be just that. He is first in my life and he is everything between the first and the last.

Reflection: Give some thought to idea of Jesus being both the beginning and the ending and how that relates to your life. Do you realize him as Lord in all of your life, from the beginning of you day until the end of it?

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty

*I Am The Root and the
Offspring of David*

I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star - Revelation 22:16

The entire story of David is fascinating. Jesus is saying that he is not only the offspring of David, as was prophesied, but he is also the root of David. Before David existed the Spirit of Jesus was in the genes of those who would be in the lineage of David.

The Root of David refers to the common thread that flows through all of mankind from Adam even until now. But in reference to David there are so many memories revived. Scripture gives us stories of many in the lineage of David, and of Christ. All of those stories are notable, but not all of them reflect nobility.

There are great men like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. There are others like Rehoboam and Jeroboam whose actions as king led to the division of the kingdom. There are also stories of women like Tamar, who posed as a prostitute; Rahab who was a prostitute as well as noble women like Sarah.

David himself is a great story of one who is called of God for a task, but who has flaws in his character. Much is revealed about the nature of God in the story of his relationship with David.

As a young lad David was thrust into prominence when he slew the giant Goliath, then became a great warrior. Later he was made a fugitive, yet when given the opportunity he did not take the life of the one who pursued him.

David also had many failures. There was the woman with whom he had an affair and his plot to kill her husband. He also seemed weak when it came to his sons, of which he had many by many different women.

Jesus declared himself to be the offspring of David and that should give each one of us hope. Even now Jesus is seated on the throne of heaven ruling as the Son of David. He rules as one who knows brokenness and who knows how to mend broken things.

Prayer: Thank you Jesus for being Lord of broken things and the mender of things others couldn't fix. And I thank you for finding this broken person and putting him together again. Amen.

Message: The very fact that Jesus declares himself to be the offspring of David should give each one of us hope. Jesus is seated on the throne of heaven ruling as the Son of David. He rules as one who knows brokenness and who knows how to mend broken things.

Affirmation: I am grateful for the God who is willing to mend broken things. Jesus knows my failures and he knows my heart. Even knowing those things he still abides with me.

Reflection: It is interesting that many of the people mentioned in the Bible who are in the lineage of David had times when their lives were not a reflection of greatness, yet Jesus joyously proclaims himself to be both the root, or source of David's lineage but also a part of that lineage.

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty One

I Am the Resurrection and the Life

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this? – John 11:25-26

The hope of resurrection has been in the heart of man since the first men began to die. Job in his days of torment cried out, “If a man die, will he live again?” All the religions of the world have two goals; favor with god now and a better life in the future.

Jesus knew this when he arrived at Mary and Martha’s house four days after their brother had died. These sisters of Lazarus were sad, and a little angry at Jesus for not coming sooner. When Jesus said, “Your brother will rise again,” Martha, in grief answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection of the last day.” In her heart she probably added, “But he wouldn’t have died if you had been here to heal him.”

Jesus answered her with the hope filled statement, “I am the resurrection and the life.” Jesus himself is the resurrection. He who would later declare, “I am the way, the truth and the life,” was himself the life of man. He who created life could resurrect life.

Many times we are like Mary and Martha. We are hoping for one thing from God when he is planning something else that will have a much greater impact for the kingdom. How often do we weep over a loss when Jesus realizes that the loss is only temporary and that he will not only restore the loss but he will add blessing to it.

If Jesus had not waited until Lazarus died to come to see his friends we would not have this story of life and resurrection. And we would not have this marvelous statement that has given hope to believers for 2000 years now.

If you are trying to hold up under unbearable circumstances I would encourage you to consider the hope that Jesus offered: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies." That is a promise from he who is the resurrection.

Prayer: Lord, grant me the grace to not despair in difficult times but rely upon the one who is life to sustain me. In Jesus name, amen.

Message: The hope that Jesus offered: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies." That is a promise from he who is the resurrection.

Affirmation: I have an abundant life, both now and in the resurrection.

Reflection: This devotion makes the point that we often ask God for answers, but we don't want his answers, we want the answers we have already planned out. Mary and Martha thought Jesus was the answer they wanted from Jesus - the healing of their brother. Jesus had a much greater plan. Give some thought to how God has worked in this way with you.

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty Two

I Will Confess You Before My Father

Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

- Matthew 10:32 KJV

The Greek word translated “confess” is a compound word. There are actually two words combined to make the Greek word *homologeō* which is the word translated “confess.” The first word of this compound is *homou* which means to be together at a certain place or time. The second word is *logos* and we know that *logos* means an expression, particularly a divine expression.

When those two words are brought together in *homologeō* the meaning becomes this; at a particular time and place we covenant with the divine expression. When we can understand that meaning we can begin to get a picture of the depth of commitment implied when Jesus spoke of those who would confess him.

I like the way the Amplified Bible treats this passage; “Therefore, everyone who acknowledges me before men and confesses me [out of a state of oneness with me], I will also acknowledge him before my Father who is in heaven and confess [that I am abiding in] him.”

I think many of us have not fully understood what it means to confess Christ. I’ve talked to 100’s of people who refer to a time in their childhood when they “accepted Christ,” but their lives today do not reflect that Christ is in them. When one recites the “sinners prayer” one is not automatically given a pass to heaven, confessing Christ is much more than that.

When we truly confess Christ we are making a covenant with him. We are saying that we agree with his words and we are binding ourselves to his teaching. In response to that commitment we are born again of his Spirit and he takes up residence in us.

Verbally acknowledging Jesus as the Christ is of little value if we do not follow through with submitting to his lordship by covenanting with him. When we have truly confessed him he comes to live in us. Our lives reflect his life and our values reflect his values.

Prayer: Lord, help me to be truly committed to the Lordship of Christ and grant me the grace to allow him to live through me. In Jesus name, amen.

Message: When we truly confess Christ we are making a covenant with him. We are saying that we agree with his words and we are binding ourselves to his teaching. In response to that commitment we are born again of his Spirit and he takes up residence in us.

Affirmation: I have confessed that Jesus is Lord of my life and now I am bound to him. I am committed to living as he taught I should live.

Reflection: Give some thought to what it really means to confess Christ before men. Is it making a public statement or is it more than? Is it joining a church? Or is it not joining a church? Is my commitment to be a Christian supposed to have an affect in all of my life, or just in my "religious associations," like church and church friends?

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty Three

I Will Give You Rest

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. – Matthew 11:28-30

Some time ago I got a bad report from the doctor. I was bummed out over it for over a week. I couldn't believe that after all of the work that had been done on my body it still wasn't responding as it should.

The doctor wanted to do a pretty radical procedure and I didn't want that to happen. We, along with many others, had been praying over the situation for a long time and this report from the doctor was discouraging to us.

Then I realized that this is not my burden, it is His burden. Jesus said that we were to get yoked up with him and he would carry the bulk of the load. Getting connected with Jesus in a co-laborer relationship is a good thing because he will always bear the largest part of the load.

Finally I let him know that I needed to get adjusted in the yoke so that he was bearing the brunt of this burden. He graciously offered himself and confirmed that his yoke is easy to bear.

I have told many people over the years that I cannot promise God will change their circumstances and I cannot promise God will give them a healing or a financial miracle, but I can promise them that whatever comes, if they are properly yoked with Christ he will make the load much easier to bear.

The rest we often need is not the rest of having the burden removed, but it is the rest of having Jesus share the burden. Oh yes, he will totally remove the burden when it is time, but he will walk with you in the yoke bearing the biggest part of the burden until it is time.

Well, I did go to the hospital for an exploratory procedure and the doctor was beaming afterwards. He reversed all of his previous findings and told me that everything had changed and the problems he had seen before weren't there now. Oh the yoke of Jesus - how light it is.

Prayer: Lord, help me to be ever conscious that I don't have to bear these burdens alone. Thank you for being my co-laborer. Amen.

Message: The rest we often need is not the rest of having the burden removed, but it is the rest of having Jesus share the burden. He will walk with you in the yoke bearing the biggest part of the burden.

Affirmation: It is a comfort knowing that regardless of what comes my way I have a yokefellow who will carry the heaviest part of the load.

Reflection: If you are tired, rest! If you are weary, get properly fitted in the yoke with Christ. His promise to us is that when we commit our lives to him and trust him then he bears the burden for us and gives us grace to endure.

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty Four

I Will Build My Church

On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. - Matthew 16:18

There are several ideas about this rock that Jesus said he would build his church upon. Most evangelical Christians believe that the rock of which Jesus was speaking was the rock of truth that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God. Others believe that the rock Jesus was referring to was Peter, whose name means “rock.” There is another view that I would like to share.

We should note the place where Jesus and the disciples were when he made this declaration. He was in Caesarea Philippi an area about 25 miles north of the lake of Galilee.

The first thing we should notice about this place is that there weren't even enough Jews in that area to have a synagogue. Next, there is no record of Jesus actually entering the city, he was just in the area near the city. He did no works there and did no teaching among the local people. So, why was he there?

A common name for the region was Panion and was named after the Greek god Pan. Pan is the god who was half horse and half man. The region was known as a center of idolatrous worship. The city was founded on or near a cliff like stone wall and worshippers were known to carve out niches in the stone face of the wall and put articles of worship in them. Many pagan gods were worshipped in this area.

With that in mind we may be able to see the purpose of Jesus making this historic statement at this place. Perhaps he was standing on the top of this rock which was the home of many pagan gods. It seems he

was standing at the very gates of hell itself declaring, "Indeed! I am the Christ, the son of God and I have come to build my church right here, on this rock, at the very gates of hell."

We have seen his church being built at the gates of hell. At the places where demonic power is most prevalent the power of God is released most effectively and the prison gates of sin cannot stand against the forward progress of the kingdom of God.

Prayer: Lord, grant me the courage to stand against the powers of darkness and declare the freedom that is in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Message: At the places where demonic power is most prevalent the power of God is released most effectively and the prison gates of sin cannot stand against the forward progress of the kingdom of God.

Affirmation: I have broken free of the prison of sin because the gates of that prison could not stand against God of my salvation.

Reflection: This devotion presents three views of the "rock" Jesus referred to that he would build his church upon. How do you view that rock? Was it the truth of the Christ? Was it Peter as a founder of the church? Was it the actual rock of the enemy's camp that his Church would invade and build upon? Or, is there an application of all three views?

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty Five

I Will Give You the Keys to the Kingdom

I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. - Matthew 16:19

God has had a master plan, even before he created man. He created man with a free will and the power of choice. In his foreknowledge he knew that man would be inclined to make wrong choices so from before creation he had a plan of reconciliation, renewal and restoration for man.

We know that he had a plan from the beginning because Revelation 13:8 speaks of the “lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.” Jesus, the Christ of Redemption was in the mind of God even before he created man. His plan would provide a new option for man. He intended to place before man a new choice; he could choose to follow life as other men do, or he could choose to follow the way which leads into his kingdom and eternal life.

Jesus came to preach the kingdom of God. In every village he visited he taught them that the kingdom of God was at hand, it was literally there before him. What is this kingdom? Hundreds, probably thousands, of books have been written answering that question, so I won't try to give an exhaustive answer, just a simple practical one.

The kingdom of God is made up of people whose lives have been transformed by the birth of the Spirit of God in them. It is a kingdom of people who have been transformed and changed from the inside out.

The citizens of this kingdom no longer live for earthly things but they live for things that are eternal.

God took the risk of giving the keys of this kingdom to mere men with the hope that they would take the message of reconciliation, renewal and restoration to the world around them. We who are believers in Christ and who are born into this kingdom are given the responsibility to take this message to those who live around us. You have the keys to release others into this kingdom. The way you use these keys will effect where others spend eternity.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for inviting me into your kingdom. Grant me the grace to invite others to enter your kingdom. In Jesus name.

Message: We who are believers in Christ and who are born into this kingdom are given the responsibility to take this message to those who live around us.

Affirmation: I am committed to the call to take responsibility for distributing the message of being reconciled to God, renewed in the Holy Spirit and restored to the person God intends for us to become.

Reflection: What do the keys to something represent? Isn't symbol of something being locked and the keys being the ability to unlock it? If that is true, and believers have been given the keys to the kingdom, then how should those keys be used today?

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty Six

*I Will Put You In Charge
of Many Things*

His master replied, “Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness! - Matthew 25:21

Most of us have heard sermons preached on the three servants of Matthew 25. Each one received a certain amount of money to use for their master while he was away. Two of the three used the money wisely and doubled it in commerce. The third servant was fearful that he would lose the money he was given so he simply hid it so he would still have it when his master returned.

The passage for today is dealing with the servant who doubled the money his master left him. Jesus is addressing the concepts of responsibility, accountability and rewards for faithfulness.

We know that the master in this parable expected that these three servants would use his money wisely and have a profit waiting for him when he returned. He had not only given them money, but there was a certain responsibility attached to receiving the money.

It is evident that the master expected a return on his investment because he rewards the faithful servants, and we read the plight of the fearful servant in verses 24-30. Jesus called that servant lazy and worthless. This unfaithful servant received a severe judgment.

The message seems to be that we are given God’s grace as a free gift, but we are responsible for how we

use that gift and we will give an accounting as to how we used the gift we were given.

The faithful servants received a reward that was much greater than the profit they gave their master. It is interesting that their reward was not measured by the amount of profit returned on what they had received but by how they used what they received. The one who received five measures of money was given the same reward as the one who had received two measures of money, even though he returned much more profit.

God doesn't reward based on the results he rewards according to our faithfulness. Have you been faithful with what you have been given?

Prayer: Lord, I thank you for the gift of salvation you have given me. Give me wisdom to use wisely what you have given me. Amen.

Message: We are given God's grace as a free gift, but we are responsible for how we use that gift and we will give an account for the gift we were given.

Affirmation: I am careful that I do not misuse God's gift of grace as a license to do as I please, but rather I realize the value of his gift and realize that I will be held accountable for how I use it.

Reflection: The parable from which this devotion is taken contrasts the rewards for faithful service and the consequence of being unfaithful in service. How do you see this parable being worked out in our daily life?

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty Seven

I Will Make You Fishers of Men

As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.” At once they left their nets and followed him.

- Mark 1:16-18

Was Jesus out for a casual stroll along the shores of Galilee, or was he on a mission to build his team? It appears that he was on a mission to build his team. In fact, in his account of this event Luke gives a few more details. Luke tells us that Jesus was ministering on the shore and people were crowding around him.

Being pressed by the people he looked and saw two boats on the shore near him. He stepped into one of the boats and continued teaching. When he had finished teaching he told Simon, the owner of the boat, to launch out into the deep water and put out their nets for a good catch.

Simon argued that they had fished all night and had caught nothing, but he relented and cast off. To his surprise, when he and his brother Andrew cast the nets into the water they caught so many fish that they needed help to get them in the boat. They called to some friends, James and John, who were nearby to come and help.

When all the fish were put in the boats both boats were so full they nearly sank. Simon was so overwhelmed he fell to his knees before Jesus and cried, “Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man.” Jesus replied, “From now on you will catch men.”

How did they respond? They put their boats ashore, left them there, and followed Jesus (Luke 5:1-11). Jesus had his first four disciples; Simon, Andrew, James and John.

Jesus still calls men and women to follow him and to be fishers of men. The method God has ordained for the kingdom of God to spread is through the witness of believers. These four soon became twelve and Jesus sent them out two by two to fish for men. God is still looking for fishermen to be fishers of men.

Prayer: Lord, there are people around me who need to hear about you, help me to be a faithful fisherman. In Jesus name, amen.

Message: Jesus still calls men and women to follow him and to be fishers of men. The method God has ordained for the kingdom of God to spread is through the witness of believers.

Affirmation: I have heard the call to be a fisher of men and I am committed to spreading the message of the kingdom of God and faith in Christ.

Reflection: Look at this story very carefully to see how many applications you can get from it. First, they were working, even though their labor produced no results. Then, though they were tired, they obeyed. Dig deeper into this parable and you will find other applications.

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty Eight

*I Will Never Drive Away
Those Who Come To Me*

All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall loose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day.

- John 6:37-39

Jesus made an interesting statement, "All that the Father gives me will come to me." He seems to be saying that those whom the Father gives him will know that they are to come to him. How would they know that?

I don't know that Jesus spelled it out, but I have seen many people come to Jesus because they felt the Spirit drawing them. I have a Haitian friend who came to Jesus in the last half of his life.

Thomas had been around religion most of his life, but he had never given in to the call of the Holy Spirit. One Sunday as his wife was getting ready to go to the little church near their home he said, "I'm going with you." That day his life was forever changed.

At the end of the service he ran to the altar, fell on his knees and cried out to God, "I give up." For years he had resisted God with the argument that he was a good man and was the member of a church, but God had bigger plans for him. When he finally surrendered to God Thomas was received into Christ.

My friend, God will always receive you. Jesus said, “Whoever comes to me I will never drive away.” We can trust him to do just as he said. Not only will he receive all who come to him but he will not abandon us just because we have a failure.

Many years ago I was discouraged over a recurring sin in my life and felt that God would not forgive me again. In fact, I was embarrassed to even ask him to forgive. When I went to prayer about it the Lord affirmed me and let me know that He would never stop loving me, regardless of what I did. His love gave me the courage to continue on and to finally overcome that sin in my life.

Trust him - he will never drive you away.

Prayer: Thank you Lord for loving me when I was unlovable. Amen.

Message: Jesus said, “Whoever comes to me I will never drive away.” We can trust him to do just as he said. Not only will he receive all who come to him but he will not abandon us just because we have a failure.

Affirmation: I am confident in my faith that Jesus will never reject me, even when I fall. When I come to him he will not send me away.

Reflection: Give some thought to how you first came to Christ. Did you feel an inner drawing, maybe even an urgency to come to Christ? When you finally came to him do you feel he received you?

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty Nine

I Will Do Whatever You Ask

I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it. - John 14:13-14

If we took this passage alone we might not fully understand what Jesus was teaching. Some would say that this verse binds Jesus to the promise of answering all our prayers. If we ask it in his name he will do it. Is that what he really meant?

These verses are the conclusion of a paragraph in which Jesus was answering the request of Philip, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us" (v8). The reason Philip asked Jesus to show them the Father was that Jesus had just said, "If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

Beginning in verse nine Jesus answered Philip. "Don't you know me Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me?"

Then he begins to put parameters to what he is about to promise. He tells them the words he speaks are the Father's words and the miracles he does are the work of the Father living in him. The next thing he says is, "I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these because I am going to the Father" (v12).

The purpose of these greater works that we are to do is not to give us satisfaction that we have great faith

and can write a wish list that our faith will fulfill. The purpose of these things is “so that the Son may bring glory to the Father” (v13).

When Christ is in us then the same purpose for his life should be in us. His purpose was to do the will of the Father. If that is our purpose, then the things that we ask in Jesus name will be consistent with the Father’s purpose.

Prayer: Lord, give me a heart to seek only your will and grant me the faith to fulfill your purposes for my life. In Jesus name, amen.

Message: When Christ is in us then the same purpose for his life should be in us. His purpose was to do the will of the Father. If that is our purpose then the things that we ask in Jesus name will be consistent with the Father’s purpose

Affirmation: The Spirit which was in Christ is now in me as a believer in Christ, therefore, the purposes of the Father will be fulfilled in me as I hear his voice speak his will in my heart.

Reflection: Did Jesus really mean that he would give to everyone who calls themselves "Christian" the things they ask for, with no regard to the will of the Father? Give some thought to what Jesus meant in this passage.

My Thoughts:

Day Thirty

I Will Not Leave You As Orphans

I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I am in you. - John 14:18-20

The evening was somber. Jesus was telling his disciples that he was leaving. He had tried to prepare them since the beginning, but they would not hear him speak of his death and departure. Now, on this final evening together, he is starting to get through to them.

They were saddened as Jesus spoke of his time being short and his departure was at hand. All kinds of thoughts were going through their head. They were probably asking themselves, "What will we do now?" Without him they were nothing. They had left all to follow him, now he is telling them that he is leaving. How difficult it must have been to hear these things.

Knowing what they were thinking Jesus said, "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever - the Spirit of truth" (v16-17). They were probably thinking, "Just great. We don't want another - we want Jesus."

To further answer their concerns Jesus continued, "The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with and will be in you." Now they are getting just a little confused. He's leaving, but another will come, that other is now with them, but will be in them. Confusing!

Finally, he answers their confusion by saying, "I will not leave you as orphans, I will come to you." They may not have fully understood, but what Jesus said gave them hope. He was leaving, but he wouldn't be gone. He was with them now, but he would be in them then.

Jesus, the Christ of Redemption did return to live in the heart of any and all who will through faith put their trust in him and follow him. He did not leave his disciples he just changed the nature of their relationship. He *was with* them, *now he is in* all who believe.

Prayer: Thank you Lord for being my comfort and my counselor. You have given me hope for tomorrow, thank you. Amen.

Message: The disciples may not have fully understood, but what Jesus said gave them hope. He was leaving, but he wouldn't be gone. He was with them now, but he would be in them then.

Affirmation: Jesus, the Christ of God, who dwelt with his disciples now dwells in his disciples. The Spirit that was in the man Jesus is the same Spirit that is in every believer.

Reflection: One of the great mysteries of the church age is, as Paul writes, "God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). What does that means to us as believers today?

My Thoughts:

Day Thirty One

I Will Come Back and Take You With Me

If I go to prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. - John 14:3

His work on earth as a man was almost completed. He knew that before the night was over many things would happen. He knew that Judas would betray him to the soldiers of the High Priest. He knew that Peter would draw his sword to protect them, then deny him three times before this night was over. And he knew that he would be beaten, given a crown of thorns and hung upon a cross.

They had been with him nearly three and half years. He had tried to tell them that his stay here was short, but they didn't understand. They couldn't understand why he would leave when there was so much to be done.

Sorrow was coming upon the disciples as they began to realize that this would be their last night with Jesus. I can almost see them as they gathered in groups of two and three asking themselves if they really do understand what he is saying.

Would he actually leave us? Would he allow himself to be sacrificed for all of mankind? Questions, and more questions. Thomas asked, "Where are you going." Philip asked Jesus to show them the Father. Though he answered their questions he could tell they didn't understand.

He wanted them to know that he was leaving, but he would return. While he was gone he would prepare a place for them in the place where he was going. He would return and take them back with him.

Later that night, reading their grief, Jesus said, “Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy” (John 16:22).

He physically left, and he will physically return. When he ascended to heaven the angel appeared and said, “This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11). He will return!

Prayer: Lord, help me to always be reminded that you have prepared a place for me and grant me the grace to be faithful to you. Amen.

Message: He physically left, and he will physically return. An angel appeared and said, “This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11). He will return!

Affirmation: My faith and hope is in Christ, my returning Lord. He has already returned in the Spirit which indwells every believer, but the day is coming when he shall physically return. I look for him.

Reflection: The disciples were full of questions as Jesus shared that he would soon leave them. Put yourself in the setting of the last night Jesus would spend with his disciples before he went to the cross. Can you feel as they felt? Can you feel their despair as Jesus tries to give them hope?

My Thoughts:
