

Daily God Walk
Promises
Volume Seven

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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 Series

This entire year we are looking at the promises in the word of God and the hope they give us in our daily walk.

When we look at the world around us we can easily see hopelessness on the rise. In the county where I live there is nearly 20 percent unemployment and 21 percent of the people are addicted to drugs, alcohol, or both.

There have been so many empty promises given by politicians that people no longer believe in them. The economy is in the tank. With the divorce rate hovering around 50 percent people have lost confidence in even the oldest institution mankind has known.

What does all of this mean? It means that if we don't find something to hope in mankind is doomed to a desperate existence living lonely, confused and hopeless lives.

That is why we are looking at the hope contained in the promises of God during this year. It is our hope that you will find something to live for and that you will discover God's plan for your life.

In Jeremiah 29:11 God says, "I know the plans I have for you. Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

We pray that the devotions for this year will reveal God's faithfulness and give you hope for the future.

Have you considered hosting a Small Group Bible Study?

The Daily God Walk is written with a dual purpose. First it is a devotional tool that helps the reader grow in their walk of faith. But, a second purpose, is to be a tool to be used in leading a small group. For that purpose we offer a Study Guide Edition.

In the Study Guide Edition each devotion has a second page which has a dual purpose. It helps the reader deepen his faith walk and it gives material suitable for use in small groups Bible Studies.

The second page of each devotion in the Study Guide Edition

- ✓ There is a section that focuses on the message brought out in the devotion. This section is an excellent tool for beginning a discussion about the devotion.
- ✓ The message section is followed by an affirmation. The affirmation is good to be used in prayer and meditation. When we personalize the principle by affirming it in prayer it becomes a part of us.
- ✓ The reflection section provides some very good material for discussion. This section usually gets to the heart of what is being taught in the devotion and contains statements or questions which help stimulate discussion.
- ✓ Finally, there is a section where the reader can share their thoughts on the devotion. This section is a very good tool to help the reader begin to journal on a regular basis. It is also good for a person to record their comments and questions about the devotion so they can bring them out during the small group discussion time.

For more information on how to use the Daily God Walk in the small group setting visit the website below: www.dailygodwalk.org

Don't Miss Out On Future Editions of The Daily God Walk

Please let us know if you are blessed by the Daily God Walk. Some of you have responded and we are so thankful for that. But, some of you have not yet contacted us and we need to hear from you.

We need to know if you are reading it or if it just sits on the shelf. If you are being blessed by the Daily God Walk we want to continue sending it to you. If you are not then we need to know that.

Just send us a quick email at paul@nhmresources.org or call us at 707-739-7043.

We just want to be sure that we are being good stewards of the ministry God has called us to.

We have gotten many good reports of the DGW being used in small group meetings as well as in personal devotions. We have even been told that one of our subscribers is translating it into Spanish for their local people. We use it in several small groups in our own ministry.

As you know we do not charge for this ministry but we are required to be good stewards. If you are blessed by the DGW please let us know so we can continue to bless you with it.

In His Service,



Paul Smith

New Hope Ministry Resources

Day One

I Will Return As the Comforter

I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever -- the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

-- John 14:16-18

Jesus could see the forlorn look on the faces of his disciples as he was explaining that he was going away. He was explaining that one of his purposes in going away was to prepare a place for them so that they could then come to him and be with him for eternity.

He could see that they weren't really getting the idea so he tried to give them comfort by promising that they weren't being left as orphans but that he would soon return to them as comforter or counselor. He seemed to be saying, "Hey guys, cheer up. It isn't all that bad. Look, I have been with you for these few years, but the time of my being with you is coming to a close. Now you will experience something that is better than my being with you; I will be in you."

He knew that they didn't quite get the idea, but he also knew that when the Holy Spirit came upon them they would understand.

They went to Jerusalem to wait. They weren't sure what they were waiting for, and they weren't quite sure what the future would hold, but they knew the Father had something special in mind. There in Jerusalem it finally became clear to them. The counselor who had been promised finally arrived in spectacular fashion.

The same Spirit of Christ, the counselor, the Holy Spirit, is in the church today giving comfort, strength and power to believers.

Prayer: Thank you for not leaving us as orphans and that you returned as a comforting Spirit. Amen.

I Will Return As the Comforter

Message: The same Spirit of Christ, the counselor, the Holy Spirit, is in the church today giving comfort, strength and power to believers. This Spirit of truth is our guide and He is leading us on this journey of faith.

Affirmation: I know that God is not only with me but He is in me. The Holy Spirit is my strength and my comfort.

Reflection: Jesus had given the disciples many clues about his death, but they were so enthralled by his presence and his teachings that they didn't get the hint. Now he is telling them point blank: I am going away. Give some thought to how they must have felt about losing him and how that all changed at Pentecost.

My Thoughts:

Day Two

I Am Coming Back for You

In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and 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 14:2-3

He went away, but he is coming back!

Jesus never promised a path of roses for those who follow him. In fact, he prophesied just the opposite. He said that if a person were to be considered his disciple they would have to pick up their cross and follow him. He predicted that those who did follow him would suffer persecution and rejection even from their closest friends and relatives.

He spoke of the trials being so bad that even some of those who were called "the elect" would succumb to temptation and fall. Knowing all of that He promises, "I am going to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."

Take heart, he's coming back.

I'm reminded of the story of a returning missionary who had invested his life in the mission field. Upon returning home, old and white haired, he expected there would be many friends there to receive him; but as he disembarked he looked around and there was not one person there to welcome him. Disappointed he asked the Lord why no one was there to welcome him home. He heard the Spirit speak to his heart, "Son, you aren't home yet."

Jesus said, "I am going to prepare a place for you."

Whatever you are facing today just remember Jesus said, "I will come back and take you to be with me."

Prayer: Thank you for the hope of your return. Grant me the grace to endure the trials of this world as I wait for your return. I cry as the earliest believers cried, "Even so Lord Jesus, come quickly." I pray in Jesus name. Amen.

I Am Coming Back for You

Message: Jesus spoke of the trials being so bad that even some of those who were called "the elect" would succumb to temptation and fall. Knowing all of that He promises, "I am going to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."

Affirmation: Even in the midst of the most severe trial I take heart in His promise, "I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."

Reflection: Has your life been difficult? Most of us have had difficult times, but those times are made bearable because we have hope beyond this life. His abiding presence now gives us strength and our eternal hope gives us the courage to go on.

My Thoughts:

Day Three

Don't Let Your Liberty Offend Others

Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall. - Romans 14:19-21

In most cases strife and discord are the result of someone being stubborn about a non-essential point. This is true in relationships in the body of Christ, in homes, in employment, or just about any other relationship. The point of contention is usually that I am right and you are wrong.

One important component to avoiding those unnecessary disagreements is to build up the other person. When we are edifying, that is building up, another person we release the peace of God over them and over ourselves.

The example Paul gives us is that all food is OK to eat. Under the old system some foods were not allowed and considered "unclean." Under grace all foods are OK to eat - with the exception of eating foods that another brother isn't free to eat and thereby causing discord and disagreements to arise. It's not the food that is a concern but it is the other brother who is our concern in this matter.

I have seen relationships broken over some incidental issue that neither side was willing to make a concession concerning. Ask yourself, "Is it worth losing this friend?"

The peace of God is released when we humble ourselves and do nothing that may offend another person.

Prayer: OK Lord, I confess. I have been guilty of stubbornly holding to my way to the point that others have been affected. Grant me the grace to surrender my way for the benefit of others. In Jesus name.

Don't Let Your Liberty Offend Others

Message: Relationships have been broken over some incidental issue that neither side was willing to make a concession concerning. Neither side was willing to ask, "Is it worth losing this friend?" The peace of God is released when we humble ourselves and do nothing that may offend another person.

Affirmation: My relationship with God and others is more important than proving I am right in every detail.

Reflection: How do our relationships with others in our life affect our relationship with God? How should our relationship with God affect our other relationship?

My Thoughts:

Day Four

God's Discipline Produces Faithfulness

This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: I will surely gather them from all the lands where I banish them in my furious anger and great wrath; I will bring them back to this place and let them live in safety. They will be my people, and I will be their God. - Jeremiah 32:36-38

If we just casually read the first part of this passage we might get the idea that God is full of anger and vengeance and that we must be careful lest he release his wrath upon us. It does express that he was angry, but that is after nearly 1000 years of trying to lead Israel into a pattern of living that releases his glory and blessing upon them.

God's goal in banishing Israel to a foreign land was to make them homesick for what they had lost. They had not only lost their homes, but they had lost the temple, their place of worship, and the city that was the very core of their identity.

The promise of God was that he would bring them back and let them live in safety. He promised that, "They will be my people, and I will be their God." It is interesting after that time Israel never forsook worshipping the Lord, Jehovah, even until today.

God loves us as much as he loved Israel of old and he will discipline us for disobedience so that we can have his best when we learn our lesson. I have known people who claim to be believers, but who live their life like the rest of the world then when tragedy strikes they cry out, "Why did God let this happen to me?" He might just be trying to get your attention. Think about it.

Prayer: Lord, grant me the grace of understanding your purposes for my life when things are not going well for me and to understand that discipline is to teach me to follow you more closely. In Jesus name.

God's Discipline Produces Faithfulness

Message: The promise of God was that he would bring them back and let them live in safety. He promised that, "They will be my people, and I will be their God." God loves us as much as he loved Israel of old and he will discipline us for disobedience so that we can have his best when we learn to follow him in faithfulness.

Affirmation: I make every effort to follow the Lord faithfully so His discipline is not necessary.

Reflection: Have you known people who have claimed to be followers of Christ yet their lives don't reflect it and then when calamity strikes they cry out, "God, why did you let this happen?" Does God discipline because he is angry or because he wants to bring people in obedience?

My Thoughts:

Day Five

Praise Him Even In Your Trials

My enemies speak against me; those who wait to kill me conspire together... But as for me, I will always have hope; I will praise you more and more. My mouth will tell of your righteousness, of your salvation all day long.

- Psalm 71:10,13, 14

Sometimes the enemies that oppose us are other people, and sometimes they are the opposing forces of evil - but whoever they are they are no match for the Lord who dwells within us.

Jesus said, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy." That is true of the enemies of our soul. The world, the evil one, even our own nature, are at war against what God would do in us and that is why we must keep our focus on him.

The writer of this Psalm was able to do that. He writes, "I will always hope; I will praise you more and more." Even as the trials become more severe, those whose hope is in the Lord will praise him more and more.

God's righteousness and his salvation are released as we remember his handiwork, giving him honor and praise. We should echo what David said in this Psalm and that, "My mouth will tell of your righteousness, of your salvation all day long."

As we place our hope in him and serve him from a heart of thanksgiving, he makes even our enemies to be at peace with us, and those who will not be at peace with us he makes ineffective toward us.

Prayer: Thank you Lord for being faithful. Even when I feel harassed by my enemies I still have peace within because my hope is in you. I look to you for deliverance. In Jesus name, amen.

Praise Him Even In Your Trials

Message: The world, the evil one, even our own nature, are at war against what God would do in us and that is why we must keep our focus on him. Even as the trials become more severe, those whose hope is in the Lord will praise him more and more.

Affirmation: I am able to endure the trials I face in life because my hope is secure in the Lord and I will praise him more and more.

Reflection: Give some thought to how praising God releases his favor. How can we praise God while we are in severe trials? Can you relate to the words of the Psalmist in this passage?

My Thoughts:

Day Six

How to Have Confidence in God

If our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God, and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him. And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.

- 1 John 3:21-23

Have you ever tried to believe God for something, but you just didn't seem to have the faith for it? I think most of us have. Why do you think that was? This passage in 1 John may have the answer.

John connects having faith in God to having a heart free of guilt. What causes us to have a guilty conscience? The obvious is that we have done things that we shouldn't have done, or perhaps didn't do something that we should have done. Another not so obvious reason is that we do not understand the grace of God.

For many of us the problem is not current sin, or disobedience, but past issues that still plague us. We have not truly believed that God has released us from our past, or at least we won't release ourselves.

His commands to obey are real simple; believe in Christ, love God with all your heart and love one another. Believe in Christ to forgive and keep us, put God and others before ourselves then we will not be condemned in our hearts and we will have confidence before God.

If you are truly trusting God then He gives you confidence toward him.

Prayer: Lord, I tend to base your acceptance on what I have done. Grant me the faith to trust what Christ has done and what you will do through my faith in him. In Jesus name, amen.

How to Have Confidence in God

Message: His commands to obey are real simple; believe in Christ, love God with all your heart and love one another. Believe in Christ to forgive and keep us, put God and others before ourselves then we will not be condemned in our hearts and we will have confidence before God.

Affirmation: It is because God's love abides in me that I can love my neighbor as Christ loves me and I have confidence that God hears and answers my prayers.

Reflection: The commands of God in the Old Testament and Jesus in the New Testament are all summed up in just these three: Love God completely; love your neighbor as yourself; and believe in the name of Jesus Christ. Can you explain what that means to you in a practical sense?

My Thoughts:

Day Seven

God's Power In Us Is Immeasurable

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen.

- Ephesians 3:20-21

I like how The Message Bible reads for verse 20, "God can do anything, you know - far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams!"

God seems to be telling us that we think and then ask based upon our human reasoning with all of its limitations, but we need to start thinking and asking through an understanding of the power He has released in us.

So often we see God do very little because our faith is based upon what we could do if we were doing it rather than the ability of the almighty God who can do whatever he very well pleases. That means he can watch for a sparrow to fall and catch it before it hits the ground - and at the same time be placing new galaxies in the universe.

Let us not miss the point. The infinite, eternal, power of the almighty God is "at work within us." That means he is calling us to expand our thinking and to ask according to his infinite power rather than according to our human understanding.

God can do anything - far more than you could ever imagine or even ask. He releases his power through the inner strength we are given by our faith in the Christ. expand our faith in Him by increasing our knowledge of Him.

Prayer: Father, I confess to knowing that you can do great and marvelous things, but not believing that you will do those things through me. Forgive me of unbelief and grant me faith to believe. In Jesus name, amen

God's Power In Us Is Immeasurable

Message: We think and then ask based upon our human reasoning with all of its limitations, but we need to start thinking and asking through an understanding of the power God has released in us

Affirmation: I practice thinking "God thoughts"- his promises - rather than thinking through human reasoning because His thoughts are based in the infinite and my thoughts are based in the finite.

Reflection: Our ability to God for great things is directly related to our confidence in the relationship we have with Him. If our life is inconsistent and our confidence towards God is limited, then His ability to do great things through us is hindered. Think about that.

My Thoughts:

Day Eight

Honor Others, But Trust Only God

No more boasting about men! All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or the present, or the future – all are yours, and you are of Christ and Christ is of God. - 1 Corinthians 3:21-23

In the many times I have read this chapter I have never seen what I just saw in this passage. The entire chapter is dealing with relationships with others and placing men in positions of honor to the point of dividing the church over who is the greatest. Then he concludes the chapter with, “All things are yours.”

It appears that the point Paul is making is that we tend put upon a pedestal those who have greatly influenced our lives, and that is good, but we must remember that they are just servants and they are only sowing seed. In verses 5-9 he is exploring the concept of sowing and the increase that comes from sowing. In that passage he says, “You are God’s field.”

Get the picture; one person sows seed in the field, another waters, but it is in the field that the plant grows up – and we are the field. When the gospel is sown in us and it takes root, then all the power that it contains is in us. That is why he wrote, “all are yours, and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.” All the glory of eternity has been sown in us that we might display the glory of God.

We are to give honor to those who serve us the word of God, but we must remember that it is the seed (word of God) that is most important, not the sower.

Prayer: Lord, help me to realize all that the men who have gone before and have sown into me is growing up in me. All your truth and power are given to me. Grant me the grace to walk responsibly in power you have given me. In Jesus name, amen.

Honor Others, But Trust Only God

Message: When the gospel is sown in us and it takes root, then all the power that it contains is in us. All the glory of eternity has been sown in us that we might display the glory of God. We are to give honor to those who serve us the word of God, but we must remember that it is the seed (word of God) that is most important, not the sower.

Affirmation: The seed of God's word has been sown in my life and it is the harvest produced by God's word which grows out of my life.

Reflection: Think about the power Paul is relating to the Spirit which abides in every believer. What does he mean by, "All things are yours"?

My Thoughts:

Day Nine

Sow Generously - Reap Generously

Remember this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. - 2 Corinthians 9:6-7

Many years ago I had a friend who was very precise in being fair. If we went out to eat and were given one check for the food he would look at the amount of his meal, figure the tax, and give me the money to pay for his exactly to the penny. That was OK, but it didn't reflect generosity.

Some people give to the kingdom that way. They figure their tithe to the penny and feel that they have done their part; and, they have fulfilled the "law" of the tithe, but where is their heart?

Paul talks about those who sow sparingly, what does that mean? It is somewhat clarified in verse 8 where he instructs us to give cheerfully, not just to fulfill an obligation, because God loves a cheerful giver. Generosity is not measured by the amount one gives but by the spirit in which it was given.

Remember the Good Samaritan? He not only helped the person in need but he left money with the inn keeper and he said if the bill comes to more I'll pay it when I come by here again. That man had learned to give with a cheerful heart.

Paul seem to be telling believers that they should be careful how they use their resources so that that have enough to sow generously. It is a joy to sow into the kingdom of God when our focus is on others instead of ourselves.

Prayer: There are times Lord, when I give, but it is reluctantly. Grant me the grace to give from a heart that is willing and desirous to give so that I am not just giving out of duty. In Jesus name, amen.

Sow Generously - Reap Generously

Message: What does that mean to sow sparingly? It is somewhat clarified in verse 7 in the Scripture passage for today, where he instructs us to give cheerfully, not just to fulfill an obligation, because God loves a cheerful giver. Generosity is not measured by the amount one gives but by the spirit in which it was given.

Affirmation: I am committed to sowing generously into the Kingdom harvest and expect to receive a bountiful harvest.

Reflection: Are you grasping the sowing and reaping concept? The example in this passage seems to be about giving money, but it is about more. It is about sowing ones life into kingdom work. Have you been sowing sparingly or generously?

My Thoughts:

Day Ten

God Gives Grace For Good Works

God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written: He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.

- 2 Corinthians 9:8-9

The principle of sowing and reaping is not just about giving money. It applies to every area of our life. The thing we sow ourselves into is the thing we will harvest. I know people who are great fishermen because they fish often - but they are lousy providers because they would rather fish.

We are being taught in this passage that as we sow our lives into God's kingdom his grace begins to abound in us. What that means to us is that God will release in us his blessing of prosperity and a right spirit as we invest ourselves in his kingdom.

The grace of God provides an abundance of resources for those who are investing their lives in the kingdom. Not only will he provide an abundance for the giver so that all of their needs are taken care of, but he will also give resources so that they can accomplish righteous works of service.

Abounding grace is serving grace and God's best is released in us and in others as we serve the needs of others. If we want to abound in God's grace then we should serve Him and His kingdom with an open heart.

Where are you investing your resources? Do you invest in your own domain or in the Kingdom of God?

Prayer: Lord, by the time I take care of my own needs (and desires) there is so little left for your kingdom. Grant the heart to invest in your kingdom first instead of giving you the leftovers. In Jesus name, amen.

God Gives Grace For Good Works

Message: Abounding grace is serving grace and God's best is released in us and in others as we serve the needs of others. If we want to abound in God's grace then we should serve Him and His kingdom with an open heart.

Affirmation: I am experiencing God's abounding grace because I serve him and others with an open heart.

Reflection: How effective has your service in the kingdom of God been? Or maybe the question should be, "How well are you sowing into the kingdom?" It is true in kingdom service as it is in the natural realm; where we invest our time, talent and resources will be where we will reap a harvest. Is your harvest in this world and its system, or will it be in the eternal kingdom of God?

My Thoughts:

Day Eleven

We Are Called to Share Our Resources

He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. - 2 Corinthians 9:10-11

This entire chapter in 2 Corinthians is about sharing our resources with others. Paul begins the chapter with these words, "There is no need for me to write to you about this service to the saints. For I know your eagerness to help." Then he goes on to talk about the value of sowing generously in to the lives of others.

The point being made is that folks in the local church should be aware of the needs of others in the greater body of Christ and they should be sharing whatever blessings God has brought to them with others who are in need.

The text speaks of an enlarged harvest so that they could be generous on every occasion, and their generosity will result of thanksgiving being given to God. How would the lives of those with whom you come in contact be changed if you were more generous with the blessings God has brought into your life?

People are more receptive to the gospel when they hear it through a generous heart. The blessings of the Lord are rich to us and to those with whom we are able to share. Because we know lives are affected and hearts are opened through our generosity we show toward those who are in need, we should generously sow the good seed of God's blessing.

Prayer: Lord, help me to get a spirit of generosity so that I will sow good works and blessings upon those who are in need. In Jesus name, amen.

We Are Called to Share Our Resources

Message: People are more receptive to the gospel when they hear it through a generous heart. The blessings of the Lord are rich to us and to those with whom we are able to share. Because we know lives are affected and hearts are opened through our generosity we show toward those who are in need, we should generously sow the good seed of God's blessing.

Affirmation: I share the blessing God has given me so that others may be blessed by my generous spirit.

Reflection: How would the lives of those with whom you come in contact be changed if you were more generous with the blessings God has brought into your life? Ask yourself the question: "How generous am I with the blessings God has given me?"

My Thoughts:

Day Twelve

We Have A Choice – Be Blessed Or Be Cursed

I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse – the blessing if you obey the commands of the Lord your God that I am giving you today; the curse if you disobey the commands of the Lord your God and turn from the way that I command you today. - Deuteronomy 11:26-28

There are some things we just don't like to talk about, and this passage brings up one of them. We love to talk about the blessings that come from living in grace, but we are very hesitant to speak of the curse, or the withholding of blessing, when we are disobedient.

The grace of God is certainly sufficient, and the Apostle Paul has told us that where sin does abound that grace does much more abound, but that does not do away with the consequences of living in disobedience to God's revealed will.

When we choose to obey God rather than follow after our own way God has promised to release blessing upon our life. Now, we don't, or at least we shouldn't, obey to be blessed; we obey because it is the right thing to do. But, we know that there is a blessing which comes along with obedience.

But that is just half the story. When we are in disobedience those blessings are withheld, and if we continue in disobedience a curse comes over our life – The choice is ours.

We release the blessing and avoid the curse by embracing the grace of God through Faith in Jesus the Christ - then living according to his revealed will.

Prayer: I ask for a consciousness of the blessing and cursing process. Give me the grace to choose obedience so that your blessing can be released on me. In Jesus name, amen.

We Have A Choice – Be Blessed Or Be Cursed

Message: We release the blessing and avoid the curse by embracing the grace of God through Faith in Jesus the Christ - then living according to his revealed will. When we are in disobedience those blessings are withheld, and if we continue in disobedience a curse comes over our life - The choice is ours.

Affirmation: I walk in the blessings of the Lord because I am in obedience to his commands and I am free from the curse of the law of sin and death.

Reflection: How can you see obedience, or disobedience affecting the blessing God wants to give believers? What have you done, or what are you doing, to insure that you are living in the blessing and not in the curse?

My Thoughts:

Day Thirteen

The Holy Spirit Is Spirit Of Truth

When he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears and he will tell you what is yet to come.

- John 16:13

When Jesus promised to never leave us alone he also promised the Holy Spirit to be our guide into the fullness of truth and understanding. Every believer has the Holy Spirit working in them to lead them into righteousness and selfless service.

The challenge faced by the Holy Spirit is that He can only lead where we are willing to follow. The challenge we face is in hearing the voice of the Spirit over the call of our ego driven humanity. Our way seems so much more practical.

The purpose of a guide is to lead to a successful conclusion. I live in Lake County, California. There are fishing guides available on the lakes in this region. These guides know where the good fishing spots are and if a person will follow the guide they will have a success. If they stop and try to fish where they want to, the guide can't help them and they will probably not catch anything.

The purpose of the Holy Spirit is to guide us into truth that produces a fulfilled life. When we follow him He guides us away from pitfalls and leads us into his glory. Let him be your guide.

Holy Spirit tells us what is yet to come and He will direct us away from pitfalls and lead us into his glory. Listen to the voice of Holy Spirit and follow him.

Prayer: OK Lord, I give up. I've tried being my own guide and it just isn't working. Grant me the grace to surrender to the Holy Spirit and allow him to guide me into all truth. In Jesus name, amen.

The Holy Spirit Is Spirit Of Truth

Message: The purpose of the Holy Spirit is to guide us into truth that produces a fulfilled life. When we follow him He guides us away from pitfalls and leads us into his glory. Let him be your guide. Listen to the voice of Holy Spirit and follow him.

Affirmation: I listen to hear the Holy Spirit speak to my heart then I am careful to follow where he is leading.

Reflection: This devotion speaks of the difficulty of hearing the voice of Holy Spirit over the call of our ego driven humanity. How do you deal with this battle between your own ego, or your own desires, and the call of Holy Spirit to follow him?

My Thoughts:

Day Fourteen

God Leads Us Through Spiritual Leaders

We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.

- 1 John 4:6

Previously we spoke of how the Holy Spirit is a guide to us. One way he guides us is through spiritual leaders. Spirit filled leaders hear God and we, as true believers, should listen to what God is saying through them.

John, speaking of leaders in the church, says, “We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us.” These leaders hear God and we are to listen and follow what God places in their heart for us.

Of course, everything that we are taught should be put up against the word of God to be sure our leaders are on target, after all, they are human too. But, we are not to allow ego and human reason to prevent us from following those who are led by the Holy Spirit.

This passage also tells us that the test of a true follower of Christ is whether he listens to his spiritual leaders. Have you ever known someone who seems to always be stirring up trouble because they seem to always know the best way regardless of what their spiritual leaders say? If we aren't following the ones who have been given direction by the Holy Spirit then we are not following God. Just a thought.

If we are walking in the Spirit then we will trust the Spirit to lead those who have spiritual authority over us.

Prayer: Lord, help me to surrender my will to you. I know that your direction doesn't always seem practical to me, but you know the road ahead much better than I do. In Jesus name, amen.

God Leads Us Through Spiritual Leaders

Message: One way he guides us is through spiritual leaders. Spirit filled leaders hear God and we, as true believers, should listen to what God is saying through them. We are not to allow ego and human reason to prevent us from following those who are led by the Holy Spirit.

Affirmation: I trust The Holy Spirit to speak to me through those He has ordained to be my leaders in spiritual matters.

Reflection: Think about the test of being a “true follower of Christ” mentioned in this devotion. How do you see that working out in your own life? Have you ever had the challenge of a spiritual leader trying to lead in a direction you did not want to go?

My Thoughts:

Day Fifteen

Birth of Flesh and Birth of Spirit

Jesus Declared, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again... I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying you must be born again.. - John 3:3-8

Jesus was responding to the opening statement made by Nicodemus when he said, “No one can *see* (Greek, *ido*; understand) the kingdom of God unless he is born again. Jesus was not giving a doctrinal stance on how one becomes born again; he was explaining how one comes to understand the kingdom of God.

The mistake we make is that we try to convince people concerning the doctrines of the kingdom when they don't even understand what the kingdom is about. In fact, far too many believers don't even know what the kingdom of God is all about.

The kingdom of God cannot be understood by human reason because it comes from eternity. Its principles are from divine origin not human reason. Nicodemus could not understand the kingdom because he was not born again.

Understanding the kingdom of God does not come by human reason; it is revealed by the Spirit.

In the next few devotions we are going to be exploring the meaning of being born into the kingdom of God. I trust that God will give you a deeper understanding and appreciation of his kingdom.

Prayer: Lord, as we look at this concept of entering a new world grant me the grace of faith to accept and the understanding to live in it. In Jesus name, amen.

Day Sixteen

The Right To Become Children 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

By nature we are born into a world by the will of man. Everything we know and understand has come through the process common to all of mankind; we inherit certain genetic characteristics, then from our birth we begin to develop thoughts, concepts and behaviors that have all been filtered through our genetic characteristics. We are truly the child of mankind.

Then Jesus introduces an entirely new concept – we can be born into a new world; a world that is not subject to the limitations of man but a world that is an expression of the infinite God himself. Those who believe in Christ are given the right to become the children of God on earth.

The entire ministry of Jesus was a demonstration of what that kingdom is to be. The kingdom of God on earth is the children of God doing the works of God among men. It is healing the sick, restoring the broken hearted, setting the oppressed free. That is to be the normal life for we who are children of God.

When we embrace Jesus as Lord it is more than just believing a doctrine. There is a change which takes place on the inside. A new Spirit is born in us and the way we think changes as does the way we act, at least it should.

Prayer: Father, I know I have been born again, but I still think as a man thinks and act as a man acts. Give me the understanding and faith to walk in the works of the kingdom of heaven as a true child of God. In Jesus name, amen.

The Right To Become Children Of God

Message: Jesus introduces an entirely new concept - we can be born into a new world; a world that is not subject to the limitations of man but a world that is an expression of the infinite God himself. Those who believe in Christ are given the right to become the children of God on earth

Affirmation: I have embraced Christ and have put my trust in Him. Because of that faith I have been born into the family of God.

Reflection: Is there more to being a follower of Christ than just accepting a doctrine about him? As a child of God, or a Christ representative on earth, what should our life look like? What kind of works should we be doing as evidence of being a child of God?

My Thoughts:

Day Seventeen

An Invitation to a New World

I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying 'You must be born again.' - John 3:5-7

We are all born into a world where the inevitable end is death. Everything we see around us is temporary and is in a state of decay. It is the nature of the natural realm. In reality, as a human person, we are born to ultimately die.

Knowing this it has been the goal of man since early times to find a way to avoid death. Secret formulas, hidden fountains of youth; all of these myths are born from the heart of man who knows that one day his life will be over and he wants to avoid that inevitability.

Then Jesus gave us the answer. Man's dilemma is answered in this one statement, "You must be born again." The only answer to the finiteness of mankind is to be born into the infinite - to be born into the family of God.

God is offering us an opportunity to move from death to life. To live in his kingdom we must choose to surrender our natural life to him and trust him for his eternal life. Being born of the Spirit is stepping into a new world.

I once heard a preacher preach a sermon titled, "An Invitation to a New World." That message was about this passage in John. What Jesus was offering Nicodemus was exactly that. Nicodemus was being invited to a new world and that is the same invitation we all receive - the question is; have you accepted your invitation?

Prayer: Thank you Lord for the hope of eternal life. I consciously surrender all that my is in the realm of the natural and by faith step into your world, the world of the Spirit. In Jesus name, amen.

An Invitation to a New World

Message: God is offering all of mankind an opportunity to move from death to life. To live in his kingdom we must choose to surrender our natural life to him and trust him for his eternal life. Being born of the Spirit is stepping into a new world

Affirmation: I have been born into the kingdom of God, the kingdom of eternal life.

Reflection: Have you given thought to the idea that even though you have received eternal life you will die some day? Does “eternal life” apply to our physical person or our spiritual person?

My Thoughts:

Day Eighteen

Unbelievers Just Can't See It

“How can this be?” Nicodemus asked. “You are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus, “and do you not understand these things? I tell you the truth, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony.” - John 3:9-11

Nicodemus was confused by what he had heard. He asked Jesus, “How can these things be?” That is the question many ask who have heard some of the principles of the kingdom, but who have not yet been born into an understanding of the kingdom.

The problem Nicodemus had is common to all of us: What we know and understand in our natural state is framed by our flesh. We can only understand what can be defined in human experience; what we can see, hear, feel, taste or smell. The sum total of all we know by nature we have learned through one of our five senses.

The concepts Jesus is presenting cannot be perceived by human reason, but they must be embraced through faith. How does one gain the faith to accept concepts that are beyond human reason? By being exposed to the world that projects those concepts.

Jesus demonstrated the world of God’s kingdom when he went about healing people and setting them free from demonic oppression. That is the world he has invited us into, a world of extraordinary experience - We are to show the world around us the kingdom of God’s world.

Are you showing God's world to your world?

Prayer: Lord, first, allow me to understand your purposes in the kingdom, and then grant me the grace and power to demonstrate the kingdom to others so they might believe. In Jesus name, amen.

Unbelievers Just Can't See It

Message: We can only understand what can be defined in human experience; what we can see, hear, feel, taste or smell. The sum total of all we know by nature we have learned through one of our five senses. We gain the faith to accept concepts that are beyond human reason by being exposed to the world that projects those concepts

Affirmation: I have accepted by faith things that are beyond human reason and God has confirmed those truths by the Spirit he has given me.

Reflection: Think on the way we receive information through our senses and how that knowledge is assimilated to become our belief system. Does that explain why we can't understand the Kingdom of God using reason?

My Thoughts:

Day Nineteen

Power Comes Through Prayer

After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. - Acts 4:31

Peter and John had just been released from prison and ordered not to teach or do miracles any longer in the name of Jesus. They were threatened with death if they did not comply. When they returned to the other believers and explained what had happened they prayed.

Here is part of their prayer: “Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”

Faced with threats of punishment, human reason would dictate that the disciples change their message, make it more acceptable to those who were threatening them. But, the Spirit of the kingdom drew them to prayer, not for deliverance, but for power and boldness to do the works of the Kingdom in the name of Jesus. God answered that prayer.

We have the same responsibility today. The world around us doesn't like the message that Jesus is the only way to God. They don't care about our lifestyle, or whether we do good works; they are concerned that our motivation is our belief that Jesus is the only way to God. We must pray for power and boldly demonstrate the truth of Christ.

How long has it been since you prayed until the place where you were praying was shaken?

Prayer: Lord, too often I have been intimidated by the world and have not been consistent with the witness of Christ. Grant me boldness to speak with signs following. In Jesus name, amen.

Power Comes Through Prayer

Message: A power prayer: “Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”

Affirmation: My spiritual strength and power comes through effectively praying. Effective praying is praying until the Holy Spirit manifests himself.

Reflection: Why do you think God responded to the prayer of these early saints by shaking the building and giving them boldness, but today our prayer meetings do not produce such results?

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty

Keep Believing for Your Children

I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants. They will spring up like grass in a meadow, like poplar trees by flowing streams. One will say, "I belong to the Lord; another will call himself by the name of Jacob; still another will write on his hand, "the Lords," and will take the name of Israel. - Isaiah 44:3-5

There are times when it is hard to keep believing that God will move our children and their children in the manner that is described in this passage - but we must keep believing because God is true to his word.

I once put this passage on a 3x5 card and carried it in my daily agenda to continually remind myself that regardless of how it looks on the surface, God is working his will in the lives of my children and their children.

The enemy of our soul, and the souls of our children, would like to convince us that God is not faithful to his promise and that they will never come to God. We must purpose to stand against the false arguments of the enemy and stand firmly on the promises that God has given.

In another place God has declared, "God is not a man that he should lie, or the son of man that he should change his mind" (Numbers 23:19). What God has promised He will perform.

We must stop confessing the circumstances we see in the lives of our loved ones and begin to confess what God sees in them and God sees them as jewels in his kingdom.

Prayer: Lord, sometimes I become discouraged about my children and grandchildren. Grant me the grace to believe your word over the circumstances. I stand on your promise. In Jesus name, amen.

Keep Believing for Your Children

Message: We must stop confessing the circumstances we see in the lives of our loved ones and begin to confess what God sees in them and God sees them as jewels in his kingdom.

Affirmation: The circumstances and the promises of God do not always agree so I choose to believe the word of the Lord over anything else.

Reflection: The enemy of our souls seeks to convince us that God is not faithful; how are we to resist him? How can we continue to stand firm on the promises of God without weakening to the circumstances around us?

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty One

His Sheep Hear His Voice and Follow Him

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. - John 10:27-28

Jesus is very clear in this passage about whose sheep we are. We are his sheep. There are two things that his sheep do; they listen to his voice and they follow him. Hearing him and obeying him are critical for the release of eternal life to us. He gives his sheep eternal life.

Some have tried to make receiving eternal life a matter of reciting a certain formulated prayer and from that point on they have their ticket punched and nothing can keep them out of heaven. Jesus was telling us that it doesn't quite work that way.

His sheep are the ones who hear his voice. If we are his sheep we will receive instruction and direction from his word. We must spend time reading, studying and meditating upon his word; in that way we "hear him."

When we have heard him the next test of whether we are his sheep is if we follow him in obedience. If we are still living in sin and justifying our lifestyle by declaring, "I am saved by grace and nothing can separate me from Christ," we may not be one of his sheep.

His sheep know him, hear his voice and follow him. Jesus said, "If a person is to be my disciple he must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me."

It is time to ask yourself, "Am I truly following him?"

Prayer: Lord, I want the assurance that I am one of your sheep. Grant me ears to hear your voice and a will to follow you with all my heart. In Jesus name, amen.

Day Twenty Two

Bring Light Into The Darkness

I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. I am sending you to [the Jews and Gentiles] to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins. - Acts 26:16-18 (Amp)

The time being addressed in this passage was at his conversion when he was called Saul, but that was about to change. Paul was telling King Agrippa of his unique conversion experience on the way to persecute the Christians in Damascus.

The whole story of Paul's conversion is in Acts 9. An interesting part of the story is that Saul, as he was known then, was blinded for a short time. When the man of God prayed for him he received his sight again. When Jesus appeared before him and called him to preach the gospel of Jesus he was told that he would "open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light." It seems that his own temporary blindness was symbolic of the work he would do to open the eyes of the world to the grace of God.

He was to be no longer called Saul, but Paul. He was no longer a Jew persecuting believers in Jesus, he was Paul, a citizen of the kingdom of God, preaching the gospel of the Christ.

We are given a light to remove the darkness - we must take the light out where the darkness is. Those God has called out of darkness are given a light to shine in the world. We must purpose to be light shiners.

Prayer: Lord, I tend to keep my light in the church where the other lights are kept. Grant me the courage to take the light out into the world where it is truly dark. In Jesus name. Amen.

Bring Light Into The Darkness

Message: We are given a light to remove the darkness - we must take the light out where the darkness is. Those God has called out of darkness are given a light to shine in the world. We must purpose to be light shiners.

Affirmation: The light in me is the life of Christ and that life shines bright for the world to see God's glory.

Reflection: What is the significance of his name being changed from Saul to Paul? How are we to be light to the world and how can that light shine through us?

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty Three

We Harvest What We Sow

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

- Galatians 6:7-8

Some people just don't get it. They keep sowing into their fleshly desires then wonder why they are spiritually empty. Just because the pleasure of the moment feels good now doesn't mean that you are going to feel good about yourself later.

Here's something interesting: I've never had a spiritual experience that left me feeling empty or cheated, but virtually every time I answer the call of the flesh to indulge some pleasure I feel empty and cheated afterwards.

Knowing that, why do we keep going back to the well that leaves us thirsty? It's because we allow ourselves to be deceived by our fleshly desire. We aren't looking to the harvest, we're just looking at what will give us the most right now. The deception is that the flesh will promise to give more than it can give. What we desire is spiritual fulfillment and we are robbed of that when we seek it through answering fleshly desires.

Jesus said, "The thief comes to rob, kill and destroy, but I have come to give you life to the full" (John 10:10). God has promised us a fulfilled life if we are willing to sow as the Spirit leads rather than following after the one who robs us of our joy.

Prayer: OK Lord; I get it. Give me the insight to look to the harvest and sow the seeds that will produce life. In Jesus name, amen.

We Harvest What We Sow

Message: God has promised us a fulfilled life if we are willing to sow as the Spirit leads rather than following after the one who robs us of our joy. What we desire is spiritual fulfillment and we are robbed of that when we seek it through answering fleshly desires.

Affirmation: I do not seek fulfillment by following the desire of my flesh. I sow righteous deeds and I reap righteous joy.

Reflection: What do you think is meant by the statement, “The deception is that the flesh will promise to give more than it can give?”

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty Four

Good Works Produce Good Fruit

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. - Galatians 6:9-10

Don't you get tired of just doing good all the time? I mean, when is it time to do something for me instead of others? Those are thoughts we have when we are beginning to grow weary in doing good. I have noticed that weariness comes when I get my mind off of the harvest and think about what I am, want and need.

It seems there are two primary reasons people quit sowing into the lives of others. One is that they become discouraged because they see very little immediate result. Another reason people quit sowing into others is because they feel their own needs aren't being met.

A friend once asked me if I knew how to grow a beautiful, weed free, lawn. He said you just keep sowing good seed and the good seed will choke out the weeds. If you quit sowing good seed the weeds will take over. You see, our challenge is not as much to deal with the weeds as it is to keep sowing good seed.

When we accept the challenge of doing good to all we are sowing for a good harvest. Sowing good seed is a challenge, but when we see the benefit in others we are rewarded.

We must remember that we can endure weariness when we are looking to the harvest. To do that we must daily deny our own desires and keep focused on the harvest.

Prayer: Lord, I do get tired of sowing, and sowing without seeing quick results. Grant me the patience to keep sowing good seed into others, even when we don't see a quick harvest. In Jesus name, amen.

Good Works Produce Good Fruit

Message: Our challenge is not as much to deal with the weeds as it is to keep sowing good seed. When we accept the challenge of doing good to all we are sowing for a good harvest. Sowing good seed is a challenge, but when we see the benefit in others we are rewarded

Affirmation: I am a seed sower. I keep sowing the gospel seed even when I don't see immediate results because I am only responsible to sow, God grows the crop.

Reflection: The concept of sowing and reaping is as old as the first farmer, but knowing how to sow, how often to sow and how much to sow requires experience. What has your experience been in sowing gospel seeds?

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty Five

God Sees Us In Our Anguish

I will be glad and rejoice in your love, for you saw my affliction and knew the anguish of my soul. You have not handed me over to the enemy but have set my feet in a spacious place. - Psalm 31:7-8

All of us go through times when we can feel the enemy of our soul breathing down our neck. It seems that nothing is going right and everything is just falling apart. Everything we endeavor to do is not working and it looks like we're down for the count.

Then, all at once, there comes the realization that He sees our affliction and He knows the anguish of our soul.

My friend, when I am down, and nearly out, there is nothing that gives me more comfort than knowing that God is aware of my circumstances and that He is getting ready to show his love for me in a special way.

I encourage you to hold on to God in times of trial. Don't let the enemy discourage you to the point that you say, "What's the use?" Remember this; God will always come through in time and he will lift you up, turn you around, and set your feet on solid ground. Amen and amen.

God will not only deliver us from our enemy, but He will move us to a place that is safe, secure and spacious - with a lot of spiritual breathing room. We are comforted that even in the trial we can feel safe because his love surrounds us.

Prayer: Lord, I thank you that every time I have felt the enemy close and about to destroy me you have come through. I rejoice in knowing that your love for me causes you to rescue me from the enemy's snares and set down safely in your presence. I praise you in Jesus name.

God Sees Us In Our Anguish

Message: Hold on to God in times of trial. Don't let the enemy discourage you to the point that you say, "What's the use?" Remember this; God will always come through in time and he will lift you up, turn you around, and set your feet on solid ground.

Affirmation: Even in the midst of my darkest trial I can rejoice because I know that I will not be defeated as long as I walk hand in hand with my Lord.

Reflection: David declares that God knows his affliction and his anguish. How did that give him confidence? What did he mean by God has "set my feet in a spacious place?"

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty Six

If You Seek Him You Will Find Him

Acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the Lord searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts. If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will reject you forever.

- I Chronicles 29:9

As King David was preparing Solomon to assume the rule over Israel he gave him both a promise and a warning. Solomon was promised that if he would seek God with an open and devoted heart, God would allow himself to be found by him. But there was also a warning; If Solomon does not seek God with an open heart then God would separate himself from him.

This promise and warning extends to all who would desire the blessing of the Lord upon their life. God doesn't just look at your actions he reads your heart. He not only knows your thoughts but he knows the motives that drive your thoughts.

Too often we have been guilty of seeking the Lord, not for his will but for our benefit. The motive behind our seeking is our own desire to be blessed rather than a true desire to know him. We cannot manipulate God with words, however devout they may sound, that come from a heart which is driven by self-motivation.

God knows the intent of your heart.

Prayer: Lord, too often I have been moved to seek the blessing, but I have not been committed to pleasing the one who blesses. Grant me the grace to surrender my will to you. In Jesus name, amen.

If You Seek Him You Will Find Him

Message: Too often we have been guilty of seeking the Lord, not for his will but for our benefit. The motive behind our seeking is our own desire to be blessed rather than a true desire to know him. We cannot manipulate God with words, however devout they may sound, that come from a heart which is driven by self-motivation.

Affirmation: I worship and serve God because he alone is worthy. I give him my wholehearted devotion with no motive in mind except to serve Him.

Reflection: Have you been guilty of seeking the Lord for your own benefit rather than to know His will? How does the life you have now reflect wholehearted devotion to God?

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty Seven

Do Not Dwell On The Past

Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland. - Isaiah 43:18-19

So many of us are held captive by the past. There are things that people have done to us that we will never forget. We have been used, abused, misunderstood, and unappreciated so much in our life that it is hard to believe that life will ever be any better than it has been. Can anyone identify?

Frankly, we can all look back and find something to have a pity party about – But God says, “Do not dwell on the past.” God cannot take us into a blessed and glorious future if our mindset is that of the past. God cannot change our yesterdays, but he can sure change our tomorrows.

God is promising to do something new, but to do it he needs you and I to be looking into the future. Hopes and dreams are based on belief in a future and God has good plans for our future. In Jeremiah 29:11 God says he has plans give us hope for a future. Think about your future.

The past will destroy us. If we dwell on our failures of yesterday we are doomed to repeat them today. If we dwell on our successes of yesterday we will become proud and our pride will take us down the road of destruction.

Our only hope is in the new thing God is doing – God has planned that the desert of our life will become well watered plains – live in that promise.

Prayer: Lord, I tend to allow yesterday to have too much influence over my life. Grant me the grace of faith to believe that the tomorrows you will give me are filled with your blessing. In Jesus name, amen.

Do Not Dwell On The Past

Message: The past will destroy us. If we dwell on our failures of yesterday we are doomed to repeat them today. If we dwell on our successes of yesterday we will become proud and our pride will take us down the road of destruction. We must live for God's will today.

Affirmation: My hope is in the future God has planned for me. Therefore, I do not dwell on my past, neither do I fantasize about the future, but I trust God's plan for me.

Reflection: Give some thought to this statement from the devotion; "God cannot take us into a blessed and glorious future if our mindset is that of the past." God is promising to do something new. How do you see yourself moving into the new thing God is doing?

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty Eight

The Lord Establishes Our Peace

Lord, you establish peace for us; all that we have accomplished you have done for us. - Isaiah 26:12

The peace of God does not come from achieving great things and looking back to see what great things we have done for God – God gives us peace as we surrender ourselves to him and allow him to accomplish the works through us.

This passage in Isaiah goes on to talk about the other lords that have ruled over Israel and how God had destroyed them. In a personal sense that is true for all of us. There are many things that are by nature “lords” in our life; ambition, ego, self-will. All of these depend upon our ability to perform, and all of them, at best, give only short term contentment or peace.

Isaiah tells us that the Lord will *establish* peace for us. Establish means something that is put into place that lasts. What we do for ourselves produces but a fleeting touch of joy, but what we do through him establishes peace in us. The peace that He gives is abiding; it lasts through the storm and through the night.

The peace I get through my own accomplishment only lasts as I continue to produce. The peace that comes from him is established by his will and lasts – Our peace has been established in him.

What peace do you seek? Do you seek the peace of your own accomplishments, or do you seek the peace of surrendering your time, talent and treasure to his will? Lasting peace comes only from a faithful God.

Prayer: Lord, I thank you for the peace you have given me, and grant me the grace to continue allowing you to work your will in me and through me so that your peace will abide in me. In Jesus name, amen.

The Lord Establishes Our Peace

Message: What we do for ourselves produces but a fleeting touch of joy, but what we do through him establishes peace in us. The peace that He gives is abiding; it lasts through the storm and through the night.

Affirmation: God has established His peace in my heart and his peace is everlasting.

Reflection: This devotion reminds us that everything we do in this life to have peace produces, at best, a fleeting touch of joy. Think about what you have done to find peace in this life and how that compares with the peace that only God can give. Jesus said, “My peace I leave with you” (John 14:27).

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty Nine

The Yoke Of Christ Is Easy

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

One of the challenges of life is to surrender to the yoke of Christ. Even when we are struggling and have great difficulty in life, it is still a great challenge to submit to the yoke of Christ.

Why is that so difficult? After all, his promise is that our burdens will be light and his guidance will be gentle, so why do we resist his yoke so much? The primary issue is that it is his yoke and not ours. It is just really hard for us to submit our will to another.

Jesus is telling us to take a look at our life. Has it been easy? Have you done such a good job on your own that you don't need help? He is telling us that he is a good teacher and we can learn from him. He is also telling us that he is a gentle leader; he will not be rough with us or inconsiderate.

The offer is the same today as it was when it was first extended; "Take my yoke upon you... for my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Trust him – surrender yourself to him and rest in the fact that you are yoked with one who knows how to gently lead. It is not easy to submit ourselves to the yoke of another, but when we yoke up with Jesus life becomes much better.

Prayer: Lord, I am tired of trying to do things my way. Grant me the grace to submit to your yoke and allow you to gently lead me into the rest you have prepared. In Jesus name, amen.

The Yoke Of Christ Is Easy

Message: Jesus is telling us that he is a good teacher and we can learn from him. He is also telling us that he is a gentle leader; he will not be rough with us or inconsiderate. He offers, “Take my yoke upon you... for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Affirmation: I have made the conscious decision to trust Jesus with my burdens. I am yoked up with Jesus and He is pulling the load for me.

Reflection: Have you experienced burn-out? Many of us have. We sometimes feel so overwhelmed that it seems like we aren't going to make it. In those times who are we trusting? Think about it.

My Thoughts:

Day Thirty

Righteous Words Produce Good Fruit

An evil man is trapped by his sinful talk, but a righteous man escapes trouble. From the fruit of his lips a man is filled with good things as surely as the work of his hands rewards him. - Proverbs 12:13-14

These verses are contrasting the result of the talk of evil men and the talk of righteous men. It is the stuff we have in our heart that will determine the words we use. If we are self-willed, and self-driven, then our speech will reflect that. If we are centered upon the principles of God's word and are committed to following him, then our speech will reflect that commitment.

All that we say begins in our heart. Jesus said, "The things that come out of the mouth come from the heart" (Matthew 15:18). When our heart is submitted to the Lordship of Christ then it is his will and his word that comes out.

People who are diligent in guarding their heart and their tongue will also be productive with the work of their hands. This passage is telling us to be diligent in our daily walk. When we think right, we believe right, we talk right and we walk right.

People with a pure heart speak words of hope and encouragement. They seem to always be looking for ways to encourage others. The writer of this proverb is telling us that the fruit of our words is as important as the work of our hands.

What fruit have your words produced?

Prayer: Lord, I tend to speak words at times that produce negative results. I know that comes from a heart that is not always submitted to you. Grant me the grace of full surrender to you. In Jesus name

Righteous Words Produce Good Fruit

Message: People who are diligent in guarding their heart and their tongue will also be productive with the work of their hands. God is telling us to be diligent in our daily walk. When we think right, we believe right, we talk right and we walk right.

Affirmation: I guard my heart with all diligence. I pray, “Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in your sight Oh Lord” Psalm 51.

Reflection: If your words are a reflection of what is in your heart, what do they say about your heart? What can you do to guard your heart against unhealthy ideas and attitudes?

My Thoughts:

Day Thirty one

The Law of Grace Frees us From the Law of Sin

What the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit. - Romans 8:3-4

A phrase we often hear is, “We are no longer under the law, but we are under grace.” Unfortunately, too often that statement is made to misapply the concept of grace and justify living in sin. According to this passage we are not freed from the righteous requirements of the law, but the law is fully met in us through the work of Christ.

The law had no power in it. It was (is) just like the laws of today. There is no power in them to keep us from breaking them, they only tell us what is going to happen to us if we do break them. The Old Testament Law is the same way. That law paints a picture of what we should be, but gives us no way to become that.

Christ, through his death and resurrection, gave us that ability. When the realm of the Spirit was opened up to us, and God took up residence in us, then we were given a righteous spirit. Now we don't live for sin, but we live for righteousness.

The old law made us conscious of sin, the new law gives us grace to live free from sin. What the law could not do, Christ does for us.

Prayer: Lord, give me a more complete understanding of living in the grace of God. Grant me the ability to live the righteousness of Christ. I want to live according to the Spirit, not according to the flesh. In Jesus name, amen.

The Law of Grace Frees us From the Law of Sin

Message: That Old Testament Law paints a picture of what we should be, but gives us no way to become that. Christ, through his death and resurrection, gave us that ability. When we are born again we are given a nature that desires God. Now we don't live for sin, but we live for righteousness.

Affirmation: I have received the truth of Christ and have been born again. Now the righteous requirements of the law are being met in me because I live after according to the Spirit.

Reflection: The only righteousness which counts before God is the righteousness which comes through faith in Christ.

My Thoughts:
