

DEVOTIONAL

*The BEAUTY of  
HIS HOLINESS*

By  
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Dear Saints in Christ Jesus,

These notes were taken from our Old Testament and New Testament Bible surveys at Koinonia on Wednesday and Sunday evenings. The intention was to give an overview of the entire Bible and see how the two testaments “connect.” Within the notes, practical truths were brought out because we know that the study of Scripture without application is like a vehicle without gas...going nowhere.

If the Holy Spirit can use these simply truths to draw you closer to Jesus Christ and develop a more mature love of God the Father, then it will have accomplished its task.

May the blessing of God be shed upon you as you receive, with meekness, His engrafted Word.

Selah,

Pastor Ray

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>DAY 1</b>	<b>Come, Receive</b>
<b>DAY 2</b>	<b>The Blessings of the Just</b>
<b>DAY 3</b>	<b>The Sabbath and Israel and You</b>
<b>DAY 4</b>	<b>Thoughts about Tossing</b>
<b>DAY 5</b>	<b>The Kingdom of God</b>
<b>DAY 6</b>	<b>Our Future Kingdom</b>
<b>DAY 7</b>	<b>What is Repentance?</b>
<b>DAY 8</b>	<b>I Will Build My Church</b>
<b>DAY 9</b>	<b>The Call of God</b>
<b>DAY 10</b>	<b>Jesus is Alive!</b>
<b>DAY 11</b>	<b>The Doctrine of Creation</b>
<b>DAY 12</b>	<b>The Facts and Mysteries of Healing</b>
<b>DAY 13</b>	<b>Glorifying God</b>
<b>DAY 14</b>	<b>The Glorious Resurrection of Jesus!</b>
<b>DAY 15</b>	<b>Missing the Lord</b>
<b>DAY 16</b>	<b>Jesus, Our Example of Prayer</b>
<b>DAY 17</b>	<b>The Commandment to Love</b>
<b>DAY 18</b>	<b>Sent Out</b>
<b>DAY 19</b>	<b>Motivation</b>
<b>DAY 20</b>	<b>You and Your Words</b>
<b>DAY 21</b>	<b>Indiana Jones and the Christian Quest?</b>
<b>DAY 22</b>	<b>Laying Down our Lives – For Whom?</b>
<b>DAY 23</b>	<b>In God’s Presence</b>
<b>DAY 24</b>	<b>Prophecy, Israel and the Gospel</b>
<b>DAY 25</b>	<b>Wait, Not Haste</b>
<b>DAY 26</b>	<b>Reality Checks</b>
<b>DAY 27</b>	<b>Husbands and Worship</b>
<b>DAY 28</b>	<b>Jesus, The Hero of the Untouchables</b>
<b>DAY 29</b>	<b>The Corinthian Test</b>
<b>DAY 30</b>	<b>Being an Example</b>
<b>DAY 31</b>	<b>The Shoulders of Jesus</b>

## DAY 1

### COME, RECEIVE

There is a beautiful picture of what ministry is all about in Exodus 24. I'm sure that this passage jumped off the pages because the Holy Spirit wanted me to pass it along to others. Verse 12 reads: "Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Come up to Me on the mountain and be there; and I will give you tablets of stone, and the law and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them.'"

First of all, the Lord told Moses to come up to Him and be there with Him. There can be no effective ministry of any kind apart from getting alone with the Lord and spending time with Him. Moses was on that mount for 40 days and nights.<sup>1</sup> The length of time really isn't the issue, but the important thing is spending consistent, quality (focused) time with God.

The word "come" implies a getting away, getting alone. When Jesus invites us to come to Him,<sup>2</sup> included in that invitation is the meaning of 'come away alone with Me.'<sup>3</sup> As priests<sup>4</sup> of the living God, we need that intimate, quiet time with our great High Priest.<sup>5</sup> We need to sit before Him and hear His word.<sup>6</sup>

You see, we cannot give away something that we don't possess ourselves. Paul said that what he delivered to the Corinthians was what he had received from Jesus.<sup>7</sup> The Lord wants to minister His word, grace, love, and strength to us so that we may in turn minister that to others. Fed sheep feed sheep.<sup>8</sup> Peter learned this lesson well<sup>9</sup> and passed it along.<sup>10</sup>

Our priority personally is to grow in a heart knowledge of the Lord<sup>11</sup> which is eternal life.<sup>12</sup> If you love the Lord, you will love His Word because the Word and the Lord are one and the same.<sup>13</sup> People do not need gimmicks or entertainment; they need God's word,<sup>14</sup> and that was why Moses went up to the mount. He went there to receive the word from God so that he could teach it to God's people, as God commanded him to do.<sup>15</sup> This is the only way faith comes<sup>16</sup> and saints grow in purity.<sup>17</sup>

I pray that each of us would have a heart like Ezra did!<sup>18</sup> Simply and consistently teach the word.<sup>19</sup> Lovingly teach the word just as God wrote it.<sup>20</sup> There is always a revival when saints draw near to Jesus and give to others what they received from Him. Three things will take place in the sheep - they will be edified, exhorted and comforted,<sup>21</sup> and God indeed will be glorified!<sup>22</sup>

1-Ex 24:18; 2-Matt 11:28; 3-Song of Solomon 2:10,13; 4-1 Peter 2:9; 5-Heb 9:11; 6-Luke 10:39; 7-1 Cor 11:23a; 8-John 21:15,16,17; 9-Acts 2:38-41; 10-1 Peter 5:2; 11-2 Peter 3:18; 12-John 17:3; 13-John 1:1; 14-Job 23:12; 15-Deut 4:14; 16-Rom 10:17; 17-Psalm 119:9,11; 18-Ezra 7:10; 19-Deut 6:6,7; 20-Deut 4:2; 21-1 Cor 14:3; 22-1 Peter 4:11.

## DAY 2

### THE BLESSINGS OF THE JUST

A person who has trusted in Jesus Christ for salvation is declared just by God.<sup>1</sup> As Spurgeon wonderfully wrote, “God will never accuse me of owing for a debt that has already been paid.” When Jesus triumphantly declared, “It is finished!”<sup>2</sup> the New Testament Greek used an accounting term meaning, ‘Paid in full’. What liberating news!

How then shall we, whom God has justified (that is, made ‘just-as-if-I’d’ never sinned), live? In both Old and New Testaments we’re told, “The just shall live by faith.”<sup>3</sup> This is essential because we cannot be pleasing to God without faith.<sup>4</sup>

In the Book of Proverbs we find God promises to bless the habitation of the just.<sup>5</sup> Our God delights in blessing His people. However, we often get so snared by our problems that we are blind to His blessings. Each and every child of God is blessed with the gift of eternal life.<sup>6</sup>

The just are those who do not simply know Jesus, but those who continue to seek Him and grow in His grace.<sup>7</sup> God tells us that the path of the just will be like a shining light, burning brighter every day,<sup>8</sup> culminating in eternity with our Lord.<sup>9</sup> To be assured that we are blessed by God, because we are prone to forget, the Holy Spirit tells us that blessings are upon the head of the just (also translated as “righteous”).<sup>10</sup> These blessings upon the head of the just in turn become valuable speech which flows from the mouth of the just.<sup>11</sup> May our Lord help each of us to export choice silver to others; well-seasoned words,<sup>12</sup> words of wisdom.<sup>13</sup>

Being just does not mean that we are not challenged in this life. No, there are trials and temptations for sure. However, the righteous person seeks God’s knowledge, and in finding and obeying it, he finds deliverance.<sup>14</sup> God’s word assures us that the just come through trouble, even though the wicked are ensnared.<sup>15</sup> The walk of a just person is the greatest advertisement for Jesus Christ, and he passes along blessings to his children.<sup>16</sup>

Oh, the joy that a just person finds in doing God’s will!<sup>17</sup> Oh, the ecstasy to know that we are a part of the resurrection of the just<sup>18</sup> because of God’s grace through Jesus Christ. We are just, only because of the Just One.<sup>19</sup> He, the Just One, died for me, the unjust one, that He might bring me to God.<sup>20</sup>

Living by faith is simply trusting the Just One and enjoying the blessings that He bestows upon us.

1-Rom 3:26; 2-John 19:30; 3-Hab 2:4, Rom 1:17, Gal 3:11, Heb 10:38;  
4-Heb 11:6; 5-Prov 3:33; 6-1 John 5:11,13; 7-2 Peter 3:18; 8-Prov 4:18;  
9-1 Thess 4:13-18; 10-Prov 10:6; 11-Prov 10:20; 12-Col 4:6; 13-Prov 10:31;  
14-Prov 11:9; 15-Prov 12:13; 16-Prov 20:7; 17-Prov 21:15; 18-Luke 14:14,  
Acts 24:15; 19-Acts 3:14, 7:52; 20-1 Peter 3:18.

## DAY 3

### THE SABBATH AND ISRAEL AND YOU

If there is one nation on earth that has “Preferred Nation” status, that nation is Israel. God’s word declares Israel to be His “special treasure”,<sup>1</sup> and the LORD Himself told Moses to tell the Israelites that if they walked in obedience and kept His covenant, they would be a special treasure to Him above all people.<sup>2</sup>

This nation, tiny in both geography and number of inhabitants, is the apple of Jehovah’s eye.<sup>3</sup> God warns that whoever touches this apple<sup>4</sup> is messing with Him!<sup>5</sup> There can be no mistake about this special relationship that exists between God and Israel. Among the many Torah commandments given to this nation was the command to maintain, or keep the Sabbath day. This seventh day rest is a sign between Jehovah and Israel,<sup>6</sup> not the Church.<sup>7</sup>

When God provided manna for Israel in the wilderness, He gave them twice as much on the sixth day so that they could enjoy the Sabbath that He gave them.<sup>8</sup> “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy”<sup>9</sup> is not a command to the Church.<sup>10</sup> The Sabbath symbolizes rest. After six days of creation, God rested.<sup>11</sup> Israel is to work six days, keeping the Sabbath holy to the Lord.<sup>12</sup>

This practice is still maintained today in Israel, and it’s the children of Israel who are to maintain this observance perpetually.<sup>13</sup> One of the psalms is specifically given for the Sabbath day.<sup>14</sup> This special day was not intended to be a gloomy restriction, but rather a cheerful delight, resulting in blessing.<sup>15</sup> It’s a time to sit before the Lord and soak in His presence. During the 1,000-year reign of Christ, all flesh will be Sabbath keepers.<sup>16</sup>

When Jesus was accused of being a Sabbath-day breaker, the basis of those accusations was not the word of God, but a false understanding of God’s word.<sup>17</sup> Notice how tragically ridiculous the Pharisees’ interpretation of the Sabbath was.<sup>18</sup>

When Jesus warns about fleeing for refuge after the “abomination of desolation” appears,<sup>19</sup> we know that He is talking to Jews because He says that they should pray that their flight would not be on the Sabbath.<sup>20</sup> The greatest discovery of all time, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, occurred after two Sabbath-observing Jewish women went to His burial spot.<sup>21</sup> Yes, today, because of what God told Moses many years ago, the Torah is read every Sabbath day.<sup>22</sup>

Whenever Israel’s blinders are removed and Jews turn to Yeshua the Messiah,<sup>23</sup> they enter into the rest of faith.<sup>24</sup> The Sabbath rest for all mankind is Jesus<sup>25</sup> - all seven days of the week!

1-Psalm 135:4; 2-Ex 19:3,5; 3-Deut 32:10; 4-Zech 2:8; 5-Gen 12:3; 6-Ex 31:13; 7-Col 2:16; 8-Ex 16:29; 9-Ex 20:8; 10-Rom 14:1-19; 11-Ex 20:11; 12-Ex 31:15; 13-Ex 31:16; 14-Psalm 92:1; 15-Isaiah 58:13-14; 16-Isaiah 66:23; 17-Matt 12:1-8; 18-Matt 12:9-14; 19-Matt 24:15; 20-Matt 24:20; 21-Matt 28:1; 22-Acts 15:21; 23-2 Cor 3:14-16; 24-Heb 3:14-4:11; 25-Matt 11:28-30.

## DAY 4

### THOUGHTS ABOUT TOSSING

There is a method of Bible study that looks at Scripture in a symbolic or picture form. This method paints illustrations for us of various kinds. For example, there is an often-used incident in the gospels where the disciples begin a journey from one side of the Sea of Galilee to the other. While on their way, their boat was in the midst of the sea tossed by the waves.<sup>1</sup> Now here is how that can be applied to our lives. There are times when we as Christians are tossed by the waves of life. David declared that he at times felt “tossed up and down”.<sup>2</sup>

Do you remember Paul’s “prosperous journey”<sup>3</sup> to Rome? It’s recorded in Acts 27 and 28. Paul eventually did get to Rome, but no doubt it was not the way he had expected! Many times God patiently reveals to us that His faithfulness<sup>4</sup> is displayed in the most unpredictable ways.<sup>5</sup>

Paul and the ship he was on was “exceedingly tempest-tossed.”<sup>6</sup> As I began to meditate on the word “tossed” a couple of other Biblical passages were found that reveal some sources of tossing. One is bad doctrine devised by manipulative, crafty messengers.<sup>7</sup> You can know that a saint who is not grounded in the word of God will be a tossed saint. It is vital that we be people who cherish God’s word,<sup>8</sup> and desire to be doers of it.<sup>9</sup>

Yes, false doctrine will cause you to be insecure, feeling condemned and fruitless, because you never really are told where you stand with God. But God’s Word says that “having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand”.<sup>10</sup> So the truth is that in Christ<sup>11</sup> we all stand as co-workers by faith,<sup>12</sup> no longer condemned,<sup>13</sup> but free<sup>14</sup> to serve our Lord.<sup>15</sup>

Another “tossed” verse is found in James 1:6 which, ironically, likens a believer who asks for wisdom with unbelief to a wave of the sea, reminiscent of Paul’s ship in the storm. So then, two certain areas that birth that “tossed” feeling are bad doctrine and unbelief.

Once again, turning to Paul’s situation, we find what kept him stable in the midst of the storm and frantic people. Look at Acts 27:25. Here is a simple solution for us as well. Place the appropriate portion of Scripture alongside your storm, and when the winds blow and the waves pound your mind and stir up your circumstances, declare in child-like faith as Paul did, “I believe God that it shall be just as it was told me.”

When we know in whom we have believed, we can be persuaded<sup>16</sup> that even what the enemy may mean for evil,<sup>17</sup> God is working for good.<sup>18</sup>

1-Matt 14:24; 2-Psalm 109:23 (KJV); 3-Rom 1:10 (KJV); 4-1 Cor 1:9;  
5-Isaiah 55:8,9; 6-Acts 27:18; 7-Eph 4:14; 8-Psalm 119:9-16; 9-James 1:21-25;  
10-Rom 5:1,2; 11-1 Cor 1:30a; 12-2 Cor 1:24; 13-Rom 8:1,2; 14-9-Gal 5:1;  
15-2 Cor 5:15; 16-2 Tim 1:12; 17-Gen 50:20; 18-Rom 8:28.

## DAY 5

### THE KINGDOM OF GOD

There are only two kingdoms that exist upon this earth, and they are the kingdom of darkness,<sup>1</sup> which all mankind by nature is born into,<sup>2</sup> and the kingdom of God, which Jesus says belongs to those who are born again.<sup>3</sup>

For all believers, seeking God's kingdom should be life's priority.<sup>4</sup> This kingdom is both at hand<sup>5</sup> and also a future hope.<sup>6</sup> Jesus likened the growth of this kingdom to sowing seed in a field.<sup>7</sup> The value of this kingdom is worth even the most extreme sacrifice.<sup>8</sup>

Although this kingdom is as powerful as the Transfiguration,<sup>9</sup> it's also simple enough for a child to understand and receive.<sup>10</sup> God's kingdom is a kingdom of love. When a scribe affirmed the great commandments quoted by our Lord, Jesus said that he wasn't far from the kingdom of God.<sup>11</sup> This loving kingdom not only declares the message of salvation,<sup>12</sup> but also the hope of healing<sup>13</sup> and authority over the work of Satan in the lives of men.<sup>14</sup>

For forty days after His resurrection, Jesus taught the apostles about the kingdom of God.<sup>15</sup> Although life in this kingdom is at times very testing,<sup>16</sup> it is no place for quitters.<sup>17</sup> The nature of this kingdom is primarily spiritual, not physical.<sup>18</sup> It's not just a 'good talk'; it's a Spirit-filled life in the here and now.<sup>19</sup> However, it is also a future kingdom and to enter this aspect of it, we must put off this old tent.<sup>20</sup>

How wonderful it is to be a part of the kingdom of God's dear Son!<sup>21</sup> We need to be kingdom-minded people, and we need to fill our hearts with its present promises and future hope. The most glorious thing about this kingdom is the King Himself!<sup>22</sup> He is the King of the saints,<sup>23</sup> the King of Israel,<sup>24</sup> "King of Kings and Lord of Lords."<sup>25</sup>

As we meditate upon our heavenly kingdom, may we praise, worship and adore "the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, (to whom) be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen."<sup>26</sup>

1-Eph 6:12; 2-Eph 2:1-3; 3-John 3:3-7; 4-Matt 6:33; 5-Mark 1:15; 6-Rev 11:15;  
7-Mark 4:26-29; 8-Mark 9:47; 9-Mark 9:1,2; 10-Mark 10:14,15; 11-Mark 12:28-34;  
12-Mark 16:15,16; 13-Luke 9:2; 14-Luke 11:20, 1 John 3:8; 15-Acts 1:3;  
16-Acts 14:22; 17-Luke 9:62; 18-Rom 14:17; 19-1 Cor 4:20; 20-1 Cor 15:50;  
21-Col 1:13; 22-Isaiah 6:1-3; 23-Rev 15:3; 24-John 12:13; 25-Rev 19:16;  
26-1 Tim 1:17.

## DAY 6

### OUR FUTURE KINGDOM

As we journey through this life,<sup>1</sup> it's important that we remember where our real home is.<sup>2</sup> Each believer experiences tribulation in his or her pursuit of the kingdom of God.<sup>3</sup> However saints, our hearts are not to be troubled by life's perils and problems, but encouraged by the promise of God's future kingdom.<sup>4</sup> Although from time to time we may get rattled by circumstances, the kingdom of God that we belong to is unshakable.<sup>5</sup> Our great High Priest is unchangeable,<sup>6</sup> and His love,<sup>7</sup> grace,<sup>8</sup> joy,<sup>9</sup> hope,<sup>10</sup> and truth<sup>11</sup> are the strength of our lives.

Beloved, when was the last time that you studied about the kingdom of God? Not knowing what this kingdom is in its present form,<sup>12</sup> or what it will be in the future,<sup>13</sup> can be a needless cause of worry and anxiety. To have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is how entrance is made into this kingdom.<sup>14</sup> To continue in fellowship with Him is how we cultivate the "fruit" of the kingdom.<sup>15</sup> God's kingdom is within the grasp<sup>16</sup> of whoever takes the Lord's invitation to heart.<sup>17</sup>

As believers, we must be aware of the traps set by the enemy to choke the life of God's kingdom out of us.<sup>18</sup> We must be prepared to go forward without any intention of turning back,<sup>19</sup> determining that no sacrifice is too great to be made.<sup>20</sup>

Without a child-like faith in Jesus Christ,<sup>21</sup> the benefits of the kingdom will never be experienced. Without a 'wedding-like' anticipation,<sup>22</sup> we are apt to get caught up in things we ought not be occupied with.<sup>23</sup>

Saints, there is a kingdom coming that is not like anything ever imagined.<sup>24</sup> May each of us be encouraged as we await that glorious time! Until then, may our prayer be, "Thy kingdom come."<sup>25</sup>

1-1 Peter 2:11; 2-Phil 3:20; 3-Acts 14:22; 4-John 14:1-3; 5-Heb 12:28;  
6-Heb 13:8, 7:24; 7-Rom 8:35-39; 8-2 Cor 12:9; 9-Neh 8:10; 10-Heb 6:19;  
11-John 8:31,32; 12-Rom 14:17, 1 Cor 4:20; 13-Rev 11:15-18, Luke 1:32,33;  
14-John 3:3-7; 15-John 15:1-8; 16-Luke 17:20,21; 17-Rev 22:17;  
18-Mark 10:23-25; 19-Luke 9:62; 20-Mark 9:47; 21-Mark 10:14,15;  
22-Matt 22:2-5; 23-1 John 2:15-17; 24-1 Cor 2:9, John 18:36; 25-Luke 11:2.

## DAY 7

### WHAT IS REPENTANCE?

One of the first words out of our Lord's lips in the first chapter of Mark is "repent".<sup>1</sup> What does the word "repent" mean? Basically it means to have a change of one's mind or purpose. Biblical repentance involves a change of mind about God, the gospel of Jesus Christ, the world, sin, and myself. New Testament repentance is always a change for the better. Repentance and conviction of sin go hand-in-hand.

The Holy Spirit brings us to salvation by first convicting us of our need for Jesus Christ.<sup>2</sup> This revelation of who Jesus is should never be construed as the by-product of our own understanding. No, as in Peter's case, it's a conviction birthed by the Spirit of God.<sup>3</sup> Peter's "change of mind" about Jesus was the first step of "repentance unto life."<sup>4</sup> There is no rebirth apart from this repentance. Peter's message on Pentecost was repentance "for the remission of sins".<sup>5</sup> Paul's message unto salvation was repentance and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>6</sup> The gospel of grace calls men to repentance<sup>7</sup> with corresponding actions.<sup>8</sup> To leave repentance out turns the gospel of grace into lasciviousness<sup>9</sup> Again, the gospel message is repentance and conversion.<sup>10</sup>

However, repentance isn't a "one-shot deal." After conversion God's Holy Spirit continues to convict the child of God of sin, doesn't He? Five of the seven churches addressed in chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation are told to repent. Paul's concern for the church at Corinth was that they would not repent.<sup>11</sup> Biblical repentance and worldly sorrow produce very different results.<sup>12</sup> Christ's sacrificial death, resurrection and ascension into heaven opened up this door of repentance.<sup>13</sup> Repentance is not a work to brag about; the work of atonement was finished<sup>14</sup> by Jesus Christ.<sup>15</sup> Our only "work" is to believe in Him.<sup>16</sup>

God's goodness draws us to this place of repentance.<sup>17</sup> Repentance itself is a gift from God that grants us the ability to acknowledge truth.<sup>18</sup> Whenever a person hears the gospel proclaimed,<sup>19</sup> is pricked in his heart,<sup>20</sup> and turns to God, from a life of sin to a life of service for the true and living God,<sup>21</sup> that is true repentance. A Christian is a new creature,<sup>22</sup> although imperfect for sure.<sup>23</sup>

Calvary provides a turning point to whoever believes, and this "road" alone leads to glory.<sup>24</sup>

1-Mark 1:15; 2-John 16:7-11; 3-Matt 16:13-17; 4-Acts 11:18; 5-Acts 2:38;  
6-Acts 20:21; 7-Acts 26:20; 8-Titus 2:11-14; 9-Jude 4; 10-Acts 3:19;  
11-2 Cor 12:20,21; 12-2 Cor 7:9,10; 13-Acts 5:31; 14-John 19:30;  
15-Isaiah 53:4-12, Heb 9:11-10:14; 16-John 6:29; 17-Rom 2:4; 18-2 Tim 2:25;  
19-Rom 10:8-17; 20-Acts 2:37; 21-1 Thess 1:9; 22-2 Cor 5:17; 23-Rom 7:14:25;  
24-John 14:6.

## DAY 8

### I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH

The only individual who can claim exclusive ownership of the church is Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup> To build the church upon man is simply carnal.<sup>2</sup> Yes, there are offices given to the church,<sup>3</sup> but to be contentious over our preferences for the men of these offices is divisive.<sup>4</sup> The church belongs to Jesus because He died for it,<sup>5</sup> and anyone who is a part of His church is married to Jesus.<sup>6</sup>

Note carefully today that Jesus declares that He will build up, not tear down, His church. The word “build” is actually a construction term in one sense. You could say, “I will structure My church.” When we realize that Jesus has the master blueprint for the entire body<sup>7</sup> as well as for each individual member,<sup>8</sup> we can proceed by faith<sup>9</sup> in great confidence and obedience.<sup>10</sup>

If Jesus is in the business of building up His church, shouldn't we be also? However, we do not build up the church by being critical of every flaw. When sin is found in the camp, do you identify with it and cry out to God,<sup>11</sup> or do you detach yourself from it like a self-righteous Pharisee?<sup>12</sup>

How we need to learn to pray without ceasing<sup>13</sup> for those overtaken in sins.<sup>14</sup> The calling of every part of the body of Christ is to edify one another.<sup>15</sup> We are to use our gifts to minister to one another.<sup>16</sup> Are you a body builder, or are you a model on display? Do you edify, or exterminate? Comfort, or condemn? Pray for, or pick apart?

God is working in each of our lives to strengthen His body. The fact of the matter is that we need one another,<sup>17</sup> so beware of that independent spirit! The foundation of the church is Jesus Christ.<sup>18</sup> His word is our rock.<sup>19</sup> We are built up in Him.<sup>20</sup>

May each of us determine to be “gainfully employed” in Christ's church, and be a body builder, not a building inspector.

1-Matt 16:18; 2-1 Cor 3:4; 3-Eph 4:11-12; 4-1 Cor 1:10-13; 5-Eph 5:25;  
6-Rom 7:4, Eph 5:31,32; 7-Eph 2:21-22; 8-Phil 2:13; 9-2 Cor 5:7; 10-2 Thess 3:4;  
11-Ezra 9, Neh 1:1-10, Dan 9:1-19; 12-Luke 18:11,12; 13-1 Thess 5:17;  
14-Gal 6:1; 15-Rom 14:19, 1 Thess 5:11; 16-1 Peter 4:10,11; 17-1 Cor 12:21-26;  
18-1 Cor 3:11; 19-Matt 7:24-27; 20-Col 2:7.

## DAY 9

### THE CALL OF GOD

As we study the gospels we see Jesus time and time again calling people to follow Him.<sup>1</sup> His invitation was a personal one that could either be accepted or refused. For example, Mark's gospel records that Jesus found two brothers engaged in fishing and His message to them was, "Follow Me".<sup>2</sup>

In a nutshell, this is Christianity; this is what it means to be a Christian. It is fallen man responding to God's invitation to "Come." The word "come" implies a tone of immediacy - "Come here, come now!!" When our Lord addressed the crowds, His simple message was an all inclusive, "Come unto Me".<sup>3</sup>

In the Old Testament God's message was the same: "Look to Me and be saved, all you ends of the earth!"<sup>4</sup> The words "Look to Me" can also be translated, "Face Me." Sin refuses to look Jesus in the face, but the reality is that it's not until we as sinners look Jesus in the face with a broken and contrite heart<sup>5</sup> that we can be saved.<sup>6</sup>

The fact is that before we were saved, we were spiritually bankrupt;<sup>7</sup> yet we were (whether we knew it or not) hungry for God's love and acceptance.<sup>8</sup> Separated from God by our sins,<sup>9</sup> we groped around in the darkness like a blind man looking for sight.<sup>10</sup> In our efforts to deal with our emptiness, we tried to fill that void with pleasures of every sort.<sup>11</sup> We may even have adopted a form of godliness<sup>12</sup> but not wanted anything to do with the cross of Calvary.<sup>13</sup> Whatever 'well' we went to in order to fill our spiritual need was never able to substitute for the living water that Jesus alone provides.<sup>14</sup>

Are you hungry and thirsty for a real relationship with God? He has not changed His method of calling. His invitation is a resounding, "Come to the waters; ...Come, buy and eat. ...come to Me."<sup>15</sup> You can be sure of one thing, and that is that Jesus will not reject you.<sup>16</sup> Oh yes, there is a cost that needs to be counted for following Jesus,<sup>17</sup> but it's not nearly the cost that you would pay for rejecting Him!<sup>18</sup>

Oh "come to Me", says the Savior!<sup>19</sup> Drop your net today. It may be the net of pride, or it may be the net of materialism, or it may even be the net of religion. God's invitation is a simple one to whosoever will, and that is, "Come!"<sup>20</sup>

1-Matt 8:22, 9:9, Mark 10:21, John 1:43; 2-Mark 1:16,17; 3-Matt 11:28;  
4-Isaiah 45:22; 5-Isaiah 57:15; 6-Psalm 34:18; 7-Jer 17:9; 8-Psalm 42:1;  
9-Isaiah 59:2; 10-Isaiah 59:10a, Eph 4:17-19; 11-2 Tim 3:4; 12-2 Tim 3:5;  
13-1 Cor 1:18a; 14-John 4:13-14; 15-Isaiah 55:1-3; 16-John 6:37;  
17-Luke 14:25-33; 18-Rev 20:13-15; 19-John 7:37,38; 20-Rev 22:17.

## DAY 10

### JESUS IS ALIVE!

For years in my Bible reading, my understanding of Scripture was all too heady and lacked a real, living intimacy with my Lord Jesus. The “I AM” statements found in John’s gospel<sup>1</sup> touched my heart one day. I knew that Jesus rose from the dead and ascended up to the right hand of the Father;<sup>2</sup> however, I had this blockage in my mind. I knew theologically that Jesus was dwelling in me,<sup>3</sup> but for all intents and practical purposes He was still “way up there.” Blessed awakening takes place when we realize that Jesus is indeed in our midst, even though He physically is at the right hand of the Father.<sup>4</sup> Thomas was taught this lesson.<sup>5</sup> We too must learn this fact.<sup>6</sup>

As we journey through Mark’s gospel together, keep this truth in your heart. We are not studying simple history about what Messiah Jesus did, but we are studying about the things that our precious Lord still does today.<sup>7</sup> It’s not that Jesus used to heal people and exercise authority over demons;<sup>8</sup> He still does! It’s not that Jesus used to have compassion on the lost multitudes;<sup>9</sup> He still does! It’s not that Jesus used to receive sinners;<sup>10</sup> He still does!

Saints, today - right now - right where you are as a child of God, is where the risen Savior is! He is here in the midst of this local church.<sup>11</sup> He is in the midst of two or three that are gathered together.<sup>12</sup> Meditate on this precious truth, that His presence is inescapable.<sup>13</sup> We serve in His presence; we worship in His presence; we talk in His presence; we watch television in His presence! He is the ever-present Jehovah Shammah, or the LORD who is there.<sup>14</sup> Where? There - right with you! The God of truth, the God of mercy, the Holy God is forever with us.<sup>15</sup>

Sin caused Adam and Eve to hide from the presence of the Lord God.<sup>16</sup> But because of God’s wonderful sacrifice for sin, Jesus Christ,<sup>17</sup> the debt of sin is removed and the door of fellowship is forever opened.<sup>18</sup> The presence of Jesus brings such joy,<sup>19</sup> such inspiration for worship and thankful living!<sup>20</sup>

Oh Bride of Christ, learn to dwell in your Lord’s presence.<sup>21</sup> His presence always destroys pride,<sup>22</sup> promotes holiness,<sup>23</sup> evicts fear.<sup>24</sup> Our Lord, is alive! He is risen!<sup>25</sup> In His presence we are strong, holy, and forever secure.<sup>26</sup>

1-John 6:48, 8:12, 10:7,11, 11:25, 14:6; 2-Eph 1:20; 3-Gal 2:20, Col 1:27;  
4-Acts 7:56; 5-John 20:24-29; 6-Acts 17:28; 7-Heb 13:8; 8-Luke 8:2; 9-Matt 9:36;  
10-Luke 15:2; 11-Rev 1:13,20; 12-Matt 18:20; 13-Psalm 139:7; 14-Ezek 48:35;  
15-Matt 28:20; 16-Gen 3:8; 17-John 1:29, Heb 9:12-14, 10:5-12; 18-1 John 1:3;  
19-Psalm 16:11; 20-Psalm 95:2; 21-Psalm 140:13; 22-Phil 2:9-11;  
23-1 Peter 1:15-16; 24-1 John 4:18; 25-Luke 24:6; 26-Phil 1:6.

## DAY 11

### THE DOCTRINE OF CREATION

The Bible teaches that God created the visible, material universe “ex nihilo” or “out of nothing.”<sup>1</sup> “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”<sup>2</sup> All life and life forms as we see them today were created by Jehovah Elohim (Hebrew for “LORD God”).<sup>3</sup>

Recently, a major religious figure publicly announced that evolution is a scientific fact. To put this another way, he was essentially saying the Book of Genesis is not true literally. Evidently, however, Jesus does not agree, for while He was here on earth He spoke of Adam and Eve in the same light as Genesis 1 and 2.<sup>4</sup> When Jesus looked into the future to the time known as the Great Tribulation, He declared that no other period in the history of mankind since creation will compare to this time of judgment.<sup>5</sup> The apostle Paul declared that the creation and existence of the visible world attest to some of God’s invisible attributes, such as His power.<sup>6</sup> Due to sin, creation along with man groans and travails just like a woman during childbirth.<sup>7</sup>

Creation and the second coming of Christ will be doctrines of Scripture that will be scoffed at in the last days.<sup>8</sup> Evolution is the “scientific” denial of the existence of the true and living God.<sup>9</sup> It’s a hellish teaching that denies accountability to the One who fearfully and wonderfully made us.<sup>10</sup> Jesus revealed Himself to the church of Laodicea (which typified the apathetic church of the last days) as “the Beginning” (meaning the Power Source or Architect) “of the creation of God”.<sup>11</sup>

People tell us that mankind has evolved and continues evolving since inception. Let me ask you, have oranges evolved? Have redwood trees evolved? Has only man evolved since beginning (“genesis” in Hebrew)? Oh how timely Paul’s words to Timothy are for us today!<sup>12</sup> “There is nothing new under the sun.”<sup>13</sup> Evolution is the “scientific” way to say “I hate God”!

Jesus, who is the Light of every man,<sup>14</sup> is our Creator,<sup>15</sup> and those who reject His words love darkness.<sup>16</sup> Paul said that if anyone preached another gospel than the one God gave to him, they should be accursed.<sup>17</sup> In the future, however, there will be an angel preaching the everlasting gospel and commanding mankind to give glory to the Creator!<sup>18</sup> Our Redeemer and Creator is One and the same, our Lord Jesus.<sup>19</sup>

The heavens declare His glory,<sup>20</sup> and so should we! To know and draw near to our Creator is a source of true strength.<sup>21</sup> Jesus Christ is indeed “the LORD, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King.”<sup>22</sup> Accept no substitutes!

1-Heb 11:3; 2-Gen 1:1; 3-Gen 2:4; 4-Mark 10:6; 5-Mark 13:19; 6-Rom 1:20;  
7-Rom 8:21-23; 8-2 Peter 3:3,4; 9-Jer 10:10-12; 10-Psalm 139:13-16; 11-Rev 3:14;  
12-1 Tim 6:20,21; 13-Eccl 1:9; 14-John 1:4,9; 15-Col 1:16,17; 16-John 3:19;  
17-Gal 1:6-8; 18-Rev 14:6-7; 19-1 Peter 2:23-24, 4:19; 20-Psalm 19:1;  
21-Isaiah 40:28-31; 22-Isaiah 43:15.

## DAY 12

### THE FACTS AND MYSTERIES OF HEALING

The Bible discloses one of the names of God as Jehovah Rapha,<sup>1</sup> which means “The LORD our Healer”. We find elsewhere that God indeed is the One who heals all of our diseases.<sup>2</sup> In the New Testament we find listed in the gifts of the Spirit “the gifts of healings”.<sup>3</sup>

Undoubtedly, God is our Great “Physician,” by which title Jesus said the skeptics referred to Him.<sup>4</sup> Realizing that the purpose of healing is to promote health so as to prevent death, we also realize that our greatest sickness is that which is spiritual. Jesus indicated that healing spiritual sickness was the purpose for which He came.<sup>5</sup> In a world of shattered hopes and dreams, Jesus still is the champion of healing broken hearts and binding up those wounds of hurt and pain.<sup>6</sup>

While Jesus was on earth He performed a series of healings and exorcisms<sup>7</sup> which were the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies.<sup>8</sup> Sadly, some people use that last passage as a “proof text” for physical healing being God’s will for every saint. This has birthed a lot of guilt and condemnation. Does God heal today? Yes, absolutely! Does God heal everyone? No, absolutely not. Paul never received his healing but he was given something far greater - abundant grace.<sup>9</sup> Timothy had chronic stomach problems and was told by his mentor Paul to use a little wine to curb this condition.<sup>10</sup>

Face it, we all have questions about physical healing. The faith that pleases God<sup>11</sup> is the faith that trusts the Lord at all times, whether or not we receive our healing. Today, just as 2,000 years ago, multitudes still flock to Jesus to hear His word and for physical needs.<sup>12</sup>

May each of us trust God’s decision, knowing that He never acts outside of love, grace, or mercy. Every doubt and mystery about healing here will be removed in eternity future,<sup>13</sup> when we will no longer see through a glass darkly.<sup>14</sup>

1-Ex 15:26; 2-Psalm 103:3; 3-1 Cor 12:9,28; 4-Luke 4:23; 5-Luke 5:31,32;  
6-Psalm 147:3; 7-Matt 8:2,3,5-7,14-16; 8-Matt 8:17; 9-2 Cor 12:7-10;  
10-1 Tim 5:23; 11-Heb 11:6; 12-Luke 5:15; 13-Rev 21:4; 14-1 Cor 13:12.

## DAY 13

### GLORIFYING GOD

The ultimate purpose of the Christian is to bring glory to God. We have been created for His pleasure.<sup>1</sup> So to determine, by God's grace,<sup>2</sup> to live in a way pleasing to Jesus,<sup>3</sup> will result in His being glorified.<sup>4</sup> If we are going to truly bring glory to the Lord, it must begin by making a firm decision to yield to Him with the realization that we have been bought with a dear price.<sup>5</sup> As we press on<sup>6</sup> we inevitably will be doing those works of faith that will glorify our God.<sup>7</sup> May each of us be careful to maintain those God-glorifying works.<sup>8</sup>

Within the Body of Christ, our Lord is glorified when we lovingly use the gifts and abilities that He has entrusted to us.<sup>9</sup> As we follow the example of Jesus in serving each other<sup>10</sup> in these practical, day-to-day ways, the Body is blessed and the Lord gets all of the glory.<sup>11</sup> In fact, we can even glorify God by how we eat and drink!<sup>12</sup> Those "worship services" in the shower, or while folding laundry, or taking out the trash are ways we glorify Jesus,<sup>13</sup> which by the way transforms mundane duty into musical, heavenly ministry.

Of course, apart from an active abiding in Christ, there can be no fruit in our lives.<sup>14</sup> However, as we abide in Jesus, the fruit that does develop not only reveals that we are disciples indeed but, more importantly, enables us to glorify our heavenly Father.<sup>15</sup> Oh how God's fruit<sup>16</sup> is so needed both within and outside the church!

Now it shouldn't be surprising that there is a type of suffering because of our identity with Jesus.<sup>17</sup> However, in this too we can glorify the Lord with beatitude-like joy.<sup>18</sup>

As God works in us,<sup>19</sup> may we continually glorify His name!<sup>20</sup>

1-Rev 4:11; 2-1 Cor 15:10; 3-Col 1:10, 1 John 3:22; 4-2 Thess 1:11-12;  
5-1 Cor 6:19,20; 6-Phil 3:14; 7-Matt 5:16, 1 Peter 2:12; 8-Titus 3:8,14;  
9-1 Peter 4:10,11; 10-Mark 10:45; 11-Psalm 115:1; 12-1 Cor 10:31;  
13-Psalm 50:23a; 14-John 15:5; 15-John 15:8; 16-Gal 5:22-23;  
17-1 Peter 4:12-16; 18-Matt 5:10-12; 19-Phil 2:13; 20-Psalm 86:12.

## DAY 14

### THE GLORIOUS RESURRECTION OF JESUS!

On that Resurrection Sunday nearly 2,000 years ago, when some of His disciples came to the gravesite of Jesus (expecting to find His body there, by the way), they were greeted with these words: “He is not here, but is risen!”<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the Scriptures proclaim that Jesus continued to show Himself alive “by many infallible proofs” for forty days after this.<sup>2</sup>

The resurrection of Jesus is the peg upon which Christianity hangs. Without this, our faith is useless and we are still in our sins.<sup>3</sup> To be an eyewitness of Jesus’ bodily resurrection was a requirement for a replacement for Judas.<sup>4</sup> Peter’s message on Pentecost revealed how David had prophesied<sup>5</sup> of the resurrection of Christ Jesus.<sup>6</sup> The religious establishment took great exception to these ‘unlearned folks’<sup>7</sup> who preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.<sup>8</sup> But faith in Jesus’ resurrection provided great grace and great power to the apostles.<sup>9</sup>

People today, many of them religious like those in the past, think that those of us who know that Jesus rose from the dead are strange.<sup>10</sup> Others simply mock.<sup>11</sup> But the stranger’s message 2,000 years ago is worth repeating: “He is risen! He is not here. Behold the place where they laid Him.”<sup>12</sup> Jesus’ resurrection affirms His declared status as the Son of God.<sup>13</sup> His resurrection also guarantees our resurrection unto eternal life<sup>14</sup> once we repent and place our total faith in Him.

In Adam we suffer death; in Christ we are promised resurrection.<sup>15</sup> To know Jesus<sup>16</sup> and His resurrection power<sup>17</sup> is the very heart of our faith.<sup>18</sup> There is going to be a universal resurrection of both the just and the unjust.<sup>19</sup> One will be unto life, the other unto damnation.<sup>20</sup> Both destinations are for all eternity.<sup>21</sup>

On Resurrection Sunday we celebrate Jesus’ victory over death’s sting.<sup>22</sup> If you have trusted in Jesus Christ, as the Scriptures teach,<sup>23</sup> you too will one day put on incorruption.<sup>24</sup>

Is the Savior alive in your heart? If not, you simply need to believe in Jesus and confess Him today.<sup>25</sup> Then you can rest assured in His promise for resurrection unto eternal life.<sup>26</sup>

1-Luke 24:6; 2-Acts 1:3; 3-1 Cor 15:17; 4-Acts 1:16,20-22; 5-Psalm 16:10;  
6-Acts 2:29-32; 7-Acts 4:13; 8-Acts 4:1-2; 9-Acts 4:33; 10-Acts 17:18-20;  
11-Acts 17:32; 12-Mark 16:6; 13-Rom 1:3-4; 14-John 11:24,25; 15-1 Cor 15:21,22;  
16-John 17:3; 17-Phil 3:10; 18-1 John 1:3; 19-Acts 24:15; 20-John 5:28-29;  
21-Dan 12:2; 22-1 Cor 15:55-57; 23-1 Cor 15:3-4; 24-1 Cor 15:51-54;  
25-Rom 10:9,10; 26-John 6:40.

## DAY 15

### MISSING THE LORD

Job declared that there were times when the Lord was working in His life but he was unable to “see” Him.<sup>1</sup> Can you relate to Job’s experience? Have you ever found yourself wondering if Jesus Christ has forgotten about you?

The eye of faith sees the hand of God at work. The life of faith trusts the Lord in spite of what circumstances tell us. Our perception of God’s working is proportionate to our drawing near to Him<sup>2</sup> and feeding upon the Word of God.<sup>3</sup> However, we must be careful that we not only hear God’s word, but also do it.<sup>4</sup> Dullness of hearing<sup>5</sup> is, many times, the result of a lack of application. We must respond to God’s word for the moment before we can move on to further revelation.<sup>6</sup> We “miss the Lord” so to speak, because we fail to listen to Scripture and walk by faith.<sup>7</sup>

The two disciples on the road to Emmaus were visibly sad after the “tragedy” of Jesus’ crucifixion. Instead of embracing and believing His promised bodily resurrection,<sup>8</sup> they were walking after their own finite reasonings.<sup>9</sup> Jesus then drew near to them but, like Job,<sup>1</sup> they didn’t see or perceive Him. So what does Jesus do to heighten their awareness as to who is in their midst? He gives them a Bible study!<sup>10</sup> Then He broke bread with them.<sup>11</sup> The result? Their hearts were on fire again<sup>12</sup> and their eyes were opened.<sup>13</sup> Their faith was refreshed, and their joy returned! They ran with excitement to pass along the good news.<sup>14</sup>

Dear saints, doubt will rob us of the awareness of God’s precious presence.<sup>15</sup> Don’t wait to “feel” the Lord; embrace Him today in the many little and subtle ways that He reveals Himself to us. May our Lord Jesus open our eyes that we might “see” Him working in us<sup>16</sup> and around us. Remember, it is Love,<sup>17</sup> not luck; Christ,<sup>18</sup> not chance; Providence,<sup>19</sup> not accidents, which direct the Christian walk.

Don’t miss the Lord today; bless Him!<sup>20</sup>

1-Job 9:11; 2-James 4:8; 3-John 17:17; 4-James 1:22; 5-Heb 5:11; 6-Prov 1:23;  
7-2 Cor 5:7; 8-Luke 24:6; 9-Luke 24:15; 10-Luke 24:27; 11-Luke 24:30;  
12-Luke 24:32; 13-Luke 24:31; 14-Luke 24:33,35; 15-Acts 17:28a, Matt 28:20b;  
16-Phil 2:13; 17-1 John 4:16,17; 18-1 Thess 5:18; 19-Rom 8:28, Jer 18:6;  
20-Psalm 103:1.

## DAY 16

### JESUS, OUR EXAMPLE OF PRAYER

After a very busy, draining day of ministry, Jesus rose up very early for a time with the Father in prayer.<sup>1</sup> Jesus sets the example for prayer. We know that He frequently spent time in prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane.<sup>2</sup> Before choosing His first 'ministry team' He spent the night in prayer.<sup>3</sup> For Jesus, prayer was as natural as breathing. He was never in the wrong place praying. Whether at His baptism<sup>4</sup> or at His transfiguration,<sup>5</sup> Jesus prayed.

His prayer life was so rich and fruitful that His disciples wanted to learn more about prayer.<sup>6</sup> In prayer, we go to our heavenly Father,<sup>7</sup> thanking Him for this precious gift of prayer.<sup>8</sup> This mighty weapon of prayer caps off the believer's armor.<sup>9</sup> It's praying that strengthens us in spiritual warfare and prevents fainting.<sup>10</sup> The correct way to approach the Lord in prayer is by being clothed in humility.<sup>11</sup>

Yes, because of Christ's complete atonement for our sins,<sup>12</sup> we can and should come to the throne of God's grace boldly.<sup>13</sup> But this boldness is rooted in grace through faith,<sup>14</sup> and should not minimize our reverence and awe of the One in whose presence we are!<sup>15</sup>

Prayer is the believer's 'knockout punch,' and is much more than just a quiet time with God.<sup>16</sup> In fact, it's to be carried out everywhere,<sup>17</sup> and is God's answer to suffering.<sup>18</sup> Prayer is to be the Church's response to sickness.<sup>19</sup> Petitioning God on behalf of others is a part of bearing one another's burdens.<sup>20</sup>

Prayer precedes Pentecost.<sup>21</sup> Prayer is the heart of ministry.<sup>22</sup> Prayer is effective from without<sup>23</sup> or even within prison.<sup>24</sup> Prayer subdues anxiety attacks.<sup>25</sup> Prayer is where we deal with unforgiveness.<sup>26</sup> Any time is the right time to be praying.<sup>27</sup>

One ministry that every saint has is that of prayer. So don't merely talk about it. Just do it!<sup>28</sup>

1-Mark 1:32-35; 2-Luke 22:39; 3-Luke 6:12,13; 4-Luke 3:21; 5-Luke 9:28,29;  
6-Luke 11:1; 7-Luke 11:2; 8-Col 4:2; 9-Eph 6:18; 10-Luke 18:1; 11-Luke 18:9-14;  
12-Col 2:13-14; 13-Heb 4:16; 14-Eph 2:8; 15-Isaiah 6:1-5; 16-1 Thess 5:17;  
17-1 Tim 2:8; 18-James 5:13; 19-James 5:14,15; 20-Gal 6:2, James 5:16;  
21-Acts 1:14, 2:1; 22-Acts 6:4; 23-Acts 12:5-12; 24-Acts 16:25,26; 25-Phil 4:6-7;  
26-Mark 11:25; 27-1 Thess 3:10; 28-James 1:22, Jude 20.

## DAY 17

### THE COMMANDMENT TO LOVE

Obedience to the word of God is proof of our love for Him.<sup>1</sup> It's with this kind of person that Jesus finds a "home."<sup>2</sup> The greatest witness the Body of Christ can present to a lost and dying world is love.<sup>3</sup> The greatest element within the Body of Christ is love.<sup>4</sup> Love is the very heart and soul of day-to-day, practical church life. A Spirit-filled person is a love-filled person.<sup>5</sup>

There need be no question as to how God defines love.<sup>6</sup> This sacrificial love honors and prefers others,<sup>7</sup> bringing church life beyond ritual and into servanthood.<sup>8</sup> Love seizes opportunity to help others,<sup>9</sup> and is tenderhearted, courteous, and compassionate.<sup>10</sup> In fact, love is the capstone of brotherly kindness.<sup>11</sup>

How are we to walk as believers? In love, following Jesus' example.<sup>12</sup> How does Jesus love you, forgive you, care for you? Unconditionally, without a cause.<sup>13</sup> The only reason I need to love you is that My Lord commands me to!<sup>14</sup> Therefore, faith in Jesus and love for the saints go hand-in-hand.<sup>15</sup>

Love settles quarrels,<sup>16</sup> and it doesn't keep record of wrongs.<sup>17</sup> Jesus takes serious note when love is missing in His church,<sup>18</sup> desiring instead a place where love abounds.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, continuing in love is vital,<sup>20</sup> and is the royal law of Scripture.<sup>21</sup> God's message for all of us to embrace is His message of love.<sup>22</sup> This love for our fellow Christian is evidence of genuine rebirth.<sup>23</sup>

Again, this love is far more than lip service.<sup>24</sup> Love for each other is an outstanding debt that each of us owes to our Lord Jesus,<sup>25</sup> and so every time we act, speak or think lovingly towards our church family, we are 'making a payment' of thanksgiving to God.

The world cannot love in this truly sacrificial way, which is why we are told not to be enamored with the world.<sup>26</sup> In contrast, the Kingdom of God is ruled by the God who is love,<sup>27</sup> and whose tremendous love towards us<sup>28</sup> is our eternal example.

1-John 14:21; 2-John 14:23; 3-John 13:34,35; 4-1 Cor 13:13; 5-Gal 5:22;  
6-John 3:16, 1 Cor 13:4-8a; 7-Rom 12:10; 8-Gal 5:13; 9-Gal 6:10; 10-1 Peter 3:8;  
11-2 Peter 1:7; 12-Eph 5:2; 13-Rom 5:8; 14-John 15:12,17; 15-Col 1:4;  
16-Col 3:13; 17-1 Peter 4:8; 18-Rev 2:4,5; 19-1 Thess 3:12; 20-Heb 13:1;  
21-James 2:8; 22-1 John 3:11; 23-1 John 3:14; 24-1 John 3:18; 25-Rom 13:8;  
26-1 John 2:15; 27-1 John 4:8; 28-1 John 3:1.

## DAY 18

### SENT OUT

It is very common within the church to have misconceptions about the people God uses. We must admit that, like the world, we may tend to glamorize or make heroes out of individuals that God mightily used. Paul is probably one of those “giants.” When we read about Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ,<sup>1</sup> in our devotions and then grab our lunch and go off to work or school, or “only” remain a mother at home with children, it’s very easy to question, “What am I really doing for my Lord?”

Well, dearly beloved, the truth of the matter is this: the Greek word used for “apostle” describes “one who has been sent out.” Sent out by whom? Jesus Christ. Sent out where? Into this world. You and I, as insignificant as we may seem, have been equally commissioned by Jesus Christ. In fact, Jesus said that we are ‘on a mission’ in the same way that He was!<sup>2</sup>

Of course, in the redemptive sense,<sup>3</sup> no other calling equals that of Jesus Christ.<sup>4</sup> However, our mission is also redemptive, though in a lesser sense, for we, all of us, are missionaries.<sup>5</sup> Every single member of Christ’s body has been called by God<sup>6</sup> and, in response to God’s powerful grace,<sup>7</sup> is an instrument in whom God works mightily.<sup>8</sup> Your life and influence makes an impression on others, either drawing people toward or driving them away from Jesus Christ.

We are ambassadors for Jesus,<sup>9</sup> sent by heaven<sup>10</sup> to serve our Lord.<sup>11</sup> I know it’s easy to think that we are not as important or necessary as a world-wide evangelist, but in reality we are. When the Lord says, “beloved”,<sup>12</sup> He’s speaking to you! When He says, “How shall they hear... unless they are sent?”<sup>13</sup> He’s speaking to you. God’s Spirit enables us to evangelize and live an evangelical lifestyle.

Get your eyes off of your circumstances<sup>14</sup> and shortcomings!<sup>15</sup> We all struggle!<sup>16</sup> Every instrument that God uses or has ever used is a common one. The only preeminent One in the church is the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>17</sup>

Allow God to direct your paths today.<sup>18</sup> Be open to His mighty hand of providence at work in you and around you. As God leads - plant, water.<sup>19</sup> Pray as you go, then go as you pray. You have a purpose today, and that purpose is to glorify your Lord by living in loving fellowship with Him and then exporting that to others.<sup>20</sup>

1-Col 1:1; 2-John 17:18; 3-John 1:29; 4-Heb 2:9; 5-Acts 1:8; 6-Rom 8:28-30;  
7-1 Cor 15:10; 8-Phil 2:13; 9-2 Cor 5:20; 10-Phil 3:20; 11-Matt 6:24; 12-Phil 4:1;  
13-Rom 10:14,15; 14-Eccl 11:4; 15-Acts 14:15; 16-Rom 7:14-24; 17-Col 1:18;  
18-Prov 3:5,6; 19-1 Cor 3:6; 20-Matt 10:8b.

## DAY 19

### MOTIVATION

Two people can be doing the exact same thing outwardly, and yet in their hearts be motivated by different reasons. This proposes a question that each one of us must answer. Why do you do the things that you do? There are only three possibilities: to please my fellow man,<sup>1</sup> to please myself,<sup>2</sup> or to please Jesus.<sup>3</sup>

The Bible itself enables us to identify our actions and motivations categorically.<sup>4</sup> Scripture tells us plainly what is outwardly of the flesh,<sup>5</sup> and what is inwardly of the Spirit;<sup>6</sup> what is heavenly wisdom,<sup>7</sup> and what is not.<sup>8</sup> However, God's Word also warns us that we can do magnanimous things for the wrong reasons.<sup>9</sup>

God the Father displayed His love for us by sending Jesus,<sup>10</sup> "who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness".<sup>11</sup> Contrary to popular opinion, man is not by nature "a god" waiting to blossom, but rather an accident waiting to happen unless Jesus Christ steps into his life.<sup>12</sup> Our only reasonable response would be to gratefully surrender in obedience to His word,<sup>13</sup> motivated by love.<sup>14</sup> You see, if we are serving the Lord for any other motive, Scripture says that it will be 'smokey' at our evaluation,<sup>15</sup> as well as a real drag here on earth. Whether it's giving to the Lord,<sup>16</sup> eating or drinking, or whatever we do, we should do it for the glory of God.<sup>17</sup>

Reader, ask yourself, what motivates you in your Christian walk? Are there areas in your life where you are motivated by selfishness,<sup>18</sup> or a desire to be seen as a man or woman of deep spirituality, or even to make you feel good about yourself? Fleshly motivation is the 'delivery room' for jealousy, envy, and conflict.<sup>19</sup> It's the fountainhead supplying the undercurrent of greed in the 'health and wealth' camp.

Our Lord wants us secure in His love,<sup>20</sup> not wavering in insecurity due to impure motives or unfavorable crowd approval! Life is short,<sup>21</sup> death is sure;<sup>22</sup> sin the cause,<sup>23</sup> Christ the cure.<sup>24</sup>

Let Jesus' love motivate you in whatever you are doing.<sup>25</sup> Do it to please Him. You won't be sorry.<sup>26</sup>

1-Col 3:22; 2-2 Tim 3:2; 3-2 Tim 2:3,4; 4-Heb 4:12; 5-Gal 5:19-21; 6-Gal 5:22-23;  
7-James 3:17; 8-James 3:14-16; 9-1 Cor 13:1-3; 10-John 3:16; 11-1 Peter 2:24;  
12-Eph 2:1-10; 13-Rom 12:1,2; 14-Gal 5:6; 15-1 Cor 3:13-15; 16-2 Cor 9:7;  
17-1 Cor 10:31; 18-Phil 2:3; 19-James 4:1-4; 20-Jer 31:3, John 13:1;  
21-James 4:14; 22-Heb 9:27; 23-Rom 6:23a; 24-John 1:29; 25-2 Cor 5:14-15;  
26-1 Cor 15:58.

## DAY 20

### YOU AND YOUR WORDS

Whenever an extreme position on any Biblical principle is taken, there is a danger of setting aside any Scriptural instruction that remotely relates to the subject for fear of being labeled a heretic. I've found this to be true in the area of words.

The 'positive confession' camp takes an extreme view on the subject. Many times honesty is disregarded and true fellowship is broken. Facts are ignored, fables embraced, and a whole lot of people in physical straits are telling you that they are healthy. (What positive confession did Lazarus make to raise up from the dead?<sup>1</sup>) If faith in your own faith makes you whole, then why do you need Jesus? Physician, heal yourself! Welcome to the holistic healing camp of the New Age movement, previously released under the title "Magical Mystery Tour".

Make no mistake about it, the tongue can create a "fiery" providence.<sup>2</sup> Careless, thoughtless, undisciplined speech is powerful.<sup>3</sup> The worldly, sensuous woman has a 'smooth' mouth<sup>4</sup> while the godly, virtuous woman speaks with wisdom and kindness.<sup>5</sup> Words are like a hunter's trap.<sup>6</sup> Words in the mouth of a hypocrite destroy a person's honor.<sup>7</sup> Do a personal study in the Book of Proverbs looking up: "words," "tongue," "lips," and "mouth." While you're there, track down "whisper," "accuse," "backbite," "talebearer," etc.

Why does God say so much about our speech? Do we hear Him speaking to us in this area? How do you interpret Col 3:8? Eph 4:29? Look at Numbers 14:2,27. What got God's 'blood boiling'? Is that only under the law? Check out Phil 2:14-15. How do you think Jesus feels when He observes our verbal 'flame-throwing'? We need to clean up our acts verbally.<sup>8</sup> We need to find out what the mind of Christ is and then put our lips in harmony with His word. Every body part belongs to Jesus.<sup>9</sup>

Verbal poison, pollution, pornography, etc., are never God's will. You may despise swearing, but do you backbite? Are you critical of others in the Body of Christ? Do you love passing on 'juicy tales' of failure? There is an Arab proverb that says, "While the word is yet unspoken, you are the master of it; when once it is spoken, it is master of you." What we think about<sup>10</sup> is an indication of our heart's treasure.<sup>11</sup>

One reason that an 'iron curtain' exists between God and us is our failure to allow the Holy Spirit to keep our mouths shut. May we pray as David prayed: "Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips."<sup>12</sup> Remember, you do not have to speak all of your mind.<sup>13</sup> Before you speak, think and pray.<sup>14</sup>

1-John 11:39,43,44; 2-James 3:2-6; 3-Prov 18:21; 4-Prov 5:3; 5-Prov 31:26;  
6-Prov 6:2; 7-Prov 11:9a; 8-Isaiah 6:5; 9-1 Cor 6:19,20, Rom 6:1-22; 10-Phil 4:8;  
11-Matt 12:34c,35; 12-Psalms 141:3; 13-Prov 29:11; 14-Prov 29:20.

## DAY 21

### INDIANA JONES AND THE CHRISTIAN QUEST?

Perhaps you recall the movie or its ad on television: Archeologist Indiana Jones is on a journey to find “The Holy Grail”. Nothing will stop him! He’s on a mission ‘from God’. Determination and faith are some of Indy’s qualities that enable him to successfully complete his quest.

We interrupt Hollywood now for a word from the Author and Finisher of our faith, Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup> The Word of God promises us that we can come into a deeper fellowship with our Lord if we purpose to search for Him with all of our heart and soul.<sup>2</sup> A Jerusalem rabbi made an interesting comment on this: “God never promises that if you search diligently for oil in Texas or gold in California or diamonds in South Africa, that you’ll find it. But He did promise that we would find Him if we searched for Him wholeheartedly.”<sup>3</sup> It’s sad when an unsaved, yet God-fearing orthodox Jew has better theology than our name-it, claim-it, demand-from-God ‘whatever’ you want evangelists!

The Lord repeated His promise to be found by Israel nearing the end of their Babylonian captivity,<sup>4</sup> and in the New Testament God likewise declares that “He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”<sup>5</sup> What is the reward? Wealth? No. Health? No. Him! Our Lord Himself is our “exceedingly great reward”!<sup>6</sup>

As with any ‘pot of gold’, there must be a desire, a longing deep within the human spirit to ‘find it’. Mark it down: We are not seeking God because He is lost; we seek Him because we are lost without Him!<sup>7</sup> Many Christians have only responded to the “Come to Me”<sup>8</sup> but have not taken Jesus’ yoke and learned of Him.<sup>9</sup> I am glad and grateful to be saved, but I’m not content in just being saved. I want to know my God more. I want to love Him more. However, I can’t ‘microwave’ the process. I must purpose in my heart to seek Him daily.<sup>10</sup>

Amazingly, this Holy God<sup>11</sup> who knows my heart<sup>12</sup> sent His Son to die for my sins,<sup>13</sup> and is now ‘looking for me’ as I look for Him!<sup>14</sup> Reader, are you seeking the Lord Jesus today, or is your Christian walk a ‘thing of the past’? Are you experiencing cold prayers, lack of joy, just going through the motions? Then take a look at what you are feeding your soul.<sup>15</sup> Listen to yourself some day and unlock your ‘spiritual bank account’ balance.<sup>16</sup>

Set your heart on a fresh course today,<sup>17</sup> and settle for nothing less than this - the knowledge<sup>18</sup> of Jesus Christ.<sup>19</sup> Pursue Him as if your life depends on it, because it does!<sup>20</sup>

1-Heb 12:2; 2-Deut 4:29; 3-Jewish Ledger, pg 15, Schlomo Riskin; 4-Jer 29:13; 5-Heb 11:6; 6-Gen 15:1; 7-1 Peter 2:25; 8-Matt 11:28; 9-Matt 11:29; 10-Matt 6:11; 11-Isaiah 6:3; 12-Mark 7:20-23; 13-John 3:16; 14-2 Chron 16:9a; 15-Luke 4:4; 16-Matt 12:34c,35; 17-Phil 3:14; 18-Phil 3:10; 19-2 Peter 3:18; 20-1 John 5:12.

## DAY 22

### LAYING DOWN OUR LIVES – FOR WHOM?

This individual is extremely popular. He has charisma, that “something special.” Someone said his words reflect “the feelings I feel.” The songs he wrote speak about love and truth. (Could they be psalms?) He has a staff who work night and day; some don’t even draw a paycheck. People have said: “When I hear him, it’s like he took my whole life and put it into words.” “I feel like he’s family.” One person reportedly relied on this individual’s lyrics to help her through her father’s death. People travel an average of 178 miles to see him, but one person trucked 2,200 miles, another flew 4,965. The article written<sup>1</sup> was about dedication to someone special - Michael Bolton.

As a musician, he does have a great voice, but where did it come from?<sup>2</sup> The reporter noted how Bolton’s fans were loyal to him and apparently would make any sacrifice of time, travel or sleep to see him. Many fans, especially female, are attracted to his sensitivity.

Two lost words in our ‘church’ vocabulary are “loyalty” and “dedication.” Hopefully, individual churches are made up of born-again disciples of Jesus Christ, and we express, though not entirely, our commitment to Him in these local churches. Dedication and loyalty to Jesus Christ will inspire us to serve Him in the Spirit within the local church. I wish to God that every local body had as many people devoted to Jesus as Michael Bolton apparently has devoted to him!

You get the impression from the article that nothing and nobody could or would ever stand in the way of any of Michael’s fans getting to him. How far would they travel to have dinner with him? How much would they pay to talk to him on the phone? They seem willing to make unlimited sacrifices, expend unlimited energy.

What about Jesus? Does He not know you well?<sup>3</sup> Does He not know how you feel?<sup>4</sup> Does He not want to talk with you and reveal His love, tenderness and mercy?<sup>5</sup> Did He not give His life for you?<sup>6</sup> Do you realize He has enlisted you in His ‘army’?<sup>7</sup> What sacrifice are you willing to make for Him?<sup>8</sup> Are you devoted to ministering to fellow believers?<sup>9</sup> If all aspects of our lives are devoted to Jesus, this would include our service within the local assembly.<sup>10</sup> We would be serving God and serving each other,<sup>11</sup> lifting each other up in prayer,<sup>12</sup> and helping out as led by the Lord.

Michael Bolton may be a great guy, but when any human being, especially a Christian, shows more loyalty, dedication or sacrifice to anyone or anything other than Jesus, something is out of line.<sup>13</sup>

May the Lord Jesus touch our hearts afresh to put away the enticements of the world.<sup>14</sup> His love is deserving of our lives.<sup>15</sup> Remove any rival.<sup>16</sup>

1-USA Today, 9/28/93; 2-James 1:17; 3-Psalm 139:1-18; 4-Heb 4:14-16; 5-Jer 33:3; 6-Rom 5:6-8; 7-2 Tim 2:3,4; 8-Rom 12:1; 9-1 Cor 16:15; 10-Heb 10:24-25; 11-Rom 12:11,13; 12-James 5:16; 13-Psalm 73:25-28; 14-1 John 2:15-17; 15-2 Cor 5:15; 16-1 John 5:21.

## DAY 23

### IN GOD'S PRESENCE

When Peter and John stood before the Jewish council after the healing of the lame man,<sup>1</sup> the Scriptures record that the rulers “marveled, and they realized that they had been with Jesus.”<sup>2</sup> This statement cites a misconception that prevails in the minds of believers and non-believers alike. Note, to the unlearned religionists the apostles HAD BEEN with Jesus. The truth was that Jesus was with them at that very moment! He told them, “I am with you always.”<sup>3</sup> The writer to the Hebrews reminds us that the Lord said, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.”<sup>4</sup> Dearly beloved, once you give your life to Jesus Christ by receiving Him as your Savior,<sup>5</sup> you become the temple of the Holy Spirit.<sup>6</sup>

I often catch myself (or others) praying, “Jesus, be with us when we go here to do this ministry.” Wait a second! I don’t need to ask Him to go with me, because when I go, He goes. We turn things upside down so easily, don’t we? For example, the church that Jesus is building today<sup>7</sup> is not made of concrete, mortar and fancy pews or steeples; it’s made up of people. The place where we gather is not the church; it’s the building where the church gathers together to learn about God and worship Him. When just two or three get together for His purposes, Jesus is in their midst.<sup>8</sup> He is not only with us individually, but He is also amongst us corporately.<sup>9</sup>

How important that we meditate on this blessed truth that Jesus is with us always. His presence is with us at work.<sup>10</sup> Marriage symbolizes our union with Him.<sup>11</sup> Reader, embrace this truth and, as Brother Lawrence so beautifully wrote, “Practice the presence of God.” His eyes are over you right now and His ears are open to your prayers.<sup>12</sup> You can confidently declare today, “My times are in Your hand.”<sup>13</sup> And, might I add that the hand of God will never let you go!<sup>14</sup>

Romans 8:35 lists a number of things that could befall any one of us in this life, but following this ‘list of horrors’ is the sovereign Lord’s assurance that nothing and nobody can separate us from His love.<sup>15</sup> Receive His love for you today! Are you lonely, hurting, and ready to throw in the towel? Turn your life over to Jesus, who loves you so much that He came to die for you<sup>16</sup> so that you might have eternal life through Him.<sup>17</sup> Ask Him into your life right now; it’s that simple.

Dear believer, if you are downcast today, look to Jesus.<sup>18</sup> He does understand.<sup>19</sup> When we give our lives to Jesus, cares and all,<sup>20</sup> those around us will also conclude that we are walking with Jesus.

1-Acts 3:1-8; 2-Acts 4:13; 3-Matt 28:20b; 4-Heb 13:5; 5-John 1:12;  
6-1 Cor 3:16, 6:19; 7-Matt 16:18; 8-Matt 18:20; 9-Rev 1:13,16,20;  
10-Eph 6:5-9; 11-Eph 5:21-32; 12-1 Peter 3:12; 13-Psalm 31:15;  
14-John 10:28,29; 15-Rom 8:38-39; 16-John 1:29; 17-John 3:16, Rom 6:23;  
18-Psalm 42:5,6,11; 19-Heb 4:14-16; 20-1 Peter 5:7.

## DAY 24

### PROPHECY, ISRAEL AND THE GOSPEL

It never ceases to amaze me, when I see newscasts from or about the Middle East, how rapidly prophecy is coming together. Interestingly enough, the average person on the street also displays 'antenna ears' when he/she hears about the Israeli-Arab situation. The modern-day miracle of Israel becoming a nation is a key part of the prophetic puzzle.<sup>1</sup>

Way back in the Book of Genesis, God called Abraham (then Abram) into a land.<sup>2</sup> Grandpa Abe (Israelis called him that) 'scoped out' that land."<sup>3</sup> The Lord gave him the geographic boundaries,<sup>4</sup> which God further clarified to his descendants.<sup>5</sup> God has also prophesied the future boundaries for Israel during the millennium.<sup>6</sup> This one tiny parcel of land on the planet earth God calls His land.<sup>7</sup>

Jeremiah the prophet wrote that the seed of the house of Israel shall be led to this land from the north country and all the countries.<sup>8</sup> Our modern history has seen the exodus from Russia (north country), Ethiopia, etc., to Israel. Under 'Operation Magic Carpet' from June, 1949 - '50, nearly the entire Yemen Jewish community returned to Israel. During 'Operation Babylon', May, 1950 - Jan., '52, approximately 104,000 Iraqi Jews were flown to Israel. 14,194 Jews were brought to Israel during a 22-hour airlift called 'Operation Moses'. As of 9/1/93 statistics, Israel had grown from 650,000 to 4,100,000, of which 2,158,403 (half) had immigrated since 1948! Now in the 21st century, Jews continue to make "aliyah" back to their ancient homeland.

Don't buy into the lie that "God is through with the Jew"! In fact, Paul specifically warns us Gentiles about casting away God's "natural branches".<sup>9</sup> You can be absolutely certain that Israel, Jerusalem in particular, will be center stage for world events just prior to and during the great tribulation period,<sup>10</sup> as well as after the Lord's return.<sup>11</sup> Though far from perfect, this land is still the apple of God's eye,<sup>12</sup> for whom the Lord will be a wall of fire<sup>13</sup> at the end of Daniel's 70th week.<sup>14</sup> We are currently living in the parenthetical time period between Daniel's 69th and 70th weeks. Tribulation period shadows appear to be looming right before our very eyes.<sup>15</sup> The nation of Israel will recognize the One "whom they pierced"<sup>16</sup> as their Messiah at the end of the great tribulation.

Your eternal destiny rests in your acceptance or rejection of this pierced One<sup>17</sup> as God's sacrificial lamb for your sin.<sup>18</sup> People scoffed at those who taught that God was not through with the nation of Israel. They're not scoffing now. Others scoff when we preach Christ crucified for our sin and salvation.<sup>19</sup> The same Author who prophesied about Israel also tells us about salvation and eternity.<sup>20</sup> You can believe Him!

1-Ezek 36,37; 2-Gen 12:1; 3-Gen 13:14-18; 4-Gen 15:18-21; 5-Ex 23:23,28-31, Num 34:1-15, Joshua 1:3,4; 6-Ezek 47,48; 7-Zech 9:16; 8-Jer 23:7,8; 9-Rom 11:13-29; 10-Zech 12:1-3, 14:1-3; 11-Zech 2:10-12; 12-Zech 2:8; 13-Zech 2:5; 14-Dan 9:24-27; 15-Matt 24:4-12; 16-Zech 12:10; 17-John 19:28-37; 18-John 1:29; 19-1 Cor 1:18, Rom 1:16; 20-2 Tim 3:16.

## DAY 25

### WAIT, NOT HASTE

I don't know about you, but at times I've got a tendency to try to "force" the hand of God to act. I confess that there are those periods in my life when I'm not so thrilled about the Lord's timing. Of course, when the dust of my emotion clears, and I read the Scriptures, He gracefully gives me peace.

We are living in 'the fast lane' as a nation. Fast food places are very popular. Microwaves cook more family meals than ovens. If we are not careful, we can get caught up in the hustle and bustle of life. Let's not forget some basic principles of following Jesus.

Seeking the Lord is the true path of life.<sup>1</sup> His Kingdom is to be our dwelling place,<sup>2</sup> filling our lives with "righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."<sup>3</sup> We need to go to the Lord in prayer and ask Him to reveal to us personally what it means to be in this world but not a part of it.<sup>4</sup>

Let's be sensitive to where our hearts are at. Placing our affections and focusing our thoughts on things above<sup>5</sup> will keep us from the snare of the "thorns" on earth.<sup>6</sup> I also believe that hastiness is a cause of many of the "weeds" in our garden., such as, hasty purchases, hasty decisions and, sadly, hasty quiet time with God.

Waiting upon God is a source of spiritual revival.<sup>7</sup> As Christians, we should plan our schedules around the will of God and the Word of God. I guarantee that if you roll out of bed, stop at McDonald's drive-up lane and get into the work mentality, your day will not be as fruitful<sup>8</sup> as it would have been if you had done that which was most needful.<sup>9</sup>

Listen, I'm not putting anyone down, but I am challenging you to be "redeeming the time."<sup>10</sup> Make every second count in your life. Have those chats with the Lord during the day. Tell Him how much you love Him and are thankful for all He's done in your life. Put God's word to work for you throughout the day as husbands, wives, children, students, employees and employers. In every sphere of life, be a doer of the word.<sup>11</sup> Yoke yourself to Jesus<sup>12</sup> and His life-giving word,<sup>13</sup> not your ever-changing emotions and flesh.<sup>14</sup> To properly "do business" (or, "occupy")<sup>15</sup> we must maintain that fellowship with God.<sup>16</sup>

The meditation upon God is sweet.<sup>17</sup> His Word is sweet.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, we should echo the bride in the Song of Solomon in saying to our Beloved, "Your voice is sweet."<sup>19</sup>

Fellowship and friendship with God will insulate us from the frenzy and fakery of this world, so let's examine our ways and focus on the Lord, giving Him our all.<sup>20</sup>

1-Amos 5:6a; 2-Matt 6:33; 3-Rom 14:17; 4-John 17:16; 5-Col 3:1,2; 6-Luke 8:14; 7-Isaiah 40:31; 8-Gal 5:22-23; 9-Luke 10:38-42; 10-Eph 5:16; 11-James 1:22; 12-Matt 11:29; 13-John 6:63; 14-Rom 13:14; 15-Luke 19:13; 16-1 John 1:3; 17-Psalm 104:34; 18-Psalm 119:103; 19-Song 2:14; 20-Lam 3:40-41.

## DAY 26

### REALITY CHECKS

A study of the attributes of God is both edifying and terrifying. The God of Scripture<sup>1</sup> cannot be fooled, tricked, bribed or manipulated.<sup>2</sup> The Creator of the universe<sup>3</sup> knows each of us better than we know ourselves.<sup>4</sup> David, who knew the Lord as his Shepherd,<sup>5</sup> requested that the Lord would thoroughly search him.<sup>6</sup> Yes, it is possible for us to fool each other sometimes, and even ourselves, but never God!<sup>7</sup>

Peter undoubtedly believed that he was prepared to both go to prison and die for Jesus, but his Lord knew better.<sup>8</sup> We, like Peter, often boast of greater faith, love and strength than we actually possess. How important to remember that our hearts are “deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.”<sup>9</sup> Our flesh is good for nothing.<sup>10</sup>

How then do we determine where we are with the Lord? Simply by observing how we respond to things in and around our lives.<sup>11</sup> As silver and gold is tried in the furnace, the Lord God reveals our hearts<sup>12</sup> by dictating events and arranging circumstances in our lives that we may discover just how much of His word we truly have heard and personally applied.<sup>13</sup> God leads and chastens us just like He did the nation of Israel,<sup>14</sup> though never, you understand, to condemn us<sup>15</sup> but to conform us to the image of Jesus.<sup>16</sup>

Like Adam,<sup>17</sup> we think that we can hide from God, but He knows us.<sup>18</sup> He knows our fears, struggles, goals, motivations, etc.<sup>19</sup> It is a glorious moment indeed when we realize we have nothing to prove to God or to hide from Him. No guile!<sup>20</sup> No showboating!<sup>21</sup> No claiming to possess what I don't have!

When we walk in real honesty before God,<sup>22</sup> there will be more humility<sup>23</sup> and less hypocrisy before each other.<sup>24</sup> Truth is reality, and practiced before God and one another it produces true Christianity.

1-John 5:39, 2 Tim 3:16; 2-Isaiah 46:9,10; 3-Gen 1; 4-Psalm 139:1-6, Matt 10:30;  
5-Psalm 23:1; 6-Psalm 139:23,24; 7-Jer 17:10; 8-Luke 22:31-34; 9-Jer 17:9;  
10-Rom 7:18, John 6:63; 11-1 Peter 4:12; 12-Prov 17:3; 13-James 1:22;  
14-Deut 8:2-5; 15-Rom 8:1; 16-Rom 8:29; 17-Gen 3:8-10; 18-Psalm 139:7-18;  
19-Heb 4:13; 20-John 1:47; 21-Matt 6:1; 22-2 Cor 8:21; 23-1 Peter 5:5;  
24-Luke 12:1-3.

## DAY 27

### HUSBANDS AND WORSHIP

Husbands have the awesome ministry of loving their wives “just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her.<sup>1</sup> I know that many sisters struggle with the ‘s’ word,<sup>2</sup> but submission is nowhere near as demanding as crucifixion! Husbands in the local church are to assume a loving, tender leadership role.<sup>3</sup> We are both the head of the home functionally<sup>4</sup> as well as leaders in our home in a spiritual role.<sup>5</sup> After Jesus, who is to be our first love,<sup>6</sup> the next priority of love for each husband is his wife.

Peter the apostle was a married man<sup>7</sup> who must have manifested some of the same qualities in his home that make him such an interesting character to study in the Bible. It was Peter who wrote about husbands dwelling with their wives in an honorable and knowledgeable way.<sup>8</sup> Note why, in one sense anyway, we are exhorted to live this way - that our prayers might be effective.

An unloving, unholy husband will experience a very poor prayer life.<sup>9</sup> There’s nothing to talk to God about until you get your heart where it should be as a husband. Interestingly, the Greek word for “prayer” also can be translated “worship”.

Husbands, are you personally a worshiper of God?<sup>10</sup> Do you enter into worship here at church, or wherever you attend regularly? Do you sometimes think that there is something missing in worship at church? I suggest to you that, as husbands, being ‘in the flesh’<sup>11</sup> can be the reason why God’s Spirit doesn’t flow freely among us.<sup>12</sup> May I also suggest that if we hold back our praises to God for whatever reason (Is my heart “in a foreign land”<sup>13</sup>), that will equally suppress the Spirit of God.<sup>14</sup>

When men love Jesus and their wives, two vital elements of church life will be evident: prayer and worship. So, as the old hymn says, “Rise up, O man of God!”

1-Eph 5:25; 2-Eph 5:22; 3-1 Tim 3:12; 4-Gen 3:16; 5-1 Cor 11:3; 6-Rev 2:4;  
7-Mark 1:30; 8-1 Peter 3:7; 9-Psalm 66:18; 10-John 4:23,24; 11-Rom 8:5-8;  
12-Gal 6:7,8; 13-Psalm 137:1-4; 14-Psalm 22:3, 1 Thess 5:19.

## DAY 28

### JESUS, THE HERO OF THE UNTOUCHABLES

Jesus Christ came to this earth to save sinners,<sup>1</sup> not destroy them.<sup>2</sup> Theology has misrepresented the teaching of Scripture about the mission of Jesus. Some have portrayed an angry God; others a racist God. Today, to be “politically correct” (which is usually Biblically incorrect), we are being offered a genderless God. In each case the “gospel” and “Jesus” presented are false both doctrinally and morally.

The Bible is very clear about the purposes of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus,<sup>3</sup> which basically were to atone for the sin of mankind<sup>4</sup> and destroy the works of the devil.<sup>5</sup> Fallen man is lost because Adam and Eve believed the devil’s lie instead of God’s truth.<sup>6</sup> The Son of Man, Jesus Christ, came to save that which was lost.<sup>7</sup> He came to give us life, and that more abundantly.<sup>8</sup> Jesus came to bruise the head of Satan,<sup>9</sup> not man.<sup>10</sup> When Jesus ministered here on earth, He was performing the will of Heaven.<sup>11</sup>

The professional religion of the day was off-limits to those whom society rendered unclean or ungodly. Jesus, as recorded in John 8:2-11 and Mark 1:40-42, reveals a blessed truth, and that is that He didn’t come to condemn sinners, but to save<sup>12</sup> and cleanse them. Of course coming to Him involves repentance<sup>13</sup> and a commitment to sin no more.<sup>14</sup> As stated earlier, any “gospel” that perverts grace<sup>15</sup> isn’t presenting the true message of Jesus.<sup>16</sup>

Jesus Christ knows you very well.<sup>17</sup> He knows your struggles, your griefs, your pains, your hidden fears. In fact, He bore all your grief and carried your sorrows, and suffered for your sins on His cross.<sup>18</sup> He’s the One to turn to when you get bruised.<sup>19</sup> His will is to cleanse you, not “clock” you; help you, not hurt you; strengthen you, not smite you.

When Jesus walked on this earth, He was the Hero of the “untouchables”. And He hasn’t changed one bit!<sup>20</sup>

1-1 Tim 1:15; 2-Luke 9:56a; 3-1 Cor 15:3-4; 4-John 1:29; 5-1 John 3:8b;  
6-Gen 3:1-8,22-24; 7-Luke 19:10; 8-John 10:10b; 9-Gen 3:15; 10-Matt 12:20;  
11-Heb 10:7; 12-John 3:17; 13-Mark 1:15b; 14-John 5:14b; 15-Jude 4;  
16-Titus 2:11-14; 17-Psalm 139:1-18; 18-Isaiah 53:4,5; 19-Psalm 61:1-3;  
20-Heb 13:8.

## DAY 29

### THE CORINTHIAN TEST

The Church of Corinth was among the most gifted recorded in Scripture.<sup>1</sup> However, as charismatic as they were, they were equally carnal.<sup>2</sup> What was one of the manifestations of their carnality? Division within the visible body.<sup>3</sup> There were social and economic divisions that totally ruined their agape feasts.<sup>4</sup> There were also divisions that revolved around their favorite teachers.<sup>5</sup>

Think about this: When the Body of Christ is divided, who bleeds?

Now there is a division that exists between believers in Jesus and those who do not believe in Him<sup>6</sup> for light and darkness cannot truly peacefully co-exist.<sup>7</sup> Truth and heretical teachings<sup>8</sup> can never walk together.<sup>9</sup> However, within the church God desires that there be a perfect joining together,<sup>10</sup> with the basis being the very mind of Christ.<sup>11</sup>

Are we any different than Corinth? Are we seeking truth, or following our favorite teachers? Satan knows that he cannot steal a true believer's salvation,<sup>12</sup> but he certainly delights in keeping us carnal. A divided kingdom cannot stand.<sup>13</sup> "Is Christ divided?"<sup>14</sup>

What is it that brings division into the Body of Christ? Divisive attitudes. Like the church at Corinth we can, if we are not careful, develop a "carnal" disposition.<sup>15</sup> We can say for example, "I am of Chuck Smith," or Billy Graham, etc. We can carry this into our preferences of styles of teaching or music. We may say, "I am of *Word for Today*," "I am of *Searchlight*," or "I am of rap," "I am of country." To have preferences that minister to us individually in our walk with Jesus is wonderful, but to allow those preferences to 'chop us up' and divide us is just being 'in the flesh'.

This can even creep into a menu of weekly activities in any church. We can surely fall into the mentality of, "I am of Sunday night ... Wednesday morning ... Friday evening" church, can't we? The precious unity of God's Spirit,<sup>16</sup> made possible through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ,<sup>17</sup> is worth maintaining.<sup>18</sup> Sowing unity is the heart of Jesus;<sup>19</sup> sowing discord is certainly not!<sup>20</sup>

To go on to maturity, we must not only get beyond certain foundational truths,<sup>21</sup> but we, both as individuals and collectively as a local congregation, should also ask ourselves a personal question, "Are we members of one Body,<sup>22</sup> or one clique?"

Thank you for taking 'The Corinthian Test'.

1-1 Cor 1:7; 2-1 Cor 3:1; 3-1 Cor 3:3; 4-1 Cor 11:18-22; 5-1 Cor 1:12, 3:4;  
6-John 7:43, Luke 12:51-53; 7-2 Cor 6:14-17a; 8-Rom 16:17; 9-Amos 3:3;  
10-1 Cor 1:10; 11-Phil 2:1-5; 12-1 Peter 1:3-5; 13-Matt 12:25; 14-1 Cor 1:13;  
15-Rom 8:5-7; 16-Eph 4:3; 17-Eph 2:13-22; 18-Psalm 133; 19-John 17:21-23;  
20-Prov 6:16-19; 21-Heb 6:1-3; 22-1 Cor 12:12.

## DAY 30

### BEING AN EXAMPLE

The best witness for the gospel of Jesus Christ is called a living epistle.<sup>1</sup> Our lives display a version of the Bible. As the Spirit of the living God works in our lives, we are changed<sup>2</sup> into the image of Jesus Christ.<sup>3</sup> As the light of the world,<sup>4</sup> we are called to be examples<sup>5</sup> to all those around us.

The word “example” means a sample or model. We are to display a life that reflects the heart of God. Our demeanor at work<sup>6</sup> and at home<sup>7</sup> is to send a ‘redemptive message’ to the unsaved. They need to see that our lives are different from theirs. How do our lives become different? Jesus gave the analogy of a branch abiding in a vine,<sup>8</sup> and Peter said our faith is proven through trials.<sup>9</sup> Make no mistake about this, saints. The unsaved are watching to see how we handle the problems, challenges, and heartaches of life. They want to know if our faith is mere talk, or if it has substance.

A fruitful life<sup>10</sup> is the example that a misdirected and lost world needs. As we have seen, fruitfulness comes from abiding in the Vine. It is also the result of our enduring God’s chastening process.<sup>11</sup> How sad to see the ‘heroes’ of Hollywood, sports, television and music industries being looked up to. This certainly isn’t God’s design.

In a real sense, the greatest example we all need to follow is none other than Jesus Christ. His beautiful modeling of humble service<sup>12</sup> and suffering in the will of God<sup>13</sup> are the believer’s pattern to follow. Being an example means that we walk the talk,<sup>14</sup> giving no occasion to the devil to speak reproachfully.<sup>15</sup> Our speech, conduct, love, spirit, faith, and purity<sup>16</sup> are living proof that Jesus makes us new creatures.<sup>17</sup> Our example is important!

Dearly beloved, as we live a redeemed lifestyle,<sup>18</sup> our Lord is being preached in the most powerful way. Being an example may be tough at times and drive us to the limits of our patience.<sup>19</sup> We can be examples either of faith<sup>20</sup> or unbelief.<sup>21</sup> The key to exemplary living is “looking unto Jesus”!<sup>22</sup>

1-2 Cor 3:2,3; 2-2 Cor 3:18; 3-Rom 8:29; 4-Matt 5:14-16; 5-1 Tim 4:12;  
6-Col 3:22; 7-Eph 5:21-33; 8-John 15:1-8; 9-1 Peter 1:6-7; 10-Gal 5:22-23;  
11-Heb 12:5-11; 12-John 13:3-5,12-17; 13-1 Peter 2:21-24; 14-1 Cor 9:24-27;  
15-1 Tim 5:14b; 16-1 Tim 4:12; 17-2 Cor 5:17; 18-1 Peter 2:11-19; 19-James 5:10;  
20-Rom 4:18-21; 21-Heb 3:19; 22-Heb 12:2.

## DAY 31

### THE SHOULDERS OF JESUS

Legalism places the burden of responsibility upon the shoulders of men.<sup>1</sup> God never intended that we carry this heavy weight around. The government of God is to be placed upon the shoulders of Jesus Christ.<sup>2</sup> This was beautifully typified in the Old Testament picture of Aaron, the high priest, who bore the names of Israel upon his two shoulders.<sup>3</sup> Aaron typifies our precious Jesus, “the Apostle and High Priest of our confession”.<sup>4</sup>

Mankind is very weak and inept so God desires to dwell “between (our) shoulders” (i.e., in our midst) and grant us safety and protection.<sup>5</sup> (That verse is also translated, “And he shall dwell between His shoulders”, the idea being that safety and protection come from being centered in God. Either way you read it, God is our Source of security!) You see, the gospel of Jesus Christ lifts burdens. He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.<sup>6</sup> He has secured peace for us.<sup>7</sup> Just as Samson bore the doors of the gates of the city (the site where business and government transactions took place) upon his shoulders and carried them up to the top of the hill before Hebron,<sup>8</sup> Jesus Christ was taken away<sup>9</sup> to bear the sin of the world.<sup>10</sup>

Whenever we attempt to mix man’s effort with God’s grace through Jesus,<sup>11</sup> we get carried away from the truth of the gospel.<sup>12</sup> Our justification, or rightness before God, is only by faith in Christ,<sup>13</sup> not ritual<sup>14</sup> or works.<sup>15</sup> Just as God delivered Israel from the shackles of hard bondage in Egypt,<sup>16</sup> Jesus has come to set captives free.<sup>17</sup>

Pictured in Isaiah 10:27 is the beautiful truth of how God’s anointing upon and within the believer<sup>18</sup> destroys the yoke of bondage.<sup>19</sup> Jesus alone has the key of the house of David; He alone opens the door of salvation that can no one can shut.<sup>20</sup> The nails that fastened Him at Calvary<sup>21</sup> depict the surety of our salvation.

God’s grace is personified in Jesus.<sup>22</sup> He shouldered your sin,<sup>23</sup> that you would experience His glorious rest.<sup>24</sup>

1-Matt 23:4; 2-Isaiah 9:6; 3-Ex 28:12; 4-Heb 3:1; 5-Deut 33:12; 6-Isaiah 53:4a;  
7-Eph 2:14; 8-Judges 16:3; 9-Mark 15:1; 10-John 1:29; 11-John 1:17;  
12-Gal 2:13,14; 13-Gal 2:16; 14-Rom 2:28-29; 15-Eph 2:9; 16-Psalm 81:5,6;  
17-Isaiah 61:1; 18-1 John 2:20,27; 19-Gal 5:1; 20-Isaiah 22:22,23; 21-Luke 23:33;  
22-John 1:14; 23-2 Cor 5:21; 24-Matt 11:28.



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