



What Does The Bible Say About That?

1. Is there **life after death**?
2. Where do we go after we die?
3. Is there a real **Heaven or a Hell**?
4. Does absolute truth exist?
5. Is there only one way to get to Heaven?
6. Is the **Muslim Quran** the word of God?
7. Are **Ghosts real**?
8. Is there **Extraterrestrial life** in the universe?
9. Are angels or demons real?
10. Does the Bible explain **dinosaurs**?
11. Does the Bible predict the future?
12. Should women preach the Gospel?
13. Can you be a Christian and be **Gay**?
14. Is Jesus coming back to earth?

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Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport.

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Try reading this book just a little bit.

We promise you that you'll screw up and learn something about the Bible.

There are no rules about how to read this book.

You can jump around all over this book if you want.

You do not have to start at the beginning .

Give it a shot. You'll see.

Before you know it, a little "faith" will begin to grow in you.

You may not even know why. It just will.

You can learn Bible stuff!

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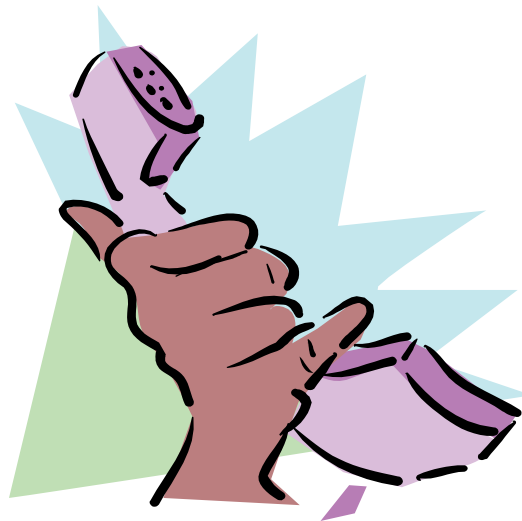
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What Does The Bible Say About That?

I know that the thought of reading the Bible comes with fear that you may fall into a coma, but take courage, and a cup of coffee.

Try asking God a question, then see if HE will answer you when you are reading this book.



It's for you, it's God.

1 Learn Some'um, Will Ya

II Timothy 2:15 *“Know what His Word says and means.”*

II Timothy 3:16 *“...it is useful to teach us what is true.”*

Proverbs 12:1 *“To learn you must want to be taught.”*

Proverbs 4:7
“Determination to be wise is the first step toward becoming wise.”

+++++

Some of the most educated people I know,
are some of the dumbest people I know.

Why?
Because to this point in time, they have refused to accept what a
young child can know. That Jesus Christ rose from the dead, and is
the Lord God and Savior of the world. just like the Bible clearly says.

Yet, with all their education, many very intelligent people still don't
know Jesus Christ. They just don't understand the clear truth.

The Bible says:
*“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of
the Holy One is understanding.”* Proverbs 9:10

Without the Lord, we all can be pretty dumb at times, can't we?
But when you come to Jesus, accept Him as your Lord, and give your
life to Him, then you'll see that everything comes into focus.
Everything else will make sense.

History,
why we are here now,
and prophecy for the future,..... all come together.

It will even be easy to understand the details of your daily life.

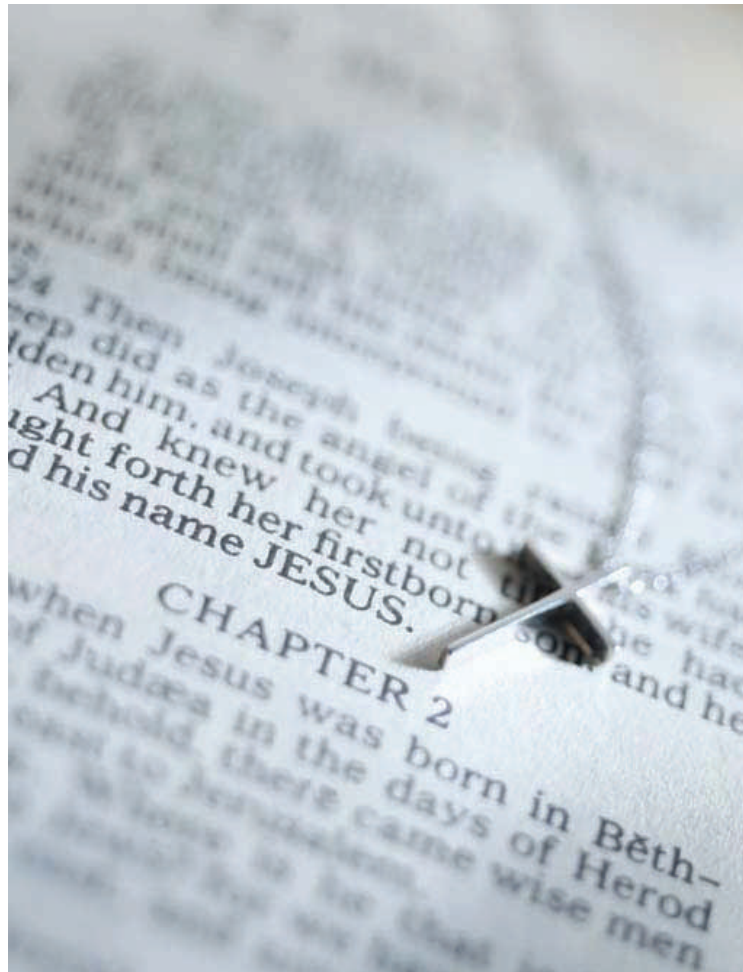
I encourage you today in telling you... *“to learn you must want to be
taught.” “Know what His Word says and means.”*
“It is useful to teach us what is true.”

*“Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he that comes to God
must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them who
diligently seek Him.”* Hebrews 11:6

So this is why we take time to read the Bible, to seek God, to gain faith, and oh yea, to LEARN SOMETHING from the Word of God

Right?

This is where it begins. Time spent with God, and His Word.



So why would you want to read the Bible?

- 1) To seek God.**
- 2) To gain faith.**
- 3) To learn something.**

2 So That You May Know

Luke 1:1-4

“Many have undertaken to write an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word.

Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught”

+++++

People talked!

*“they were handed down to us by those who,
from the first, were eyewitnesses”*

People in Jesus’ day were like people today. They loved to talk. In fact, we would expect that, with fewer distractions such as TV, computers, and video games, they probably talked even more than today.

The resurrection of Jesus was as shocking then as the events of 9/11, or the assassination of JFK is today.

The only difference would be that they did not have mass media to communicate what the eyewitnesses saw.

Incredible and disastrous events burn vivid details into the minds of those witnessing them. Consequently, the facts are not forgotten, and versions of the events can easily be compared.

Eventually, when they are recorded, as in the New Testament, the accuracy of the writings is easily verified.

People wrote!

“since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account”

We call the letter that Luke wrote, The Bible, or part of it.

If you want to debate how, or what part, the Holy Spirit “moved” men to write, so be it.

But what we have here is a letter from an eyewitness telling us verifiable information.

“Jesus’ disciples saw Him do many other miracles besides the ones written about in this book, but these are recorded so that you will believe that He is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that believing in Him you will have life” (John 20:30-31)

The eyewitnesses wrote what they saw,
so that you can know, and believe.
Your job?.....Talk about it!

++++
The top page of this devotion is taken from a book entitled
“Examine the Evidence” by Ralph Muncaster.
++++

3 Want To Understand?

I Corinthians 2: 10, 14 *“We know the things of God because God has sent His Spirit to tell us, and His Spirit searches out and shows us all of God's deepest secrets.....but the man who isn't a Christian can't understand and can't accept these thoughts from God, which the Holy Spirit teaches us. They sound foolish to him, because only those who have the Holy Spirit within them can understand what the Holy Spirit means. Others just can't take it in”*

James 1: 5-8 *“If you want to know what God wants you to do, ask Him, and He will gladly tell you, for He is always ready to give a bountiful supply of wisdom to all who ask Him, He will not resent it.*

When you ask Him be sure that you really expect Him to tell you, for a doubtful mind will be as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind, and every decision you then make will be uncertain, as you turn first this way, and then that. If you don't ask with faith, don't expect the Lord to give you any solid answer.”

I Corinthians 14: 33
“God is not the author of confusion, but of peace...”

++++

Did you notice the pattern above?
A promise with a condition attached.
If you want to understand God,
you must have the Holy Spirit within you.
Translation: You must be a believer to understand God.

A step of faith, even if only a little faith, can produce salvation, if that faith is in Jesus. Mark 9: 24 *“...Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.”*

If you give your heart and life to the resurrected Jesus Christ, and believe in Him, then the result will be that the Holy Spirit will come

to live forever inside of you, THEN you will be able to come to a full knowledge and understanding of God.

You can't do it the other way. Understand it all, then believe.

How about the next one.

Ask, and He will give wisdom.

He will answer.

But you must believe first.

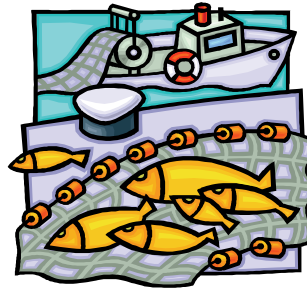
Not the other way around, getting all the answers, and then believe.

The story of John 21 is an interesting one. Read it.

It occurs after the resurrection.

It says the disciples went fishing, and caught nothing all night.

Then at dawn, a man on the shore yelled out to cast the net on the right side of the boat.



Even though they couldn't tell who the man was, they didn't argue, they just obeyed, and by doing so, they caught many fish. THEN they recognized that it was the Lord Jesus, and ended up having breakfast with Him.

Obedience, then intimate fellowship and knowledge of Him.

Get the picture?

Faithful obedience,
then success and spiritual understanding.

Want to understand?

It all starts with God, and ends with God.

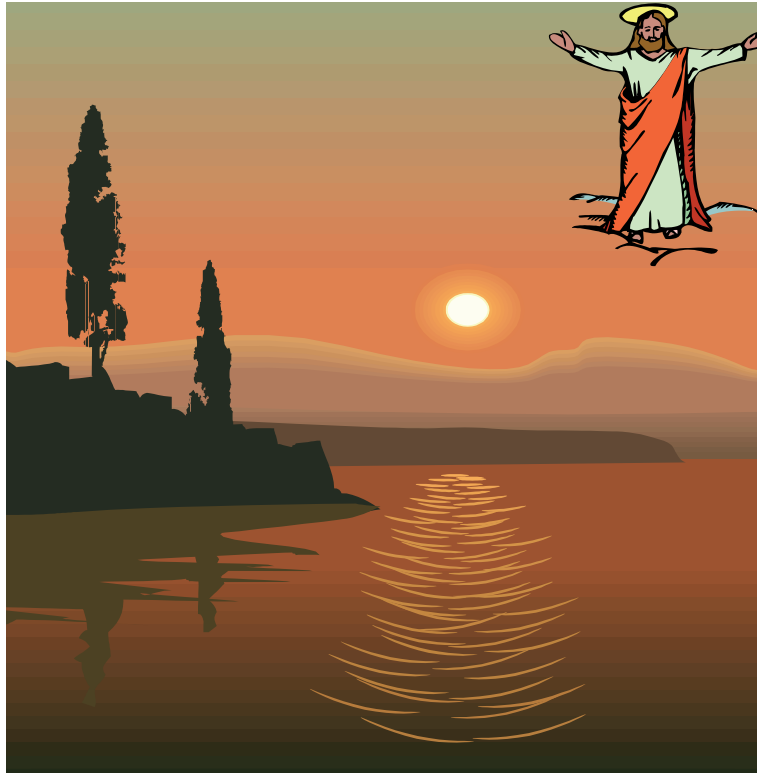
You will not understand a thing, until you come to grips with Him.

Take a believing step,
and watch God turn the light on your next step towards Him.

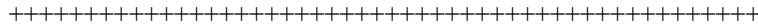
A step of faith,
and then more intimate knowledge revealed.

Try it.

Take a step towards Jesus and watch Him quiet your heart.



*Come to me
and I will give you rest.*
Matthew 11:28



4 Accept Each Other's Differences

Romans 14: 1, 3-4 “Give a warm welcome to any brother who wants to join you, even though his faith is weak. Don't criticize him for having different ideas from yours about what is right and wrong....Those who think it is all right to eat meat offered to idols must not look down on those who won't. And if you are one of those who won't, don't find fault with those who do. They are God's servants, not yours. Let Him tell them whether they are right or wrong. God is able to make them do as they should.”

Romans 14: 10, 12-13

*"You have no right to criticize your brother or look down on him.
Remember, each of us will stand personally before the Judgment Seat of
God.....Each of us will give an account of himself to God.
So don't criticize each other any more."*

+++++

If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, then we are connected.
The Bible tells us not to criticize one another.
As the "church" of God grows in numbers and diversity let us heed the
Word of God and accept each other's differences.

We come from every church denominational background and walk of life
imaginable. We were placed into the service of Jesus Christ by God's
providence, not by coincidence.

May we all focus on the ONE TRUE reason we are connected...Jesus.
It was Jesus who said He was the Way, the Truth, and the Life and that
no one was going to get into Heaven unless they believed in Him.
Not one of the ways to Heaven. THE way to God. Right? (John 14:6)

It seems that Jesus laid down the one major guideline on what was the
most important issue we should focus on.
Everything else comes in second.
Let us be "followers of the way" as early believers were called.

Let us put emphasis on what Jesus focused on....
Jesus Christ the Messiah who came to give life eternal.

That's why His gift of love at Calvary proves I Corinthians 13: 8, 13
*"All special gifts and powers from God will someday come to an end,
but love goes on forever. Someday prophecy will be done away with, and
speaking in tongues will cease, and having special knowledge will vanish
away. Of the three things that remain-faith, hope, and love-
the greatest of these is love."*

Love each other

5 God Keeps His Promises

II Samuel 7: 18,20-21,28 “ *O Lord God, why have you showered your blessings on such an insignificant person as I am?...What can I say? For you know what I am like. You are doing all these things just because you promised to and because you want to. How great you are, Lord God... For you are indeed God, and your words are truth, and you have promised me these good things, so do as you have promised.*”

Ephesians 1: 13-14

“Because of what Jesus did, all of you who heard the Gospel about how to be saved and trusted Christ were marked as belonging to Jesus by the Holy Spirit who long ago had been promised to all of us Christians.

His presence within us is God’s guarantee that God really will give us all that He promised, and the Holy Spirit’s seal upon us means that God has already purchased us and that He guarantees to bring us to Himself.”

Luke 1: 37 “*For every promise from God shall surely come true.*”

+++++

God keeps His promises.

Hebrews 6: 18 “*It is impossible for God to tell a lie.*”

In a world where people don’t keep their word, and where the daily news show another corporate CEO lying to hide their greed, isn’t it refreshing to read the Word of God and know God will keep His promise.

God can not lie. He will do as He has said.

Rejoice in this eternal guarantee.

It’s better than any warranty you can find on this planet.

God wants to remind you of His promises. You are on the winning side and are guaranteed victory. His promises can uplift you and keep you going when you are down. Nothing can keep God from completing His prophetic course in your life.

Know His promises, and you will be unstoppable. This is why we read the Bible. To hear God speak to us, learn His promises, and know He loves us. Then when the going gets rough we can have His assurance of victory. He did not promise an easy road, but He has promised eternal life with Him in Heaven.

Psalms 91: 4-5

“His faithful promises are your armor. Now you don’t need to be afraid of the dark any more, nor fear the dangers of the day....”

6 God's Involved In The Details

Matthew 10: 29-31

“ Not one sparrow can fall to the ground without your Father knowing it, and the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't worry. You are more valuable to Him than many sparrows.”

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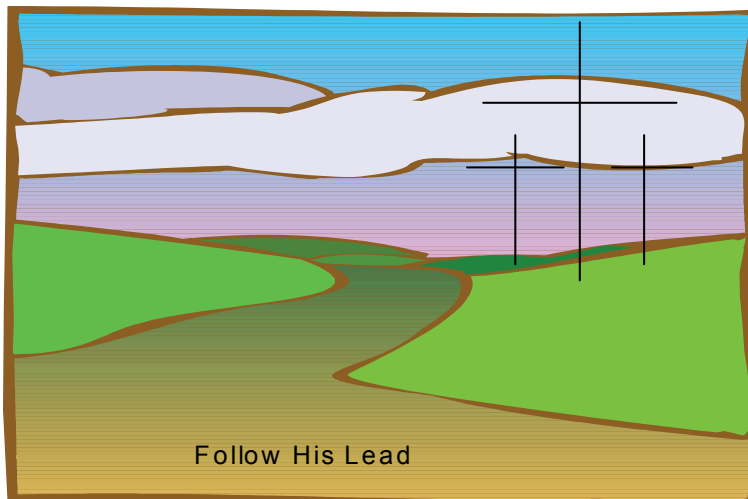
Some think this verse is a metaphor and they say “Yea, sure God knows us, but He really doesn't keep up with the sparrow population of our planet.”

May we disagree? Our human finite mind may have difficulty wrapping around this idea because it is so big. But the Bible says it as fact. So believe God.

Life is not full of coincidences.
God is involved in the details of your life.
He knows everything about you. He knows where you work.
He knows when you are driving down the road.
He knows when you are in Kroger buying milk.

“He is always thinking about you and watching everything that concerns you.” II Peter 5: 7

When you come to this insightful realization, then you may be ready to hear His whisper telling you to witness to the person in the next aisle at the Kroger. The Holy Spirit within you can direct you right now to your “mission of today”. Remember the Lord Jesus is involved in the smallest detail to today's assignment. Look for Him to lead you. Listen for His voice.



7 Planting, Watering, and Harvesting

Romans 10: 8-10 “ *For salvation comes from trusting Jesus Christ... For if you believe in your own heart that Jesus died according to the Scriptures and three days later rose from the dead as the prophets predicted, and tell others with your own mouth that Jesus Christ is your Lord, you will be saved...For it is by believing in his heart that a man becomes right with God, and with his mouth he tells others of his faith, confirming his salvation.* ”

II Timothy 1: 7-8

“For the Holy Spirit, God’s gift, does not want you to be afraid of people. He has given you power, love, and a sound mind. If you remember you have this inner power, you will never be afraid to tell others about Jesus Christ.”

I Corinthians 3: 6-7 Paul wrote “*My work was to plant the seed in your hearts, and Apollos’ work was to water it, but it was God who made the garden grow in your hearts.*”

Luke 10: 2 “*...for the harvest is so plentiful and the workers so few.*”

+++++

Remember why you share your faith. Your testimony of faith in Jesus can be used by God in the process of bringing someone to salvation. I know there are days here on this planet when you’re around folks who make it difficult to talk about the Lord. It actually makes sense that some folks focus on everything under the sun but Jesus Christ, since they don’t know Him.

I sometimes wonder how many live another day not knowing true peace of heart. Without knowing what is going to happen to them if they have an accident and die. It has to wear heavy on them at times. I understand the need to numb out that kind of chaos and fear. To try to stay distracted so as not to think about it.

But we have been given such a wonderful gift by God, and an unmatched privilege to share the Good News. What we do today can have an eternal impact in a person’s life.

Don’t forget that if you are a Christian then you should be involved in your own relational ministry as a cleverly disguised missionary.

Now spiritually we all have different jobs to do. Some of us plant the seed, some of us water it with tender care, and

some of us harvest, as we all try to assist people to find the Lord.

As we do the “day job” God has given us, let us not forget the “mission” God has given us also.

8 Fresh Mercy Each Morning

Psalms 136

“ His mercy continues forever.....His mercy continues forever....His mercy continues forever....His mercy continues forever....His mercy continues forever..... ”

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In this one Psalm God’s Word tells us the same statement 25 times. I guess that means this is an important point to remember, or maybe that we’re kind of dense, what do you think?

Name a sin...

Lying, stealing, lust, hatefulness, adultery, ...you name the sin.

When someone sins against us, aren’t we slow to forgive.

And it depends on the sin, whether we forgive or not.

When we really screw up, we don’t even want to forgive ourselves.

But God forgives.

God is merciful with loving kindness towards us.

Thank God for the forgiveness of salvation.

Thank Him that as Christians we have I John 1:9 which says:

“If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

There are 22 words in that verse

and we are only responsible for the first 5 of them.

The rest is up to God.

If you blew it yesterday remember *“His mercy continues forever”*

If you blow it today cheer up, in the morning you have another daily portion of His unending resource of forgiveness and mercy.

Start again and get back in the service of your Lord.

*Jesus loves you
and forgives you*

9 Know God

Let's do something different. Let's try a word study.
Have you ever done this?

The Hebrew word meaning "to know" is [dy
Written and read from right to left, the transliterated word is: yada
Phonetic spelling : yaw-dah
Used 947 times in the Old Testament. Here are a few.
Look at each CAPITALIZED word and it is the word yada- to know.

Genesis 4:1
"And Adam KNEW Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain"

Genesis 24:16 *"And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin,
neither had any man KNOWN her: and she went down to the well,
and filled her pitcher..."*

Whoa!.....this is not what we thought you were talking about.
Oh really? Have I got your attention?
Follow this word carefully.

Proverbs 3:6 *"In all thy ways ACKNOWLEDGE Him, and He shall
direct thy paths."*

Psalms 25:4 *"SHEW me thy ways, O LORD; TEACH me thy paths"*

Psalms 46:10 *"Be still, and KNOW that I am God: I will be exalted
among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth"*

Psalms 139:23 *"Search me, O God, and KNOW my heart: try me,
and KNOW my thoughts"*

All the same word in all these verses.- Yada.

+++++

What's all this mean?

This is God's use of this word.
Under the inspiration of God, these verses were written.
This is the Word of God. God is trying to explain to us what it means
to know Him.

Now follow this thought.

Sex was created by God, and IS a perfect Holy plan.
It is the most intimate way two become one flesh.

Yada is the term used in Scripture
for this most Holy and most intimate act.

This verb “to know” is also used in these other examples above to say
that we should know God, and that God knows us.
Strange use of the word, isn't it?

It means that knowing God is an action.
To know God is more than just having knowledge or information
about Him, it's intimate connection with Him.

To not know God is not just ignorance, it's rebellion,
it's refusing to get that close.

Psalms 82:5 “They **KNOW** not, neither will they **UNDERSTAND** ,
they walk on in darkness.....”

The message is clear. We are instructed to know God.
To get close to Him. Why do you think that when you got saved,
the Holy Spirit came to live inside you?

John 17: 11, 21-22 Jesus was praying and said “*that they may be one,
as we are....that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe
that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have
given them, that they may be one, even as we are one.*”

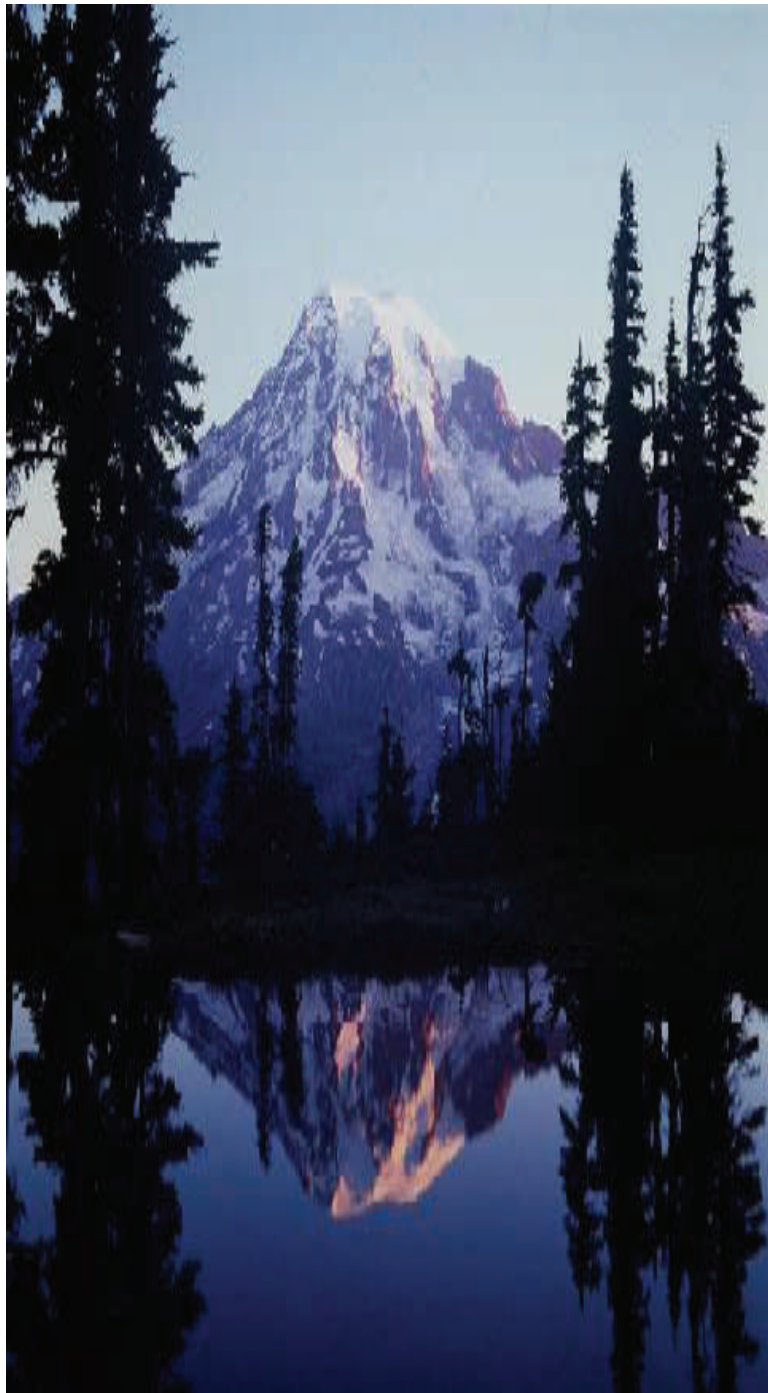
Galatians 3: 28 “*for ye are all one in Jesus Christ.*”

Wow! Wonderful isn't it?

Know God today. Connect with Him today.
We're only on this planet for a short period of time.
Serve Him, and make it count.
But also spend time with your Lord. Praise Him as you talk to Him.

Listen to His voice. The greatest moments we have here is the time
we spend deeply connected to Him in worship. You can do this every-
where, as well as a church service. Be willing to open your eyes and
heart as you drive down the road, sit at work, or eat a meal.
Your Lord wants to spend time with you.

Know God.



10 Number Your Days

Psalms 90: 12“ *Teach us to number our days and recognize how few they are, help us to spend them as we should*”

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How much time do you have left?
Many of you are so busy.
Is the Lord on your mind, as you do the things that you do?
We do our jobs as unto Him. Our families belong to Him.
Our free time belongs to Him. Our focus is on Him.

How many years do you have left to serve Jesus?
I hope we all can answer 50,60, 70 years, but what if your appointed day is scheduled for next month on Saturday night at 11:30 PM?
On that night, you are given the privilege of going home to see Jesus face to face. Think of it. One month left.
What are you going to do with it?

I forgot the name of someone at work and went looking for her.

I went to several places where I had seen her and asked:
“Do you know the lady who is always talking about Jesus?”
Every person I asked knew her.
They all knew her name by that description.

If someone came to your corporation and asked the same question, would you be the one identified?

Many of you are busy at what you’re being paid to do. Good job.
Do your job as unto the Lord, and as a witness for Him.

Many of you are involved in other areas of ministry like your church.
Good job. Keep it up. Stay faithful.

But I wonder about some of you who seem unmotivated and uninvolved in what the Lord is doing in these last days.
Time is running out.

Many will still accept Christ, if you take the time to introduce Him to them, even in the workplace.

You just have to build some friendships, get someone willing to discuss faith issues where you can share the Word of God, and remain respectful and sensitive.

Many can still be motivated to serve Jesus during these last days.
Will you help motivate and encourage other Christians?
Will you open your eyes to the opportunities God gives you today?
These are YOUR last days.

“Only one life, till soon be past.
Only what’s done for Christ will last”

Proverbs 10:27 “*Reverence for God adds hours to each day*”

11 Cleverly Disguised Missionaries

Colossians 4:5-6 “*Make the most of your chances to tell others the Good News. Be wise in all your contacts with them. Let your conversation be gracious as well as sensible, for then you will have the right answer for everyone.*”

II Timothy 2: 25

“*Be humble when you are trying to teach those who are mixed up concerning the truth. For if you talk meekly and courteously to them they are more likely, with God’s help, to turn away from their wrong ideas and believe what is true.*”

I Peter 3: 15 “*Quietly trust yourself to Christ your Lord and if anybody asks why you believe as you do, be ready to tell them, and do it in a gentle and respectful way.*”

II Timothy 2: 9 Paul wrote:

“*the Word of God is not chained, even though I am.*”

Romans 10: 17 “*So then faith comes by hearing the Word of God*”

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Memorize the Bible.

Quote the Word of God as you courteously share your faith.

The Bible is a living powerful book. Learn to use it.

Trying to be a witness at work is a challenge....But it can be done.

No matter what denominational background you hail from let us come together in the workplace as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.
Let us honor and worship Him with our lives and our jobs.

We are cleverly disguised missionaries.
Our mission field where the Lord has placed us is anywhere we work during the day or night. We cover the globe.



It is no easy field to work.
Sometimes corporate policies and the so called separation of church from the state makes living a witness for Jesus a tough and even risky thing to do.
Remember who is your God.



Remember no matter how sinfully dark it may seem around you at times, the light of your life will shine though any darkness if you rely on Jesus, the Word of God, and the power of the Holy Spirit within you.
Build friendships and relationships as you work and you will see the opportunities for relational ministry.
You can be the difference in someone's life today at work.

Be an employee of integrity and faith and show by example that you are an employee that is a hard worker. You're being paid to work a job so work hard with a good attitude as unto the Lord.

"Work hard and cheerfully at all you do, just as though you were working for the Lord and not merely for your boss." Colossians 3:23



You too can be a cleverly disguised missionary!

12 Death Is Your Servant

I Corinthians 3: 22 “...and life and even death are your servants.”

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Death is my servant? Say what?

Jesus said “*I am the Way, the Truth, and THE LIFE.*”

Believers in Him don't have to be afraid of death, but did you say death is my servant?

Yes. The Word of God says that. Now what does that mean?

Here's a thought.

Have you ever tried sharing your faith in Jesus, and tried quoting the Word of God to someone who isn't really interested?

Pick a group. Any group. Family, friends, work, a corporation, a city, a nation,....pick the group. Then watch what happens when someone within the group, and known to the group, dies unexpectedly. An accident. A murder. A heart attack.

For a while at least people will listen to scripture, and that's good, since “*faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.*”

Rom. 10:17

We speak life, peace, and faith by giving the Word. That's why we read, study, and memorize the Bible. It builds our faith. It gives us peace. It gives life.

Watch how people will stop to consider your words about Jesus, about Heaven, about hope, and about life,AFTER death.

Death has become your servant, to help you get folks to listen to God. Don't miss the opportunity when it is presented.

Death is the one thing people will talk about sooner,or later.

Jesus is waiting at that cross road of that discussion.

Final thought: “Death is the kind messenger that will fetch you to your Father's house.” Matthew Henry Commentary

13 Are You A Success?

Matthew 16: 26

“What profit is there if you gain the whole world- and lose your own soul? What can be compared with the value of eternal life?”

+++++

How do you measure success? What is truly important in life?
What do you think of when you see the following names?
John D Rockefeller, Bill Gates, Ted Turner, Sam Walton.
Money, right?

Did you know that the world’s three richest men are worth more than
the GDP of the world’s 25 poorest countries? Astonishing.
We value money and the ability to make it. Don’t we?

How about these names?
Hitler, Lenin, Stalin-- political power.
Mohammad Ali, Wilt Chamberlain, Michael Jordan--Athletic impact .
Marilyn Monroe, Elizabeth Taylor, Madonna--Celebrity Fame.

Now try this name. Billy Graham.
Different view of things, isn’t it?
Faith in Jesus. Obedience to Him.

Billy spent his life trying to point others to Heaven,
and to warn people of Hell.

When we mention your name,
what will come to mind to those who know you?
Money?
Power?
Fame?
Faith and Obedience?

You have a lot of responsibilities and priorities to family, friends,
neighbors, church, the job God has placed you in, and the mission
field He has given you to work.

But the Bible indicates that the first responsibility, and your number
one priority, is for you to know Jesus, and thereby receive the promise
of Heaven.

This comes first. Blow this, and nothing else matters.

I had a friend die recently. He used to drive a taxi cab. When I previously asked him about Jesus, and life after death, he said he believed in everything. Buddha, Allah, Jesus, Krishna, and reincarnation.

I tried to explain that Jesus said that He was THE way to heaven..... but I don't think I got through. Now every time I see that kind of cab go by, I think of him and wonder where he is out there in the afterlife. Do you ever think those kinds of thoughts? Wonder if the Bible is correct? Everything about Jesus and Heaven and Hell being real? If it is,then what?

I want you to think about your life.
*"What profit is there if you gain the whole world-
and lose your own soul?"*

How do you measure your success?



*A life lived in faith and obedience
to the Lord Jesus Christ
is a life of success.*

14 Quickly Carry Out The Task Assigned

John 9: 1- 4 *“As He was walking along, He saw a man blind from birth. 'Master', his disciples asked Him, 'why was this man born blind? Was it a result of his own sins or those of his parents?'*

'Neither', Jesus answered, 'but to demonstrate the power of God. All of us must quickly carry out the tasks assigned us by the one who sent me, for there is little time left before the night falls and all work comes to an end'.”

+++++

A man born blind. A very negative thing.
Notice the answer Jesus gave to why this negative thing happened.
1)“to demonstrate the power of God”
therefore.....He gives a command.....
2)“Quickly carry out the task assigned”, because time is running out.

Has God recently given you an opportunity to do something?
An assigned task that will demonstrate the power of God?

Let me rephrase.
Has a negative thing happened recently?
Or are you in the middle of a negative event?

It may be your perfectly timed opportunity to serve God.
Instead of asking God why, ...ask Him what.
Ask God, “What is my assigned task in this?”

15 Were They Lying?

Acts 1: 3
“During the forty days after His crucifixion He appeared to the apostles from time to time, actually alive, and proved to them in many ways that it was really He Himself they were seeing.”

Acts 2: 32 Luke wrote
“...we all are witnesses that Jesus rose from the dead.”

I Corinthians 15: 6
“After that He was seen by more than five hundred Christian brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive....”

Were they lying?

Read those verses again.carefully.
Either Jesus arose from the dead,
and therefore you have a choice to make,or they lied.

These men gave their lives for this testimony.
They said they saw Jesus after He arose from the dead, and they never
changed their minds, even at the point of death.

What would it take to make you a sold-out Jesus-preaching zealot?

Do you have to physically see Jesus, like Thomas did?
Or can you believe their report?

John 20:29

*"Then Jesus told Thomas, 'You believe because you have seen Me.
But blessed are those who haven't seen Me and believe anyway!'"*

The miracles Jesus did, including the biggest one of all, Him rising
from the dead, were witnessed, and written down, so that you would
believe.

John 20:30-31 *"Jesus' disciples saw Him do many other miracles
besides the ones told about in this book, but these are recorded so that
you will believe that He is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that
believing in Him you will have life."*

So do you believe, or not?
Do you believe what they said about Jesus rising from the dead?
Do you believe in this risen Savior?

If you do, then prove it,live like it.

Jesus is alive

16 Hear God's Voice

Isaiah 30: 21 *"And if you leave God's paths and go astray, you will hear a Voice behind you say, 'No, this is the way, walk here'."*

John 10: 27 Jesus said *"My sheep recognize my voice....."*

+++++

Do you recognize His voice?
Have you ever heard Him speak to you?
Have you ever been given a dream or vision from God?

Some get nervous concerning this subject, but I am convinced that God still speaks to us in many different ways.
In Luke 4 verse four, Jesus is responding to the Devil's temptation to prove that Jesus is the Son of God by turning a stone into bread.
But Jesus answers...
"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God."

Interesting verse.
It seems that listening, reading, knowing, obeying what God says for your spiritual life, is more important than eating to maintain physical life.

Can you honestly say you are more motivated to hear from God than you are to eat your next meal, or run the treadmill to maintain your physical body?

Some want to say that God only communicates to us by way of the written Bible. I would be careful about trying to put God in a box. Surely anything He whispers to us will never contradict His written word.
But I believe God does still speak to us directly if you are willing to listen.

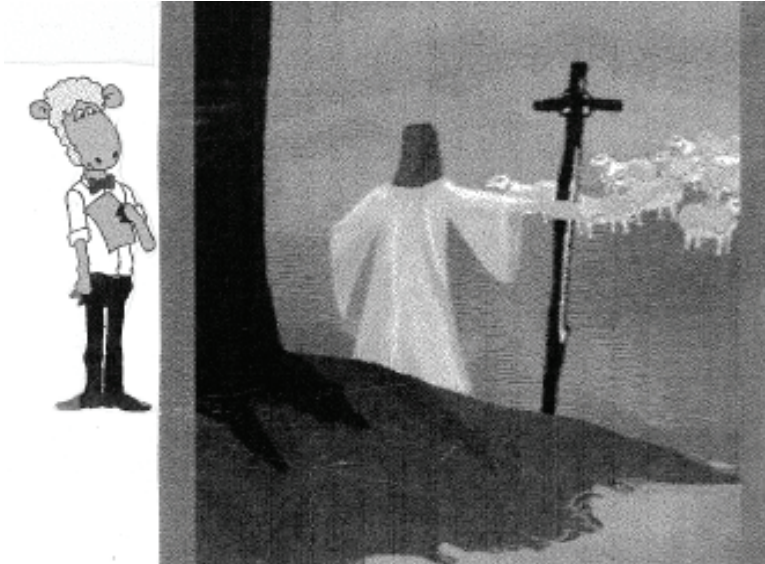
Need an answer from God? Need to hear from Him?
Try the following four ideas:

1)Submit to His Lordship. Cleanse your heart by confessing sin.
Ask Him to help you silence your own thoughts and desires.

2)Resist the enemy. Use the authority that Jesus has given you to silence the voice of the enemy.

3) Expect an answer. Ask God, then quietly yield yourself to Him and wait for Him to answer.

4) Allow God to speak to you in the way He chooses.
His written Word, that quiet inner voice, or maybe a vision or dream.
Trust Him to answer you.He will.



My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me. John 10:27



17 I Am Yahweh

Exodus 3:14 “God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM’, and He said ‘this you shall say to the sons of Israel, I AM has sent me to you’”

John 8:58 “Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I AM.’”

Matthew 14:27 As Jesus walked on the water out to the disciples he said “Be not afraid, I AM.”

Isaiah 44:6
“I am the first and the last, apart from me there is no God.”

Revelation 1:8 “I am the Alpha and Omega, says the Lord God, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”

Hebrews 13:8
“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”

+++++

The name of God, YHWH derived from the verb HAYAH, to be. Yahweh, Yah, YHWH is strictly speaking the only proper name for God. This is what God called Himself. Not Allah,..... Yahweh! It is also the most frequent name, occurring in the Old Testament 6,828 times. Yah is a shortened form that appears fifty times in the OT, often in the admonition “hallelu-Jah” (Lit:praise Jah). English Bibles represent the name Yhwh by the title “Lord”. Or written *JHVH*, is how they came up with *Je Ho Va H*, Jehovah.

The meaning of the name yhwh may best be summarized as “present to act in salvation”. The name specifies an immediacy, a presence. Central to the word is the verb form of “to be”, which points to a “being present”, and may in Israel's later history have come to mean: “I (and no other god) AM”. (Isa 41: 4, 43:10)

Philippians 2:11
“every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is LORD”.

Jesus is here. He is present. He is alive.
He is whom we serve, and worship.
Jesus can hear, can answer, and is involved in our present daily lives.

Look for Him today. Look for I AM. You will find.....He is.

18 Nothing Is Wasted

I Corinthians 15: 58 *“So, my dear brothers, since future victory is sure, be strong and steady, always abounding in the Lord's work, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever wasted as it would be if there were no resurrection”*

Galatians 6: 9 *“And let us not get tired of doing what is right, for after a while we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't get discouraged and give up”*

II Thessalonians 3: 13
“But ye, brethren, be not weary in well-doing.”

+++++

To be honest I have been discouraged and tired of the fight. There have been days when I wonder if I've made mistakes in how to best serve my Lord. Wondering if I've misread His leading, and wasted effort that He didn't ordain. I hear a whisper to give up. Think to myself to let the unbelievers go exactly where they are unwittingly choosing to go. Why should I care?

Then I remember who I'm really fighting. Not flesh and blood. I remember who I live daily for, and who I serve. I remember that He cares, and so do I. I don't want anyone to end up in Hell. I remember my armor. I remember to pick up my sword. I remember how He showed how much He cared at the cross. *“While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”* Romans 5:8

His Spirit in me. That is what makes the difference. More of Him, less of me.

Have you ever felt like me?
Then read the Scripture above again.

Nothing wasted. Don't give up.
Try again today by getting on your knees, and asking for His Spirit. His Power. His Directions. His Blessing.

Don't Give Up!

19 Know Who You Are

Romans 8: 16-17 “..we are the children of God, and if children,
then heirs- heirs of God”

Acts 1:8 “Ye shall be witnesses for me...”

I Corinthians 6:17

*“If you give yourself to the Lord,
you and Christ are joined together as one person.”*

II Corinthians 6:16

“For you are God's temple, the home of the Living God.”

+++++

I got an email from a friend with words of encouragement that lifted my heart. And the Lord gave me this devotional message.

In the old days when a representative of a noble came to see you, it was as if the noble was there, in person.

What was said was just as if it was the noble was speaking.

Whatever was done was as if the noble was doing it.

Example: Luke 7 of the healing of the Centurion's servant.

Jesus was listening to what the Centurion's representative was saying, and then Jesus said He had never seen such faith as the Centurion showed.The Centurion was not standing there.

His representative was.

Now think about it. We are heirs of God. We are His representatives.

When we speak His words, or share His thoughts with someone here today in reality, we speak for the Lord.

We show them Jesus in reality.

What you say and do today in the name of Jesus,

is just like He is speaking and doing it.

When you walk into a room,He walks into the room.

His presence there in reality.

We are His hands, His words, His smile, His warning....

We are His encouraging words, His caring thought.

People have a hard time “seeing” the invisible God.

But they can see you,

and God can touch their body, soul, and spirit through you.

Will you give Him yourself today?

Will you give yourself to Jesus to do what He wants done?

Let Him worry about the results.
Just obey Him and watch Him supernaturally work.

If you feel the tug of the Holy Spirit right now realize I am just a man writing a book, but the Lord Jesus, who is real, is speaking to you right now.



20 Worship God With Your Work

Genesis 2:15

“And the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to WORK it and to keep it.”

Exodus 34:21

“Six days thou shalt WORK, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest...”

Psalms 104:23

“Man goes forth unto his WORK and to his LABOUR until evening.”

Psalms 100:2 *“SERVE the Lord with gladness,
come before His presence with singing.”*

Psalms 2:11 *“SERVE the Lord with reverent fear...”*

Joshua 24:15 *“...choose ye this day whom ye will SERVE... ,
but as for me and my house, we will SERVE the Lord.”*

+++++

Let's do a Hebrew word study:

hdb[

This word is read from right to left.

Transliterated it is:

abodah

from the word db[transliterated... abad .

The words mean “labour, work, or service to God”.

All of the CAPITALIZED words in the verses above have the same Hebrew meaning.

Are you getting this?

The words for work and servng God..... are the same.

In fact, the one verse above sounds like your average WORSHIP service at church. Doesn't it?

Where do you serve the Lord with gladness and come before His presence with singing?

.....Now try these next verses on for size.....

Hebrews 12:28

“Since we have a kingdom nothing can destroy, let us please God by serving Him with thankful hearts and with holy fear and awe.”

I Peter 2:5

“You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood TO OFFER UP SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

When was the last time you killed a lamb, put it on a pile of rocks, and set it on fire?

I would think that most of you would answer never.
But who knows.

In the past, God did require animal sacrifices, ...but not today.
You don't have to sacrifice a lamb, because Jesus the Lamb of God was sacrificed once for all.

What He wants for us to do is to praise, worship, and serve Him.

Today He asks you to offer up spiritual sacrifices.
Well, what's that?

Here's a thought.

If an act is already defined as a sin in scripture, we are not going to include that in this discussion. But here's the point I want to make:
ANY act we do AS UNTO GOD could be seen by Him as an act of worship IF WE MEAN IT AS SO.

Is this too deep?
Let me try again.

Your work can be seen as serving God, if that is what you commit yourself to do. You don't have to go into full time Christian service, to serve God.

You are already in full time Christian service, at the job God has given you to do. Your job is a very special mission field.
You can do your job as unto God.

“Work hard and cheerfully at all you do, just as though you were working for the Lord and not merely for your boss.” Colossians 3:23

You can type a memo, clean a floor, carry a box, or hammer a nail,
.....all as an act of worship.

Get a hold of this idea.

It is God who notices what you do. He will know if you do your job as
unto Him as an act of worship.

You can do your job as an offering and sacrifice to serve God.

God will notice and it will please Him,
because you have done it as unto Him.

He is involved in the details of your life.

He knows when you are driving your car, shopping for food,
or serving and worshiping Him at work ...or at church.

Try this today.

Pick one action at work, and do it as an act of worship to God.

This is only going to be between you and God.

See what happens.



Thank God, MONDAY is here!

**Now I can go back to work and worship my Lord in
the mission field He has given me.**

21 Pass It On

II Corinthians 1: 3-4 *“....the Lord Jesus Christ, the source of every mercy, and the one who so wonderfully comforts and strengthens us in our hardships and trials. And why does He do this? So that when others are troubled, needing our sympathy and encouragement, we can pass on to them this same help and comfort God has given us.”*

+++++

Let me get this straight,
when others are troubled, needing sympathy and encouragement,
I am to give them comfort
by passing on the SAME HELP God gave me.

OK, I got it.
But wait a minute,
not to be sacrilegious,
but why don't they get their comfort
the SAME WAY that I did? Maybe they are!

The verse doesn't say HOW ...I.. GOT wonderfully comforted and strengthened during my hardship and trial.

It just says that Jesus is THE SOURCE of every mercy,
and is the one who comforts me.
Now I believe this verse.
I have experienced this comfort.
I know Jesus lives. I have felt His presence....

But when He comforted me,
I don't recall seeing Him, or meeting Him face to face.

What I do recall VISUALLY are those Christian brothers and sisters
in the Lord that I saw in REALITY, and those other Christians who
SPOKE words of encouragement to me, prayed for me,
and DID ACTIONS that uplifted me.

JESUS USED THEM to touch me.

He can do anything supernaturally by His Spirit,
with no one else involved, if He wants to,
or He can use US to comfort in His name.

Just two weeks ago, I was impressed to write a devotional email (#19) entitled "Know Who You Are".
I think I'm supposed to repeat this thought,
because God wants someone out there to really get this message.

To know when you do anything, or say anything in His name,
that you represent Him, here in reality.

Others can see the invisible God,when they see you.
He can do supernatural work THROUGH YOU if you are willing to
be used by Him.

Yes, He can do this without your help, if He wants to,
but maybe it's time for you to be that someone whom others find
themselves engrossed with the supernatural, invisible,
yet very real God,when you're around.

Will you let the Holy Spirit use you in that way today?

Been having a tough time lately?
Found Jesus in the middle of it?
Maybe it's time for you to pass it on.
You can do this, if you know who you are.

22 Extreme Makeovers by God

II Peter 3:10-11

"The day of the Lord is surely coming, as unexpectedly as a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise and the heavenly bodies will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it will be burned up. And so since everything around us is going to melt away, what holy, godly lives we should be living."

+++++

The earth and everything on it will be burned up.
Whoa! Did you get that?
You think watching extreme makeover on TV is something,
you ain't seen nothing yet.
God is going to do a serious redo.

Now let me throw a thought at you.
While here on the planet in a physical human body,
Jesus was a carpenter for the majority of His life.
Only three years in His "full time ministry".

In the movie “The Passion of the Christ”, Jesus is seen making a wooden table. Quite plausible.
I got to thinking about that scene in relation to this passage.

Jesus is going to make a new heaven and a new earth.
The old will burn up.
Yet He took time to be a carpenter, and make things out of wood.

He worked a job.
A job that wasn't solely a people oriented job, but rather a job working with a product.

I think He did this as an example to us.
Like He lived His whole life, as an example to us, by showing us how to live holy before God.

You know it may not last, but if you are doing your job as unto Him,
He is pleased because you are obedient.

As we have said before, worship Him in everything you do.

So whether you are making wooden tables, typing paper memos,
cleaning floors, or carrying a bunch of boxes,
all of these activities can be done as an act of obedience and worship to Jesus Christ our Lord.



23 Where Is Your Faith?

Luke 8: 22-25

“One day as he and his disciples were out in a boat, he suggested that they cross to the other side of the lake. On the way across he lay down for a nap, and while he was sleeping the wind began to rise.

A fierce storm developed that threatened to swamp them, and they were in real danger. They rushed over and woke him up, ' Master, Master, we are sinking!' they screamed. So he spoke to the storm: 'Quiet down', he said, and the wind and waves subsided and all was calm. Then he asked them, 'Where is your faith?' ”

+++++

Where is your faith?
In whom is your faith? ...Is it in God?

When we only see with our physical eyes, things might look like God must not know what's happening around here.
But God does know.
With their eyes, they see Him asleep.
But His followers haven't figured out yet, ...who He is.

Today many believers haven't figured out completely who He is.
He is aware and in control of everything.
Can you know God is in control, even when your ship is sinking?

Do you really believe Romans 8:28?
“All things work together for good to them who love God and are called according to His purpose?”

Great verse.
Easy when things are good.
Tough to live,when things are sinking.
God is in control of your life.
And God is in control of your death.

If it's your time to cross over, then it doesn't matter whether you're on a sinking ship, ...or hiding under your bed.

If it's not your time, because God has more work for you to do on this side of glory, then NOTHING can kill you,
...even if you're on a sinking ship.



In the *“valley of the shadow of death,
I will not be afraid for you are with me”* Psalms 23

Who is with me? ...God.
Jesus said,
“I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” Matt 28:20

So if He is with me, I'm not afraid of anything, including death.

“..perfect love casts out fear..” I John 4:18

Love of whom? ...God.
For He is always with us, has saved us,
and is in control of everything.

If you love Him, everything that happens WILL work together for good. You won't have to question that, even in the sinking times.

When you finally figure out this message, the *“peace of God that passes all understanding, will keep your heart and mind in Christ Jesus.”* Philippians 4: 7

Where is your faith?
Hopefully your faith rests in the person named Jesus Christ.

24 Wonderful Times of Refreshment

Acts 3:19 *“Now change your mind and attitude to God and turn to Him so He can cleanse away your sins, and send you wonderful times of refreshment from the presence of the Lord”*

+++++

Wonderful times of refreshment. Sounds like a coca-cola commercial. If only as believers we were as diligent in our worldwide marketing campaign for Jesus Christ, as the makers of a simple soft drink.

I have struggled as to how I should present my thoughts today.

Take this verse for example.

Other versions translate the beginning of it, *“Repent and be converted that your sins may be blotted out....”* Ok, I understand those terms.

Ask to have your sins forgiven, turn away from sin, and ask Jesus to save you. Believe He died and rose again. Salvation is given.

Good stuff.

I also believe I John 1:9 was written to Christians which says, *“If we confess our sins.....”*

So as a Christian, I need cleansing and forgiveness as well.

Ok, again that's good stuff.

But Acts 3:19 , the verse for today's devotion, was written as a prophecy to the Jewish nation to be fulfilled at the Second Coming of Christ.

How does it really apply to me today?

Let me ask you,

what do you think when you read Bible verses like this one?

Some folks only take notice when a verse applies to their life now.

Not a verse that was written specifically to the Jewish nation, but to me personally.

Not a verse of prophecy, but rather a present message for today.

Not a verse telling someone to get saved, and have their sins forgiven, because I'm already saved and forgiven.

I want a relevant verse for me.Today.

Are you somewhat like that?

Do you read the Bible like that?

You know, it's one thing to know the Bible,
it's another thing to fellowship with the God of the Bible.

Question: If God chooses to speak to you today by using a verse from the Old Testament that was written and applied to the Israelites 1500 years ago, do you believe He can speak directly to you today with that verse?

.....Yes?

We know that God will not give you a personal message that contradicts the rest of the Bible,
but I believe He can use any verse in the Bible,
to say something to us if He chooses.

The Bible says, "*All scripture ..is profitable...*" I Timothy 3:16
It is a living book (Hebrews 4:12).

Remember a previous message (#3) entitled "Want To Understand?". We pointed out that the Bible says we have to have the Holy Spirit inside of us to understand God. The Holy Spirit will guide us, and teach us about God. This is one of the ways God talks to us and shows us Himself.

I have been trying to get better at listening for Him to speak to me.
To calm my thoughts, ...to hear His.
Perhaps that's what Psalms 46:10 means when it says,
"Be still and know that I am God".

On occasion, I have asked God to give me an answer on an issue, and He can do this in many ways. One way is by using written scripture, just like our verse for today. Now, I think we're ready for Acts 3:19.

"Now change your attitude to God....."

and turn to Him so He can cleanse away your sins....."

and send you wonderful times of refreshment....."

from the presence of the Lord."

Will you pray this prayer with me:

"Lord, I will change my mind and attitude about you.
Cleanse me and send me those wonderful times of refreshment which I can feel when I'm in your presence. You are my God, my Savior, and my friend. Thank you for loving me so much. Amen".

25 Where Do YOU Work For Jesus?

Philippians 4:22

“And all the other Christians here want to be remembered especially those who work in Caesar's palace.”

+++++

Do you think it's tough to live for Jesus Christ where you work?
I've heard fellow believers say that to me.
I've said it on certain days when everything seems to be going wrong.
Some days it feels like I'm fighting the Devil himself.
But what else is new? It's always been like that.

Jesus said in John 15:18

*“If the world hates you,
you know that it hated me before it hated you.”*

We're workplace believers,
on the front lines of the Christian battle field.

Where would you think is the toughest place to be a Christian in New Testament times?

Let me give you a hint.

Where did they feed Christians to lions?

.....Rome.

Who was the Caesar at the time the Apostle Paul was in Rome?.

.....Nero. One of the most wicked Caesars of all time.

Yet the grace of God reached into the household of where Caesar lived, ...and saved souls.

There were workplace believers in Caesar's palace.

“Christians herewho work in Caesar's palace”

Beat that for a tough mission field.

Remember we serve the same God who was in control of all things in Rome,and now also where you work.

Where do You work for Jesus?

26 The Date Is Already Set

Psalms 146: 4

*“For every man must die. His breathing stops, life ends,
and in a moment all he planned for himself is ended.”*

+++++

Do you keep a calendar?

You know, where you write down things you are scheduled to do?

Next week, dinner with ‘What’s-his-nose’. Friday’s workshop.
Then Mom’s birthday visit at her house on the 3rd. Etc. Etc. Etc.

Now imagine that on next month’s schedule the calendar is completely
wiped clean from the 12th forward.
Nothing written at all.

And things that were written there, are now scratched through.

All the following months are the same way.
All blank with things you had written there scratched through..

The verse above says *“in a moment”* everything *“is ended”*.



Next Month’s Calendar

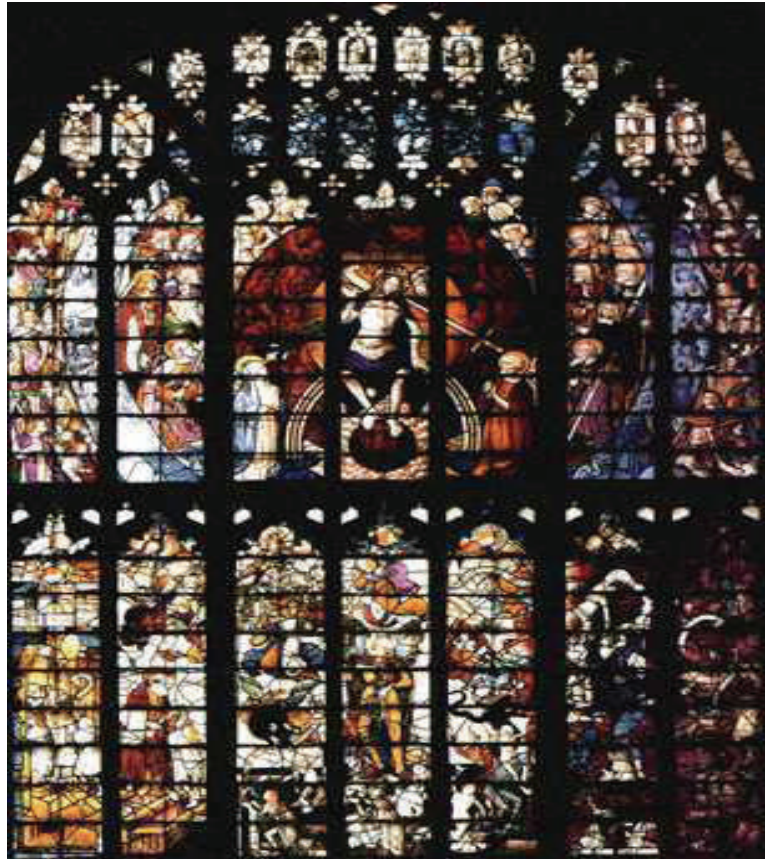
**Meeting:
Jesus Christ**

**Place:
His place**

**Time:
After the car accident**

Jesus our Lord,
knows exactly when this moment is scheduled on your calendar.

I wonder, are you living with that date in mind?



When you stand before the Lord,
it won't matter how much money you left behind,
or how in physical shape you were.

It won't matter that your retirement investments were solid.
It won't matter what house you lived in.
It won't matter whether you were well known, or even well liked.
It won't matter what kind of vehicle you owned.
It won't matter how cool you were.

What WILL matter is did you know Jesus personally as your Lord and
Savior, and did you live your life as a servant of His.
Did you impact others eternally for Christ?

How ya doing?

Remember, the date is already scheduled on your calendar to meet Him.

27 Praise God For His Plan

I feel God wants me to have you read a portion of His Word as the complete devotion for this week.
Please read this slowly, and preferably out loud, so that you can hear your own voice speaking these words.
This exercise is for someone out there today.

Ephesians 1: 9-14

“God has told us His secret reason for sending Jesus, a plan He decided on in mercy long ago; and this was His purpose: that when the time is ripe, He will gather us all together from wherever we are- in heaven or on earth- to be with Him in Christ, forever.

Moreover, because of what Jesus has done, we have become gifts to God that He delights in, for as part of God's sovereign plan, we were chosen from the beginning to be His, and all things happen just as He decided long ago. God's purpose in this was that we should praise God, and give glory to Him, for doing these mighty things for us, who were the first to trust in Christ. ”



He will gather us all together from wherever we are-- in Heaven or on earth-- to be with Him in Christ forever.

28 Marked As Belonging To Christ

Ephesians 1: 13

“And because of what Christ did, all you others too, who heard the Good News about how to be saved, and trusted Christ, were marked as belonging to Christ by the Holy Spirit, who long ago had been promised to all of us Christians.”



Several years ago, the Lord impressed upon me to do a crazy thing.

I believe He told me to put a Christian evangelistic message on the back of my car.

Crazy huh?.....Maybe.

Intense?.....Definitely.

Many have seen the bumper stickers and thanked me for them, or smiled and waved, or given me a thumbs up.

Some have told me later that they stood at the back of my car and said yes to Jesus Christ.

Some think I'm a fool.

Well maybe it's better to be a fool for Jesus,.....than just a fool.

Here is what the big bumper sticker says:

IT WILL ONLY TAKE A COUPLE SECONDS ONCE YOU'RE IN HELL FOR YOU TO BELIEVE AS STRONGLY AS I DO NOW THAT IT'S A REAL PLACE, BUT THEN IT'S TOO LATE. ARE YOU WILLING TO RISK THAT?

YOU MAY KNOW SOMEONE THERE WHO IS PRAYING THAT YOU WILL READ THIS SIGN AND SAY YES TO JESUS TODAY.

SAYING YES TO JESUS MEANS THAT YOU ARE ASKING HIM TO FORGIVE YOU AND TO COME INTO YOUR HEART AND LIFE. HE IS ALIVE AND CAN HEAR YOU. SAY YES TO HIM RIGHT NOW.

Something happened the day I put that on the back of my car. And what happened has continued for years.

It marked me as belonging to Christ in a real literal way. Being marked like that changed my driving habits completely.

When anyone is behind me, I am aware that they are reading it and looking at the message,and the driver. They are looking at how I drive, and listening to what music I'm playing, and listening to what I'm saying to the person next to me when the windows are down.

They notice how I'm dressed, and what I look like.

They notice how I act.Do I smile?

Do I let others go in front of me.
Do I drive aggressively, or show my frustration in traffic.
They noticeEverything.
And I've changed how I drive.
I've changed what I listen to, what I say, and how I act.
All because I marked myself as belonging to Christ.

I find that I don't mind traffic jams anymore,
because I'm always wondering who it is behind me reading the sign.

I wonder will the Holy Spirit use the bumper sticker to have an eternal
impact on them today.
Will God wake them up?

I think we all need a bumper sticker like that on our cars,
on our suitcases, our coats,and our lives.

Are you willing to be marked as belonging to Christ?
Will it make a difference in how you live?

29 Bath Regularly

Romans 12:2 *"Don't be conformed to this world,
but be transformed by renewing your mind.."*

Ephesians 5:26
"...washed with the bath of water, by means of the word."

+++++

Drive your car around this world, and it gets dirty, and needs washed.
Walk around for a few days, and you'll need a bath.
Live here, and you'll need to renew your mind,
or you'll start to conform to this world.

How do you renew your mind?
Answer: You give it a bath!

You wash your mind with the word.
Sounds simple, huh?

Why then,
do we only get hosed down on Sunday ?



We spend more time worrying about the physical, and neglect the spiritual. *Grab your Bible*
No wonder we conform to this world. *and Wash UP*
Folks, it's time to wash up.
Grab your Bible and read!

30 Cheer Up! You're a Slave.

Romans 6:22 “...now you are FREE from the power of sin and are SLAVES OF GOD, and the benefits to you include holiness and everlasting life.”

+++++

The world says that freedom means doing whatever you want.
Remember the last devotion on washing your mind?
We encouraged you not to be conformed to this world,
but to renew your mind, by washing it with the word.

The Devil is a liar,
and he tries to conform you to his thinking, ...and to the world.
But don't be confused.
You are either his slave, and a slave to sin,
Or,
you are a slave of Jesus Christ who offers forgiveness and eternal life.

WHAT RIGHT DO YOU HAVE TO YOUR LIFE?.....None.

As a Christian you were bought and paid for. (I Cor 6:20)
It's like trying to drive away in someone else's car.
You don't own it. You're just the chauffeur.
So drive it where and how the Master says.
He rewards well, and is easy to work for.
He controls all the roads and highways.
Owns all the bridges and tunnels.
And has memorized every map.

And He loves you more than you know.

He wants to give you everything.
So don't drive off in the opposite direction.

Come to Him, and bring Him everything, and your life will be good.

Philippians 4:6

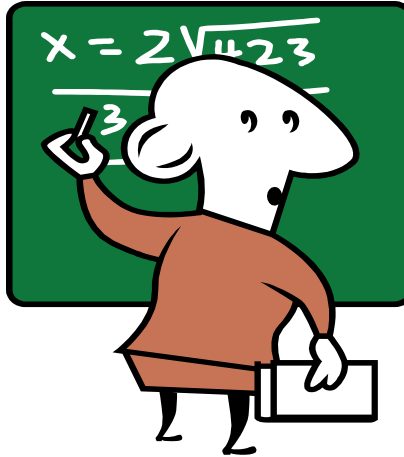
"...tell God your needs...if you do this you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will keep your thoughts and your hearts quiet and at rest as you trust in Jesus Christ"

31 How ya handling your division?

Luke 12:51-52

Jesus speaking:

"Do you think I have come to give peace to the earth? No! Rather, strife and division! From now on families will be split apart, three in favor of me, and two against,or perhaps the other way around".



Luke 14:26

Jesus speaking:

"Anyone who wants to be my follower must love me far more than he does his own father, mother, wife, children, brothers, or sisters—yes, more than his own life—otherwise he cannot be my disciple."

+++++

So how ya handling your division?

I'm not asking you about your math skills.

I want to know how you're dealing with the FACT that since you're a believer there WILL BE those who won't agree with you.

- 1) They will try to hinder what you do for the Lord.
- 2) They won't understand your desire to witness, to worship, to pray, and to study God's Word.
- 3) They won't understand why you give money away, why you pass out a tract to someone, or why you have a Jesus bumper sticker.
- 4) They won't understand your view of what's important in life, or in death.
- 5) Sometimes I believe they are used by the Devil to try to defeat you.

This is hard enough when it's a stranger, but when it's your husband?,
your wife?...your mom, or dad?
your best friend?
It gets really difficult doesn't it?

Do you realize that the popular ideal that says,
"We all just need to get along", is not even scriptural,
.....let alone realistic.

There will be no peace on this earth,
..... until Jesus comes back to reign on it.

We should therefore not be surprised when **we struggle**
with our families, our loved ones, our friends,
our in-laws, our out-laws, our employer, and every other sinner that
we know,including ourselves.

Now that doesn't mean you aren't admonished to love everyone,
and forgive those who transgress against you.

To try to live in peace.

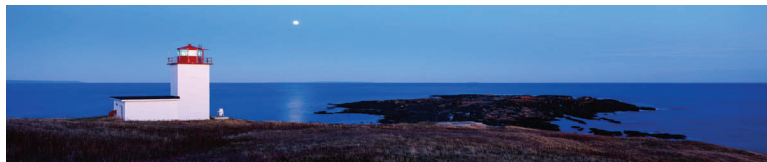
Not to mention that as believers we are to be "one" according to
Galatians 3:28. The Bible does tell us to do all of these things.

But there are things that you need to fight for.
There are things that you have to stand up against.
This is no easy battle that you're in.
Jesus Himself has pointed out that **there will be division.**
So get ready for it.
Daily.

Thank God, He has already given us the victory.
We may not understand
when it "seems" like we've lost a certain battle,
but God is in control,
and can see the end from the beginning.

He knows what He's doing!
So cheer up, and get back into the fight!

You can be gentle, you can be calm,and you can be unmovable!
Just stay faithful and trust your Lord!



32 Let Jesus Teach You.

Matthew 11: 27-30

“.....the Father is known only by the Son AND BY THOSE TO WHOM THE SON REVEALS HIM. Come to me and I will give you rest, all of you who work so hard beneath a heavy yoke. Wear my yoke for it fits perfectly, and LET ME TEACH YOU for I am gentle and humble and you shall find rest for your souls for I give you only light burdens.”

+++++

Do you want to get to know God?

Experience Him personally?

Experience Him daily?

Do you sometimes look around at the multitude of people who seem oblivious that there is an invisible God who is real?

Do you sometimes feel like you must be wrong about thinking that God is real? Like you're odd for believing in this "imaginary Friend"?

Jesus is the answer.

Jesus is alive.

His Spirit lives within you.

You are truly possessed, and your faith is what makes the difference.

Your faith in Jesus is what sets you apart from every other non-believing human being on the planet.

Jesus is here, now, and very real.

If you let Him, He will open your eyes,
so you can see when He moves behind the scenes.

He's in control of all the details.

Because He knew last year that you were going to be in this place on this moment, He caused x,y, and z to be placed into action, so that today something happened that you just asked Him about in prayer.

He is in control of all things and all details.

That may be hard to understand because the idea is so big.

But it's true.

“Every sparrow that falls”.

“The hairs on your head all numbered”.

Remember that previous devotion?

Will you let Him teach you?

Has He revealed Himself to you, so that you know God is there?

If what I am writing right now makes no sense to you,
you can experience what I am trying to describe.

Ask Jesus about this.
He can hear you, and He wants to teach you.

Let Him.



33 Time To Switch Yokes

Switch yokes?

What in the world are you saying?

First, before we give our scripture for this week's devotion, let's give a definition for the word yoke.

YOKE: a wooden gizmo that goes over a cow's head, so you can hook him up to the plow, and/or hook two cows up to work together.

This denotes a CONNECTION THAT IS NEEDED to make it possible for the cow to do a certain job.

(It also would then imply that effort must be applied by the cow to do a certain job.) Think about this. It isn't easy living for Jesus.

James talks about showing your faith by your works. James 2:18
It takes effort.

Matthew 11: 28-30

"Come to me and I will give you rest, ALL OF YOU WHO WORK SO HARD BENEATH A HEAVY YOKE. WEAR MY YOKE for it fits perfectly, and let me teach you for I am gentle and humble, and you shall find rest for your souls for I GIVE YOU ONLY LIGHT BURDENS."

Now we could go a lot of different directions with this verse concerning the heavy burden of sin that we are born into, and that we contend with in life (and on the job).

And Jesus is the answer to our sin problem.

But let's go down the path of work place ministry.....

Your job doesn't have to feel so heavy, and seem so hard,
IF you wear His yoke. What does that mean?

It means, if you STAY CONNECTED TO JESUS, YOU KEEP THE RIGHT PERSPECTIVE.

You're reminded that God is in control of everything.

Your struggle in this life is seen with a spiritual eternal view.

10,000 years from now, when as a believer in Jesus, you are sitting in the new Jerusalem with the Lord right there before your eyes, what will be important from this brief life time?

Can you see your life now in perspective through God's eyes?

When you bring all your worries to Him, and leave them at His feet knowing He is in control of all things,....what happens?

God tells us the answer in Philippians 4:7

“If you do this you will experience God’s peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will keep your thoughts and your heart quiet and at rest in Christ Jesus.”

When will God do this? Just in Heaven?

No.

He promises this peace NOW.

He promises this peace HERE.

God promises this peace while you in the middle of wearing His yoke.

Working and living on this planet.

In the middle of your struggles.

Peace that passes all understanding,

.....while you pull your plow,for Him.



34 Mundane Clouded Purpose

Isaiah 49: 4

“But I said, ‘I have labored to no purpose. I have spent my strength in vain for nothing. Yet, what is due me is in the Lord’s hand, and my reward is with my God.’”

+++++

Have you ever felt like you’re spending your life using your talent for nothing? Many of the jobs we do are mundane activities.

You do the same thing over and over again.

Crunch some numbers, measure this and that, pick up one thing, deliver another, clean one thing just to dirty up something else, buy, sell, build it, take it apart, and memos of previous memos, and on and on and on.....

They seem to have little eternal purpose.

Do you sometimes feel the same as the great prophet Isaiah?

Do you sometimes struggle with your purpose in life?

We all go through periods when our purpose seems to be clouded with the mundane. Just like Isaiah.

On the other hand, Isaiah didn’t stay in this place.

We see he knew the truth of his existence.

He could look past his present circumstance and know that his real reward and purpose would be revealed in eternity.

The real reason he is on this planet will be revealed in Heaven, and it is there that he would be rewarded.

He knew that God was just and fair,
so he placed his faith on this truth.

What truth?

That God is a fair and just God,

and will reward you for your faithfulness to the details He has called you to.....to the details HE has called you to.

“All things work together for good to those who love God and ARE CALLED according to HIS PURPOSE” Romans 8:28

God has you in you’re your place of work for His own reason.
Trust Him.



Remember your true purpose is serving God.

Obey what He tells you to do, and wait for Him to reward you for your faithfulness.



You are not responsible for all the results of your efforts. You are only responsible for your faithfulness.

Follow Him through the door He opens. Don't try to pry open a door He has shut.

He is not a God of confusion.
 He wants you to know the answers to life.
 During times of cloudiness, ask God for clarity, and keep on going.
 Remember the old adage, God can only steer a sailing ship.

When life appears to lack meaning and purpose, remember that if you devote your life to the purposes God has for you, the fruits of your labor will be manifested in due time.

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35 What Does God Think About?

Psalms 139: 17-18

“ How precious it is Lord to realize that you are thinking about me constantly. I can’t even count how many times a day your thoughts turn towards me. And when I waken in the morning, you are still thinking of me.”

+++++

A penny for your thoughts.
Ever have someone say that to you?
They want to know what you are thinking about.
Are you thinking something about them?
They want you to notice them and think, feel, and say good things to them showing that you’re not mad at them, and instead that you like them. We all need these positive strokes.

If you ask God, “What are you thinking about?”
The answer will probably be: YOU.
Because He loves you.

In this chaotic fast moving world, we seem almost invisible at times.
Like no one even notices us.
So many people, so much activity, so many extraneous details.
We’re like ants in an ant farm.
Who even notices that one ant right there?
We just happen to have a bunch of concrete buildings around us,
instead of dirt.

Even in the same book, Psalms 144: 3, David writes,
“O Lord, what is man that you would even notice him?”
We seem insignificant. And many people feel totally alone.
That no one knows them, or notices them, or cares about them

But God does care.
He loves you with an unfailing love.
He has made promises to you, and He will keep His Word.
He stays closer than a brother, and knows all about you.

God loves you

*“O Lord, you know everything about me...
You chart the path ahead of me, and tell me where to stop and rest.
Every moment you know where I am.. You both precede me and follow
me, and PLACE YOUR HAND OF BLESSING ON MY HEAD...
You saw me before I was born and scheduled each day of my life
before I began to breathe. Every day was recorded in your Book.”*
Psalms 139: 1,3,5,16.

Today, look to Him, and you will find Him.
You will sense His presence, if you take the time to notice.
Let Him bless you. He is right there.
Remember, He is thinking about you.

36 Armies of Heaven

Psalms 148: 2
“Praise the Lord, all His angels, all the armies of Heaven.”

+++++

Ever been told as a believer that you’re in the Lord’s army?
The old hymn that starts: “Onward Christian soldiers marching as to
war. With the cross of Jesus going on before.”

Whether you know it, or not,
Whether you like it, or not,
You are living on an active battlefield.
A spiritual battlefield.
The struggle is intense. The enemy is tough.
Attacks occur daily, under the plan of an evil, yet intelligent designer.
The names of the dead are logged in daily, by the thousands.
And even though we’ve already been promised the victory,
that does not mean that today’s fight is any less difficult, or important.

*“For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but
against persons without bodies—the evil rulers of the unseen world,
those mighty satanic beings and great evil princes of darkness who
rule this world, and against huge numbers of wicked spirits in the
spirit world.
So use every piece of God’s armor to resist the enemy whenever he
attacks, and when it is all over, you will be standing up.”(Eph.6:12)*

Since I’ve gotten involved as a Chaplain, I can tell you without a
doubt that we fight a real and tangible enemy.
Invisible,yet very active.

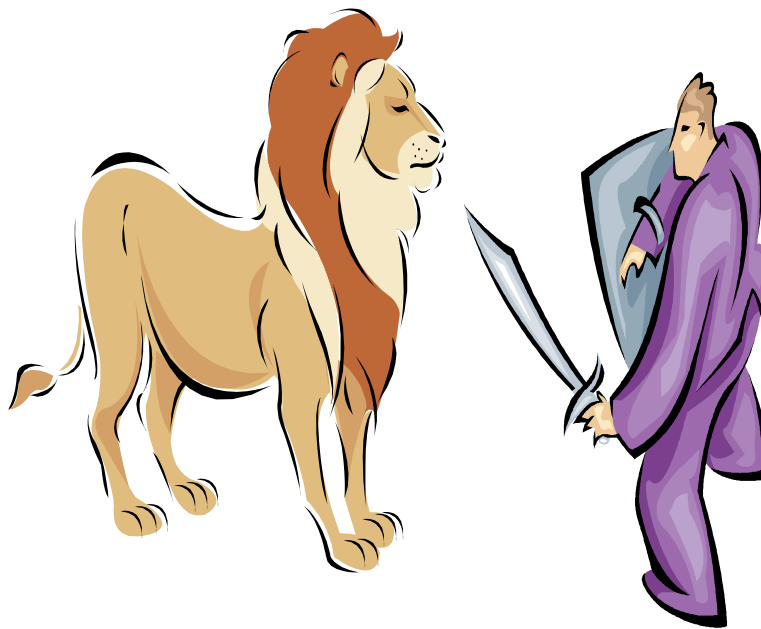
It is with a humble, yet courageous heart,
a prayerful dependent attitude,
and a sword drawn ready to use,
that I try my best to serve my King.

How about you?
Up for a fight?
Or do you want the easy way out?
To do nothing and be left alone.
Quiet and conformed to this world.
Making no eternal impact on the lives of those around you.

If you decide to actively serve Christ,you're in for a battle.
So get ready!

Perhaps in time you too will be given the opportunity to join that
army that's praising the Lord in Heaven.
Won't that be a great day?!

So,Soldier,.....Get up! Get ready! Get active!



37 Just Do It

II Timothy 4:2

“Preach the Word of God urgently at all times, whenever you get the chance, in season and out, when it is convenient and when it is not.”

+++++

Ever get the urge to say something about Jesus...
only to stop yourself thinking... “This isn’t a good time, I’ll wait.” ?

Well maybe you’re right, we do want our words to be “in season”,
but then again the Bible seems to clearly say that we should attempt to
share the Word of God *“URGENTLY AT ALL TIMES WHENEVER
YOU GET THE CHANCE.”*

It seems to say that we should try to do this whether it’s convenient,
or not. In season, or not. The right time, or not.

That does seem to “feel” right, does it?
But this is what God’s written word says.
Speak His word,even when it doesn’t feel right.

Are you willing to do that?

You don’t need to ask the Lord for His instruction on this matter.
He has stated His will on this issue quite plainly in print.
The question is, will you obey Him?

IF...you’ve memorized some scripture verses,
THEN..you can quote a verse when you get the chance.

Remember the Word of God is a Living Book that God uses to break
through to someone’s heart. Learn to use it.

The other easy thing to do
is to share how Jesus has impacted your life.

Maybe the reason we hesitate to tell someone how Jesus has totally
changed us,is because we haven’t been totally changed.

If you’re so conformed to this world, that they see no difference in
how you live, you’ll be hard pressed to prove that this Jesus you want
to talk about, is really a life and death issue for you..... Is it?

Why are we letting the Devil tell us that we can't discuss Jesus?
I'm sure he is the one who made the rule,
"Never talk about religion or politics because that's too personal."

Right.
It is personal.
The decision to accept Jesus Christ is personal.
So is going to Hell.

You may be scared of getting in trouble for proselytizing at work,
and we don't want to be foolish about this risk.

But there is a big difference
between offering to share your faith, and what Jesus means to you
with someone who seems interested in listening,
(verses)
repeatedly stepping across a line that's been drawn in the sand by
someone who has told you they are not interested.

If you want more information about the legal issues on this subject,
we wrote devotion #105 presented later in this book. That devotion is
entitled "Your Rights vs Their Rights" .

Scripture tells us to "*be smart as a serpent but harmless as a dove*".
Maybe we should add, courageous as a lion.

Don't be afraid to talk about Jesus Christ.
May the Lord bless you as you try to obey Him in this.



38 Called By Name

John 10: 3-4

“...the sheep hear His voice and come to Him, and He calls His own sheep BY NAME and leads them out. He walks ahead of them, and they follow Him, for they recognize His voice.”

+++++

Years ago I played a round of golf with Steve Spurrier in a best ball foursome in a benefits tournament.

(For those of you who don't know,
he's a famous football player and coach)

During the tournament Steve called me by name several times while a crowd was around taking pictures of him.

I was trying to help our foursome with a certain chip shot or putt.
I took pride that day with others hearing that Steve knew my name.
Like we were buds, or something.
Shallow, huh?
But it was exciting.

Imagine the feeling we should have to hear Jesus call us by name.
That He knows our name.
He knows us, individually.

Do you understand the importance of that?
The God of the universe who made planet Earth
by speaking it into existence,
is also speaking your name.

In a world of billions of people, He still knows you, ...personally.

He is aware of your needs and wants.
He knows your heart.
He knows your future.

We did a devotion once before on the importance of recognizing His voice and listening to Him. (# 16 “Hear God's Voice)

God does still speak to us,
if you're willing to stop,
and be still,
and know that He is God.

Look again at this verse.

“...the sheep hear His voice and COME TO HIM, and He calls His own sheep by name and LEADS THEM OUT. He walks ahead of them, and THEY FOLLOW HIM, for they recognize His voice.”

Get it? If you come to Him and follow Him, He will lead you out.

Out of where? Out of what?

Trouble. Pain. Death. Destruction.

Sadness. Sickness. Hopelessness.

Hell.

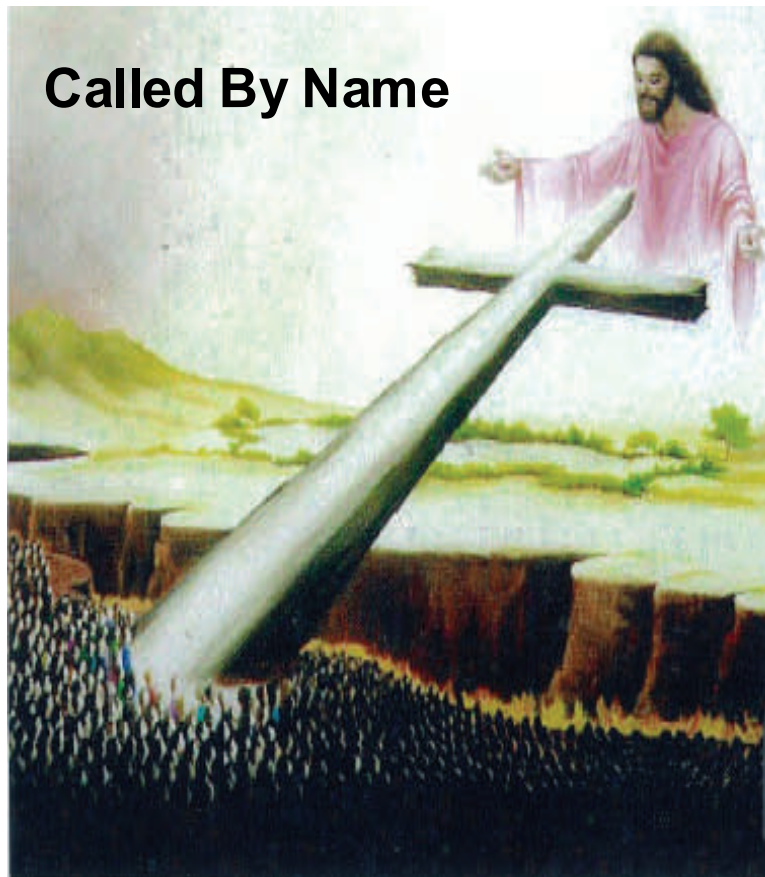
He calls you by name, and wants to lead you out of trouble, into life.

Eternal life with Him. Eternal life in Heaven.

Eternal life in peace, happiness, and safety.

Will you listen for His voice,

and come to Him, to follow where He leads?



39 Stay Faithful

Hebrews 11: 34-38

“...Some through their faith escaped death by the sword...

...others trusted God and were beaten to death...

...others were chained in dungeons, some died by stoning, and some by being sawed in two.....others were promised freedom if they would renounce their faith, then were killed with the sword....some hid in caves and were hungry and sick and ill-treated , too good for this world.”

+++++

If you're thinking that this is a strange or difficult passage, you're right. It is.

But stay with me on this one, and take the time to read this whole thing. I think God wants to say something to all of us.

In the age of the prosperity gospel where all believers should be millionaires, and where there's something wrong with you if you're poor, sick, lose a job, or die young. Maybe we should read our Bibles again.

How did the Bible describe the believers in Hebrews 11?

This is the famous faith chapter which lists all the biggies like: Moses, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Enoch, Jacob, Joseph, Rehab, David, Samson, Samuel, etc. They all did good.

That's why they're mentioned in Scripture.

And it's what THEY DID that's mentioned.

It says they trusted God and obeyed Him by doing the following:

- 1) Brought an offering
- 2) Built an ark
- 3) Left his home
- 4) Became a mother in old age
- 5) Offered up his son Isaac
- 6) Blessed Joseph's son's
- 7) Confidently spoke of God bringing the people out of Egypt
- 8) Hid Moses for three months
- 9) Refused to be treated as the grandson of the King
- 10) Left the land of Egypt unafraid of the King's anger
- 11) Brought the walls of Jericho down by marching around them.

And on and on.

Question: Why would God give us this list?..... Think about it.

Why would God give us this list?
A list of no big deal activities.
Even you could do them.

And that's the point.
All He requires is that you trust and obey Him.
Just do what He has told you to do.

Now, let's look at the end of THAT SAME CHAPTER where it has the strange passage above. It gives another list of things done.

Chained, beaten, sawed, stoned, . . .and killed.
Tough act to follow.

Or is it?

When I looked closely at both lists,
God gave me the following insight.
There's nothing that God required of any of the big names, that if He asked the same of me, that I couldn't do. Including the dying part.
The key is whether I trust Him, and am willing to obey what He says.

I can bring an offering. I can hammer a nail to build a boat.
I can leave my home and country, if He wants me to.
I can walk around a wall, and watch it fall down.
And if threatened for my belief in God, I can stand up for Him,
even if I lose my job, or lose my life.

Hebrews 11 is telling us that God wants you to trust and obey Him.
And that you can do whatever He tells you to do.

Your life should be a testimony of your faith in Jesus.
The activities that you DO define that testimony of faith.
And in death, you leave a witness of your faithfulness.
People who remember you, will remember how you lived,
and what you DID in obedience to Jesus Christ.

How will you be remembered?

Here is Webster's Dictionary definition of faith, and faithful.

Faith: Belief in God, or in the testimony about God, as recorded in the Scriptures.

Faithful: The trustworthy fulfillment of a performance of duty.

So we are to:
Believe in God, and be trustworthy
in the fulfillment of performing our duty.

Stay faithful,
and work to leave a witness that shows your faithfulness to Jesus.
And remember, you can do whatever He tells you to do.



***“Some through their faith escaped death
by the sword. ..Others were promised free-
dom if they would renounce their faith,
then were killed.”*** Hebrews 11:34,38

**Redefines the meaning of being faithful,
doesn't it?**

**Is there enough evidence to convict YOU
of being a believer? Or do you just blend in?**

40 Why Does God Ask Questions?

Genesis 3:8

“the Lord God came walking in the garden and they hid themselves among the trees, the Lord God called to Adam, “Where are you?””

Matthew 16: 15-17

“Then Jesus asked them, “Who do you think I am?” Simon Peter answered, “The Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” “God has blessed you Simon” Jesus said, “for my Father in heaven has personally revealed this to you, this is not from any human source.””

+++++

Do you really think that the all-knowing God
did not know where Adam was?

It's Adam, who didn't know where Adam was.

Adam had sinned, and that sin had separated him from God.
The question was asked for Adam's benefit, so that he could receive a
revelation from God.
Adam was the one who needed information and insight, not God.

How about the question Jesus asked?
Do you think Jesus knew the answer already?
Yes?..... So why did He ask it?

Because it gave Peter the opportunity to receive a revelation from
God. It gave him the chance to make a decision, to verbalize that
decision, and to come to a full understanding of that decision with the
help of the Lord.

Peter had to get a revelation from God to give the answer.
Peter also had to come to a decision about that revelation.
He showed the choice that he made,
by saying that Jesus was the Messiah.

All of us must come to this same point in time.
And a decision must be made.
So Jesus is still asking us that same question:
“Who do you think I am?”

Getting saved is something God starts.
He created the plan.

He starts the process of revelation.
He reveals Himself,... and brings us to a decision.
If we say yes, we get saved.

Now as believers, we're involved with God in bringing others to that decision point. Isn't that the reason why we witness?
We spend a lifetime being used by God,
to bring others to that decision.

So back to the question at hand.
Why does God ask questions?

Answer: to save us, to bring us to salvation, to bring us to Himself.

41 His Presence Makes The Difference

Exodus 33: 14-16

"And the Lord replied,

'I myself will go with you and give you success.'

For Moses had said,

"If you aren't going with us, don't let us move a step from this place.

If you don't go with us, who will ever know that I and my people have found favor with you? What else will distinguish us from all the other people upon the face of the earth?"

+++++

Here's the scene. Moses is with the people of Israel in the wilderness, and they have just sinned against God, by worshiping the golden calf.

>>>Side note:

Think about this. The Bible says the Israelites had just watched God use a pillar of fire to lead them to the Red Sea, and then watched as God parted that sea for them to cross on dry land.

You'd think that would have been enough to get their attention, and change them forever.

They got major proof of God's existence, then chose to sin any way. Seems pretty stupid, huh?

But before you get too tough on them remember, we have the completed written Word of God, the greatest proof of God today with clear details of EVERYTHING, yet many choose to ignore what Jesus did on the cross, and worship their own modern day golden calf.

We too as Christians know God, have seen Him work a miracle in our lives, and still we sin against Him.
Remember Christian, there's a reason why 1 John 1:9 was written to believers. It starts. "*If we confess our sins...*"

Now back to the story.

The Israelites sin, and Moses intercedes for them.
God spares their lives, and forgives them.
But hear the rest of this story.
Moses wants more than just to avoid the judgment that is deserved, he wants God to restore His presence, with all the benefit and comfort of that. Think about this.

We also are not only saved from death in Hell,
but can experience His presence right now, if we open our eyes.

We have the promise of His presence continuing forever in Heaven.
Imagine it, we will experience living with Jesus Christ, in Heaven.

We are entitled, through Christ, to everlasting happiness, which starts now, if we allow God to be active in our lives.

We can experience His presence now, because the Lord Jesus is real, alive, and present. Have you experienced Him?
Not just in salvation, but in active involvement in your life?
To be close to Jesus, no matter what circumstance you're in?

Moses knew that it would be better to be with God in the wilderness,
than without Him in the promise land.

In asking God to go with them, Moses also asks a good question.
What else will distinguish us from all of the other people on the face of the earth? We need to ask the same kind of question.

If we are to show the reality of the Lord Jesus in today's world,
the Lord must be actively involved in our daily lives.
We can't just attend a church service, or do good behavior.
Moral people can do that.

We must live the miracle. We must be willing to live a faithful life of service with experiences that only can be explained as a "God Thing".

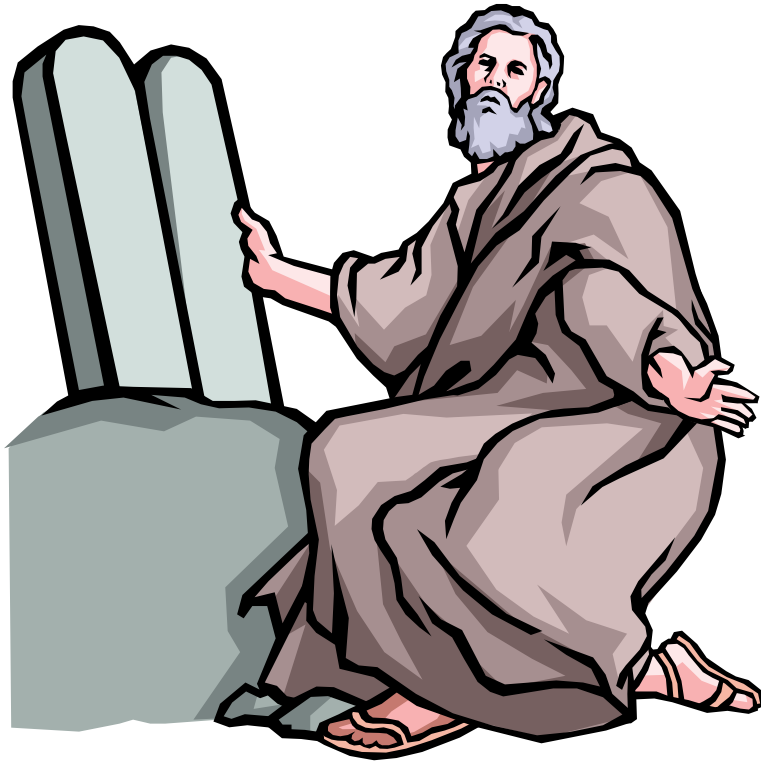
Have you had those kinds of experiences?
The ones that strengthen your faith, and make you tell the story with increased fervent commitment?

They come when you walk a daily life close to God, with Him leading you by signs that are clearer than pillars of fire.
Where you walk into situations where only He can part the waters.

Unless God is with us, nothing else will distinguish us from the rest of the world. Unless He fills us with His power, to point the world to a living Savior, we show them only religion.

Unless we can demonstrate how He is daily involved in our lives as we walk with Him, we grind out an ineffective existence.
Without His presence, our short life has little impact, and we sit alone at the bus stop to Heaven, just waiting for transport to the new neighborhood in glory.

Ask God to go with you, and then follow Him into the wilderness, or the promise land.
His presence makes the difference.



God will go with us.

42 Are You Happy?

Proverbs 16:20 *“God blesses those who obey Him,
happy is the man who puts his trust in God.”*

Psalms 144: 15
“Happy are those whose God is Jehovah.”

Romans 15: 13
“... God who gives you hope will keep you happy and full of peace..”

I Peter 1:8-9
“You love Jesus even though you have never seen Him, though not seeing Him, you trust Him, and even now you are happy with the inexpressible joy that comes from heaven itself. And your further reward for trusting him will be the salvation of your souls.”

+++++

I have to admit that there are days when I'm going to work,
and I'm not happy.....Is it just me?

I say to myself, “It doesn't matter. Just go do your job.”
But after reading what God has to say, maybe it does matter.

Jesus is interested and involved in our daily lives.
He loves us so much.
He wants to give us every good thing
including the feeling of happiness.
He doesn't want us discouraged, worried, or full of sadness.

Yes, we're normal human beings with a range of changeable emotions. We've been wonderfully created this way, by God. Sadness, concern, or anger are normal emotions to upsetting events. And we can't forget the natural consequences of being emotionally stressed, if we choose to live with un-confessed sin, or in direct rebellion to His commands. He does know what's best for us.

God wants you to live your life happy,
because you trust and obey Him.

God wants to give us so much.
The scripture says even earthy fathers would not give their child a stone, when bread is asked for. Luke 11:11

Moreover your Father in heaven wants to give good gifts to you.

Being happy is a gift that God can give you.
Have you asked Him for this?

We look forward to being in heaven.
We are told that the Lord Jesus is making a place for us.
He promised to return to get us, and take us where He is.
This produces hope.

We are promised so many things.
Happiness is just one of our inherited benefits that we can claim.
Believe what God says, and you'll be able to answer today's question.
Yes, I am happy.

Be Happy. Don't Worry.

43 The Plan. The Choice.

Luke 12: 1-8

“...hypocrisy CANNOT BE HIDDEN forever. It will become evident as yeast in dough.what you have whispered in the inner room shall be broadcast from the housetops for all to hear.

...Don't be afraid of those who want to murder you. They can only kill the body, they have no power over your souls,fear God who has the power to kill, and then cast into Hell.

...GOD KNOWS the number of hairs on your head...and I assure you of this, I, the Messiah, will publicly honor you in the presence of God's angels, if you PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGE ME here on earth as your friend.”

+++++

The Bible is a living book.
A living God can use the words of this book to tell you stuff.
And it's all important stuff.
Take the passage above.

Do you think the Holy Spirit moved the writer, Luke, to write these words in this specific order for a reason?

Yes,I think so. God is trying to tell us something.

The passage reads in this order:

- 1) You can not hide forever.
- 2) Fear God's judgment of Hell.
- 3) God knows you.
- 4) Acknowledge Jesus as Messiah.

Pretty good message, huh? Clear and easy to preach.

God already knows you very well

(so you can't hide at all, let alone forever),

and has made a Hell to avoid.

Like it or not. Speak about it or not.

Believe it or not.

It's a Biblical fact.

A Holy God is in control, and will judge and punish all sin, one way, or another.

Aren't you glad that sin payment can be paid for you?

Those who say yes and accept GOD'S WAY of payment, God's way of salvation, will gladly acknowledge the payer: ... Jesus the Messiah.

It's all very clear. There's no confusion in this message.

Do you presently fit into God's plan?

Are you going along with His order of things?

Then don't try to hide.

Publicly acknowledge Jesus as your Messiah.

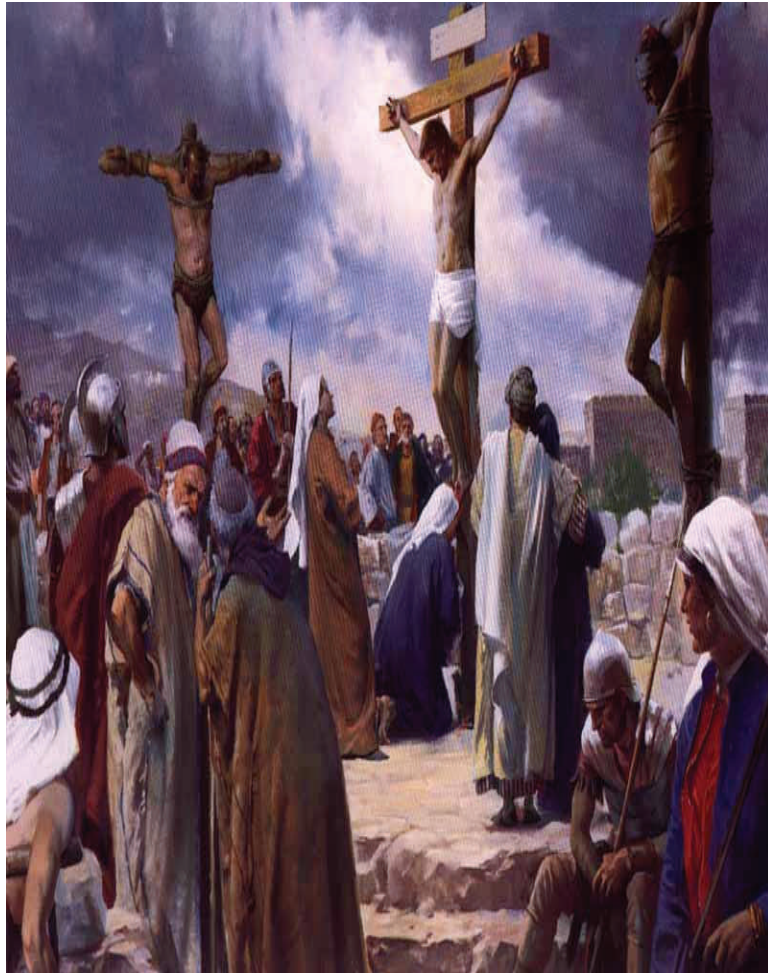
He said: *"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."*

The only way to Heaven. Not one of the ways. THE way.

God has made a way for you to pay for your sins, without having to go to Hell.

It is God's plan. He has made the choice very clear.

Choose Jesus Christ and you'll choose life.



**Will you publicly acknowledge
Jesus as your Messiah?**

44 God Will Make It So

Exodus 4: 10-12

“Moses pleaded, ‘O Lord, I’m just not a good speaker. I never have been, and I’m not now, even after you have spoken to me, for I have a speech impediment.’

‘Who makes mouths?’ Jehovah asked him. ‘Isn’t it I, the Lord? Who makes a man so that he can speak or not speak, see or not see, hear or not hear? Now go ahead and do as I tell you, for I will help you to speak well, and I will tell you what to say.’”

Acts 7: 20-22

“..Moses was born, a child of beauty. His parents hid him at home for three months, and when at last they could no longer keep him hidden, and had to abandon him, Pharaoh’s daughter found him and adopted him as her own son, and taught him all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he became a mighty prince, and later a great speaker.”

+++++

If God promises something, GOD WILL MAKE IT SO.

In Acts, the writer Luke, recounts what was said by Stephen, right before Stephen is stoned to death. Stephen goes through their history, telling a bunch of unbelieving Jews, what God has done from Abraham, right up to the point of the crucified Messiah. In his account, he tells the story of Moses, whom they all knew from the Torah.

From the words of Moses in Exodus, he writes what Moses said to Jehovah when standing before Him at the burning bush. Moses describes himself with a speech impediment. Luke also tells us what Jehovah said to him. He tells us what Jehovah promised him.

“.. I will help you to speak well.. “

God keeps His word.

Moses became a great orator, as one translation says.

A great speaker, because he obeyed God.

And we have the entire story with all the details, because God wanted us to read about it, and know that God is faithful and true.

What has God told you to do? What has He promised you?
Will you obey Him? He wants to keep His promises to you.
Trust Him.

“Now go ahead and do as I tell you..”

45 Avoid Useless Arguments

Titus 3: 9

“Don’t get involved in arguing over unanswerable questions and controversial theological ideas.”

I Corinthians 15: 1-4

“Let me remind you of what the Gospel really is, for it has not changed.... Christ died for our sins just as the Scriptures said He would, and that He was buried, and that three days afterwards He arose from the grave just as the prophets foretold.”

Romans 10:13

“Anyone who calls upon the name of the Lord Jesus will be saved.”

+++++

I get these kind of questions all the time.

- 1)“How can you say there is only one God, and then believe in the Trinity?”
- 2)“Why does God allow the rape of a little child?”
- 3)“Why do you think your religion is the only way to God?”
- 4)“The Bible is full of errors, how can you believe in it?”
- 5)“Why would God force people to believe in Him?”
- 6)“So you’re saying a pedophile can get saved at the end of his life and go to Heaven, while a kind Buddhist will get sent to Hell?”

People ask these questions as an excuse, or a defense, of why they won’t believe in Jesus. No matter what proof has been offered, they choose not to believe. It is a choice.

Remember the story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead?

The Bible says after that great miracle, many of the Jewish leaders who saw it, believed Jesus was the Messiah.

“..yet some did not and went their way to the Pharisees.” John 11:46.

They made a choice.

They would rather find a reason for not having to bend their knee.

They would rather argue.

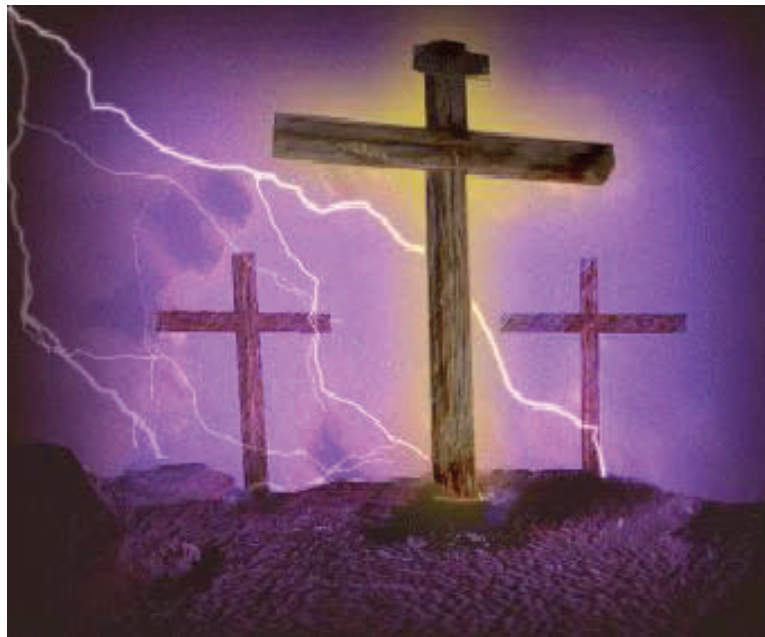
They would rather find a way to go on the offensive, and attack.

“When the ordinary people of Jerusalem heard of the arrival of Jesus, they flocked to see Him and also to see Lazarus—the man who had come back to life again. Then, the chief priests decided to kill Lazarus too, for it was because of him that many of the Jewish leaders had deserted and believed in Jesus as their Messiah.” John 12: 9-11

Amazing isn't it? They wanted to kill Lazarus.
They wanted to kill the proof, so they wouldn't have to believe.
Non-believers will do almost anything to keep their view of the world unchanged, and unchallenged.
Asking difficult questions is just one of the ways.

The answer is to continue to share the gospel,
and pray they choose life.
I Corinthians 2 is clear that non-believers will think the things of God are foolishness, and can not understand God,
.....until they say yes to Jesus.
When that choice is made, then the Holy Spirit is given,
to “lead into all truth”. Their eyes are finally opened.

Don't waste your time and breath trying to explain their unanswerable questions. Share the Gospel. Quote Scripture in kindness.
Be accepting. Be loving. And pray. God is at work.
It is He who pulls the hearts and minds towards the cross.



46 There Is No Shelf

Romans 11: 29 “*For God’s gifts and His call can never be withdrawn,
He will never go back on His promises.*”

+++++

The greatest lie the Devil has ever told Christians,
has to do with the “shelf” you may get placed on,
if you sin a certain sin, or a certain amount of sin.

Listen up.

God would not call you, and give you specific gifts,
if He didn’t want you to use them.
The Bible is clear that the call, and the gifts, can not be withdrawn.

So what does that mean?
It means that you need to call the Devil a liar.

It means that you need to get up off the canvas,
and get back into the fight.

If you’ve sinned, then ask God to forgive you, as I John 1:9 tells
believers to do. Then, believe God.

It is He who forgives.
It is He who strengthens your faith.
It is He who will place you back into His service.
Why?
Because He chooses to.

He doesn’t put any of His children on a shelf here on earth.

If you’re going to call yourself a child of God,
then live like the Devil,
then God may decide to bring you home,
so you won’t harm the cause of Christ.

But if He’s left you here, then He’s giving you another opportunity to
be in service for His kingdom.

Scripture says that “*His mercy endures forever*”

Don’t let the Devil rob you of your God-given earthly responsibility.
Don’t let the Devil take you out of the game.

We're playing for keeps.

Renew your commitment to Jesus Christ today, and get back into it.

Once God calls you, you are forever called.
Once God saves you and gives you gifts to serve Him,
you have those gifts forever. So use them.

You can start with sharing this devotion.
Maybe give it to a fellow believer who seems out of action.

Do you know anyone who has said that they are a Christian,
yet they seemed to have checked out of active Christian service?
Have you checked on them? Shown some interest in them?

Maybe they're not involved right now in things of the church because
they've just let things slip.
Maybe they are not serving the Lord for some other reason.

Maybe they screwed up,
or maybe they're mad at God because they think He screwed up.
Maybe it's just that the Devil has convinced them that God wants
them to stay off the playing field.

How about giving them this devotion?

Who knows, the Lord may work another miracle in their life, and you
may be the one whom the Lord uses to uplift a fellow believer.

Remember, you've been called and given gifts that are still in effect.
So get off your 'shelf', and serve your Lord.

Don't listen to the Devil.

There is no shelf.

Get back into the fight!

47 Give Em a Break

Matthew 12: 7

"I want you to be merciful more than I want your offerings"

+++++

Jesus said these words.

That's important.

Jesus was quoting the Scriptures. (Hosea 6:6 to be exact).

That's important.

Whatever Jesus has to say, should get our attention.

And think about it,

Jesus is showing us the importance of knowing the Bible.....Why?

Because it has meaning in what is happening in our lives today.

Jesus was quoting a verse of scripture that was hundreds of years old,
yet it had present implication to what was happening at the moment.

Pharisees seeing only the letter of the law, and nothing else.

Sounds like modern day legalism.

The letter of the law, and not the Spirit.

Let's use this idea. How can we use this verse today?

Come on, think about it.

How about when you drive your car?

God is saying He wants you to be merciful,

more than He wants your money.

We have a tough enough time giving Him our money.

But be merciful?

Especially when driving with all the idiots around town?

Are you kidding?

No,He's not.

Grace: getting what you don't deserve, such as salvation, life, Heaven.

Mercy: not getting what you do deserve, such as death and Hell.

Do you think you could NOT give "the idiots" what they deserve?

Can you be merciful, and give them a break?

This Scripture hits us where we live, doesn't it?

48 Your Shepherd Protects You

Luke 22: 31 Jesus said: "...*Satan HAS ASKED to have you, to sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you....*"

I Peter 5: 8 "...*the Devil, like a roaring lion, walks around seeking whom HE MAY devour*"

I Corinthians 10:13
"*God is faithful, who will NOT PERMIT you to be tempted beyond what you can handle*"

+++++

The Devil is not all powerful.
Jesus Christ is.

The Devil can't just do anything he wants.
He has to get permission from the ONE in charge.

Jesus is the one in charge.

Jesus controls all things.
Without Him nothing can continue to exist. That includes us.
Even the atoms that make up everything, are held together by His power. Without Him, we are sheep without a shepherd.
Ready to be devoured by the roaring lion.

With Him we can do all things. Children of the King.
With Him as our Shepherd, we are safe. We are protected.
Satan may be given permission to devour another,
but not one of God's own, whom God Himself is protecting.
Don't take yourself out from underneath that protection.

If He allows you to be sifted like wheat, then you will have less chaff.
Like Peter, you might be given the opportunity to be tested, and if you stumble, you can come back stronger to strengthen others, because God is a God of second chances.

Listen to that full verse from Luke 22:31. It says:
"*Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to have you, to sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith should not completely fail. So when you have repented and turned to me again, you will strengthen and build up the faith of your brothers.*"

Are you like me?

Do you have a lot less chaff today, then you did a couple decades ago? Are you now trying to strengthen the faith of others? Remember, God is faithful, and will not permit you to be tested beyond what you're able to handle.

And when you fail, remember our Lord is a Shepherd that goes after His sheep when they stray, to anoint our heads with oil, to heal us.

(Psalms 23)

Stay near the Shepherd, and you'll be safe in green pastures. You may hear the lion roar from the woods, but he's not permitted to get near you, while you are close to your Shepherd.

Your Shepherd protects you.



49 Do You Really Believe?

Luke 24: 32-41

(This story occurs after Jesus has risen from the grave and then appeared to two believers as they walked to the village of Emmaus.)

“They began telling each other how their hearts had felt strangely warm as Jesus talked with them and explained the Scriptures during the walk down the road. Within the hour they were on their way back to Jerusalem, where the eleven disciples and the other followers of Jesus greeted them with these words:

*‘The Lord has really risen! He appeared to Peter!’
Then the two from Emmaus told their story of how Jesus had appeared to them as they were walking along the road and how they had recognized Him as He was breaking the bread.
And just as they were telling about it, Jesus Himself was suddenly standing there among them, and greeted them.
BUT THE WHOLE GROUP WAS TERRIBLY FRIGHTENED,
THINKING THEY WERE SEEING A GHOST!*

*‘Why are you frightened?’ He asked.
‘Why do you doubt that it is really I?’
Look at my hands. Look at my feet. You can see that it is I, myself.
Touch me and make sure that I am not a ghost.
For ghosts don’t have bodies, as you see that I do.
As He spoke, He held out His hands for them to see, and showed them his feet. STILL THEY STOOD THERE UNDECIDED, filled with joy and doubt.”*

+++++

They said it like they believed it. Jesus is risen!
They talked about Him among themselves saying, He is alive!
But when Jesus actually showed up, they couldn’t believe it!

The experience of Jesus in reality scared them.
They stood there undecided.

True faith has to do with making a decision.
Not just saying the right religious words,
or following the church crowd,
but deciding that Jesus is the Lord God, and is alive. ...Today.

Do you believe He is alive?

You say you believe. You tell others about your faith.
You pray and ask for something to happen.
And when it does, when Jesus shows up, you can't believe it.

Does your statements of faith, drive your daily life?
Do your words of faith, match your actions, and reactions to life?
Do you expect Jesus to show up when you pray?

Will you step out in faith and believe,
or are you still undecided, and afraid of ghosts?

Jesus is alive. Live for Him. Live in His presence.

Experience the reality of Jesus!

50 What Lifts Your Heart?

John 20: 30-31

"Jesus' disciples saw Him do many other miracles besides the ones told about in this book, but these are recorded, SO THAT YOU WILL BELIEVE that He is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that believing in Him YOU WILL HAVE LIFE."

Romans 10:17

"So FAITH COMES FROM HEARING the Word of God."

+++++

Life. Faith. Hmmm..

I went months and years without picking up the Bible.
If I did think to pick it up, a whisper said:
"Bible study is like having to do high school homework"
"You're an adult now, you don't have to do that anymore."

But recently I've discovered, that when I start reading my copy of the Bible, something starts to happen.

My heart is lifted.

It doesn't matter what was just happening,
I find myself with a smile on my face as I read His word.

As I read, I feel pulled into the pages,
and I want to experience the touch of God.
It makes me want to seek Him, and to feel His presence.
And I sense His pleasure, as if He was smiling as well.
A warm feeling comes over me.

Do you remember last weeks verse? Luke 24:32.
The two men walking to Emmaus?

It says:

"They began telling each other how their hearts had felt strangely warm as Jesus talked with them and explained the Scriptures during the walk down the road."

I think there is something here that the Devil doesn't want us to know.
About what happens when we read and study the Word of God.

Philippians 4:6 says not to worry about anything,
but to tell God everything.

If we do this, then verse 7 says:

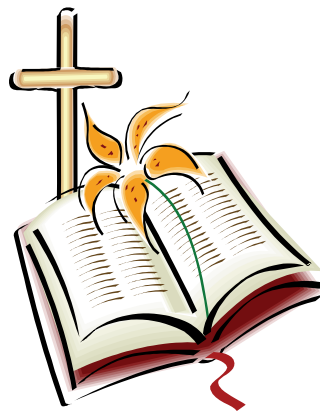
"You will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will keep your thoughts and your hearts quiet and at rest as you trust in Jesus Christ."

I don't know about you, but as for me. I need peace for my heart.
I need my thoughts to be quiet and at rest.
I need help not to worry.
And I want to feel that warmth of Him being close.

I need to read His Word,
and stay in His presence.

By reading the Word,
I get life,
and faith,
and peace,
and the warmth of Him.

Join me.
You will be thankful you did.



51 Do What You Are Told

Mark 14: 12-16

“On the first day of the Passover, the day the lambs were sacrificed, His disciples asked Jesus where He wanted to go to eat the traditional Passover supper. He sent two of them into Jerusalem to make the arrangements.

‘As you are walking along’, Jesus told them, ‘you will see a man coming towards you carrying a pot of water. Follow him. At the house he enters, tell the man in charge’: ‘Our Master sent us to see the room you have ready for us, where we will eat the Passover supper this evening’. ‘He will take you upstairs to a large room all set up. Prepare our supper there.’

So the two disciples went on ahead into the city and found everything as Jesus had said, and prepared the Passover.”

+++++

- 1)The Disciples
- 2)The man in charge of the house
- 3)The man carrying the pot of water

Each told to do something.

And the activity, and the obedience, were important enough to be mentioned in Scripture.

1)The Disciples.

If it had been you or I, we would have asked questions.

We would have wanted more specific information, before obeying and setting out on this trip.

We would have said to Jesus,

“Say, if you know where we’re going, why not just give us the address of the place, and we’ll find the place on our own?”

“Why do we have to follow this other guy?”

“Why do we have to do it this way?”

And the answer?

God involves each of us in one another’s lives.

We’re connected.

He does that for His own purpose, and to glorify Himself.

The disciples obeyed, and just did as they were told.



2)The man in charge of the house.

We aren't told how he knew to prepare the room for the Passover supper, or if he knew who was coming for dinner.

Did God give him a vision?

We don't know.

We're just told that he had the room ready, and that he apparently did as he was told.

Question:

Have you ever been given a glimpse of what you're supposed to do, and then wanted to wait until you got the rest of the details...

... before you obeyed?

Suggestion:

Just do as you're told, and leave the results to the Lord.

3)The man carrying the pot of water.

I like this guy the best, because his obedience is what I strive for.
He probably was told by the man in charge of the house, to go get
some water. Obeying him served the Lord.

Let me say that again.
Obeying the boss, in a seemingly insignificant activity, served God.

To obey the boss is part of the Lord's plan.
Through this man's humble obedience at work,
the Lord led others to the right place.

A small act , ...a big result.
No activity is too small in the eyes of the Lord.
If our King asks you to serve Him with a momentous calling such as ,
carrying a pot of water for your boss, will you do that, as unto God?

I want you to think about this devotion.
And do what you are told.

*Will you carry a pot of water
in service of the Lord?*



52 Flip A Coin

Proverbs 16:33

"We toss the coin, but it is the Lord who controls its decision."

+++++

Sounds crazy, huh?

The majority of the crowd would think you're nuts.

But this is Biblical.

I have a decision to make, and the Bible isn't giving me the answer.

I've asked in prayer for direction from the Lord,

but I still don't know what to do.

Do I accept the job, or not? Do I start this large project now, or wait?

Do I buy it, or not?

If I can't make up my mind on how to proceed,

I could just flip a quarter into the air,

because the Bible says that the Lord controls the result.

Do you believe that?

Do you really believe what the Bible says in this verse?

Or is the real question, "Will you humble yourself to God's control?"

Tossing a coin into the air, that feels a little out of control, doesn't it?

None of us like the idea that we're not in control.

We want to make our own decisions.

We want to be the master of our own fate.

But God.

It is He who controls our day.

Without His permission, we don't wake up in the morning.

It is He who controls our future.

Without Him, we don't make it to the evening.

It is He who wants to protect us, and lead us to green pastures.

Will you allow Him to do that?

God is involved in the details of your life.

He knows how many hairs are on your head.

He wants to give you wisdom.

On every decision that you make, He wants in on it.

And why not, since He knows exactly what tomorrow holds.

Jeremiah 29:11

"I know the plans I have for you. Plans to give you hope and a future."

Proverbs 3:6

"...in all your plans put God first, and He will direct your path.."

If you let Him, your life will be filled with peace of heart and mind.
You'll be right where you're supposed to be every moment.

So, not for luck, and not for chance,
but for God given direction sometimes, flip a coin...



53 A Lord Who Weeps With Us

John 11: 33-36 (the story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead)

*“When Jesus saw Mary weeping and the Jewish leaders wailing with her, He was moved and deeply troubled.
‘Where is he buried?’ He asked them.
They told Him, ‘Come and see’ and Jesus wept.
‘They were close friends.’ the Jewish leaders said.
‘See how much He loved him.’*

Romans 12:15

“Rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep.”

+++++

Jesus watched Mary and the Jewish leaders weeping,
and it caused Him to weep also.

Even though He knew He was about to raise Lazarus from the dead,
.....Jesus still wept.

Jesus was all man, and all God.
He had the power of life and death,
knew the future,
was sinless,
and had normal emotions.

And my point?

That when sadness comes, it is ok to cry,
even though your ultimate future is bright.

Knowing Heaven is your home,
should not short circuit the normal emotions you have.

Having the Holy Spirit living inside of you, scriptural promises of
happiness, and the peace of God available, does not mean you won't
have times of sorrow.

And the tears don't have to be caused by something sinful in your life.
Obedience can produce tears.

And when you cry,you move the heart of your Heavenly Father.

If you're a parent, I don't need to explain this any further.
You know exactly what I'm talking about.

Nothing moves your heart,
more than your little child crying in sadness.

Recently something happened in my life that broke my heart.
I had asked God for an answer, and I believe He gave it.
But the result caused me to cry for some time.

I believe my Lord cried with me.

God has a plan for my life, and I know He loves me very much.
Yet my heart was broken, and I wept.
Obedience to His will, doesn't mean there won't be tears.

Seems contrary to our devotion on being happy, doesn't it?
But it's not.
God our Father knows what is best for us. We don't.
We must follow Him, and do what He says,
even when we don't understand.
Sometimes there's sadness for the night, and joy in the morning.
Eventually everything will be clear, and the happiness will overflow,
and be unending.

Today's question is, will you obey God, with a broken heart?
Will you follow Him, if He leads you into a period of sadness?
When that happens, remember, Jesus is a Savior who weeps with us.



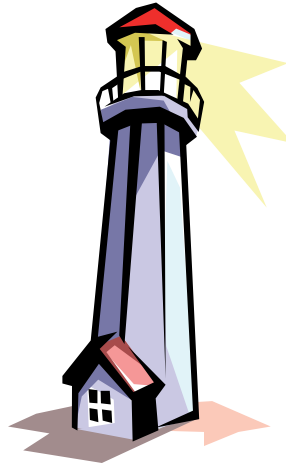
54 Be a Beacon

Philippians 2: 14-16

“In everything you do, stay away from complaining and arguing, so that no one can speak a word of blame against you.

You are to live clean, innocent lives as children of God in a dark world full of people who are crooked and stubborn.

Shine out among them like beacon lights, holding out to them the Word of Life.”



+++++

Shine as a beacon light in a dark world.
What a great metaphor.

Seeing lights in the darkness is a regular perk
if you are a flight attendant or a pilot for an airline.

I'm talking about flying at night time.
Flying at night is a wonderful experience.
To look down at all the lights.
It's beautiful.

When flying over a vast rural area, I sometimes wonder who it is
down there when I see one light on the ground below.

One house light in the middle of the darkness.
Why are they out there in the darkness alone?
No one around as far as the eye can see.
And the darker it is, the more that one light is so noticeable.
For miles and miles.

Is your life like that?
When placed into a very dark situation,
do you see that as your opportunity to shine?
To light up that environment with the light of your life?
To be noticed, because of your faith in Jesus?

Or do you need your battery recharged?

My suggestion is that you stay connected to the Light of the World.

(John 8:12)

You do that, and you'll always shine brightly.

You can be that one light someone can see from a long ways off.

You can be that someone, that another can't help but notice.

Be that chance for someone to find the bright and morning star.

"I, Jesus...am the bright and morning star." Revelation 22:16

*"You are the world's light....glowing in the night for all to see.
Don't hide your light. Let it shine for all, let your good deeds glow for
all to see, so that they will praise your Heavenly Father."* Matt 5:15



55 The Fear Of Death

Hebrews 2:14-15

“Since we, God’s children, are human beings—made of flesh and blood—Jesus became flesh and blood too, by being born in human form: for only as a human being could He die, and in dying, break the power of the devil, who had the power of death. Only in that way, could He deliver those who through fear of death have been living all their lives as slaves to constant dread.”

+++++

Fear of death. Slaves to constant dread.

Sounds depressing. Sounds scary.

Doesn't it?

No wonder people numb themselves with every addiction known to man. My question is, how do you go on living another day, without seeking permanent relief?

Why would you choose to stay in that place, instead of finding an answer?

Maybe it's because down deep inside, people know the answer, but would rather choose the above,then bend their knee.

Stubbornness, mixed with the fear.

I've heard many people say how much they fear death.

Afraid of not knowing what will happen.

It is something to fear, if you don't know Jesus.

The fear of death is a totally logical emotion.

Being a slave of constant dread, and living your whole life that way, is logical, because if Hell is real, then it's a place to fear.

Hell is also a place to avoid.

But God didn't make Hell for us.

The Bible says He made it for the devil, and his angels. (Matt 25:41)

We don't need to live in fear and dread of it.

That's not what the Lord wants for us.

He can take that fear away, and replace it with a peaceful assurance.

You can know what's going to happen.

That's why God gave us a book to tell us.

God doesn't want us to be afraid.

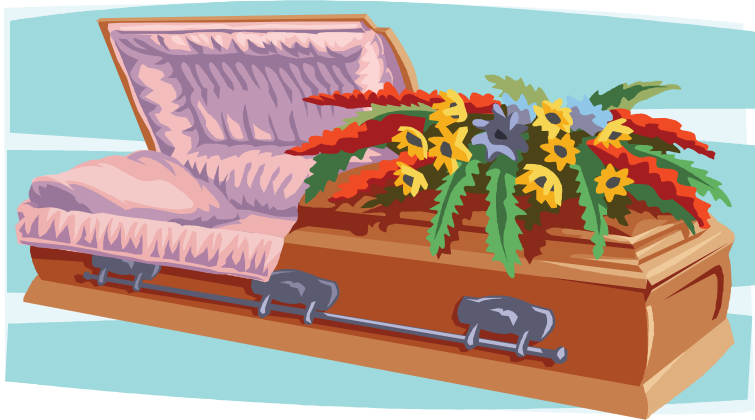
He doesn't want us worrying and dreading death.

It just takes turning away from your natural sinful inclination, and reaching out to Jesus.

At that moment, He makes everything better.

Everything changes in that heartbeat.

Then as you read His Word, you learn what death is, and you expectantly look forward to being with the Lord Jesus in Heaven. It becomes a hopeful thing. Wondering about all the wonderful things that you will see and experience. Death is a doorway to Jesus Christ,if you know Him as Savior.



Now, look at the scripture verse one more time.
*“in dying **BREAK THE POWER** of the devil who **HAD** the power of death. Only in that way could He **DELIVER** those...”*

The devil HAD (past tense) this power.
He doesn't have this power any longer.
Jesus broke the power of the devil. Jesus broke the power of death.
Jesus has DELIVERED us.

So why live with the fear of death any longer?
Why dread it your whole life?
Why do that, if there is an answer?
Maybe you can pose that question to someone this year.

If you get the chance this year to minister in the shadow of death.
Take it.
People are never more ready to talk about these issues,
then when someone passes away.
It is a God given moment for you to share God's love and provision of hope in Jesus.

May you help someone see through the cloud of fear,
to find the light of life and hope..... Only found in Jesus Christ.

56 Grace Abounds

Romans 5:20

"..where sin abounds, grace does much more abound."

+++++

This one has been rattling around in my head for weeks.
I think God put this idea there,
wanted me to think about it,
talk to Him about it,
and finally to listen for the answer from Him to give to you.
So here we go.

Can the Devil confuse a person and CAUSE them to miss salvation?

Think about your answer.

Can the Devil confuse someone to the point that they can't understand
the basis of salvation, or the fact that Jesus is the ONLY way to
Heaven; so they mistakenly choose to follow Buddha, or Mohammad
and the Koran, or someone other than Jesus Christ?

Is that person's God given freedom of choice some how diluted by the
wickedness of the Devil, and the lies the Devil tells?

With all the sin in the world,
all the apathy,
all the distracting confusion,
all the different religions,
and the visible which contradicts the invisible;
can a person just get confused, and choose incorrectly?

They grow up in a part of the world where everyone believes some-
thing different. India? China? Iran? Fuji? Atlanta?

Try this passage on for size: Romans 1:18-21

*"God will show His anger from Heaven against all sinful men
who PUSH AWAY THE TRUTH from them.*

*For the truth about God is known to them INSTINCTIVELY, GOD
HAS PUT THIS KNOWLEDGE IN THEIR HEARTS. Since earliest
times men have seen the earth and sky and all God made, and have
known of His existence and great eternal power.*

*So they will have no excuse when they stand before God at Judgment
Day. They knew about Him all right, but they wouldn't admit it,
or worship Him , or even thank Him for all His daily care."*

I believe scripture teaches that if anyone wants to find God,
God will send the details about Jesus Christ,
and the message of the cross.

A Bible in their language.
A missionary.
A neighbor.
A co-worker on the job site.
All they have to do, is respond to what they know inside.
And God does the rest.
He reveals Himself.

God is knocking at the heart door of every person on earth, asking
them to say yes. Anyone who wants to find the truth, can find it.
God will see to it, and make it easy.

God is stronger than the Devil.
God's plans are stronger than the Devil's plans.
God will succeed.
What God wants, will be accomplished.
God can overwhelmingly reveal His truth through any confusion that
the Devil presents.

Where sin abounds, grace abounds more.

And as long as you have breath in your body, it is never too late to
choose Christ. Whether you have lived your whole life believing
something else, there's still time.

As long as you are alive, you have another chance to choose.

People CHOOSE to push away the truth,
that God Himself is trying to reveal.

Or they choose to accept the Lord, and the free salvation He gives.

It's not about the Devil.
It's not about increasing confusion.

It's about God.
It's about your choice to say yes.



Say yes right now to the Lord Jesus Christ.
He is listening, and waiting for you to respond.

57 I Am THE Way

John 14: 6

*“Jesus told him, ‘I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.
No one can get to the Father except by means of me.’”*

In Galatians 1:6-7,

*(Paul rebukes some for saying there is another way to Heaven..)
“...a different way to Heaven, which really doesn't go to Heaven at all. For there is no other way than the one we showed you, you are being fooled by those who twist and change the truth concerning Christ.”*

Acts 4: 7-12

*“‘By what power, or by whose authority have you done this?’ the Council demanded. Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, ‘Honorable leaders and elders of our nation, if you mean the good deed done to the cripple, and how he was healed, let me clearly state to you, and to all the people of Israel, that it was done in the name and power of Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah, the man you crucified, but God raised back to life again. It is by His authority that this man stands here healed. For Jesus the Messiah is the one referred to in the Scriptures when they speak of a ‘stone discarded by the builders which became the cornerstone’. **THERE IS SALVATION IN NO ONE ELSE. Under all Heaven THERE IS NO OTHER NAME FOR MEN TO CALL UPON TO SAVE THEM.**”*

+++++

This STILL isn't a popular message,
and even more so in today's world.
But the fact is, it's Jesus. It's only Jesus.

So those who say it doesn't matter
if you call on Allah or Buddhaare mistaken.

People say “You need to be more accepting.”
“Don't be so derisive.” “It's not Christ like.” “Don't be so dogmatic.”
“You should be more loving of other's differences.”

My answer is, “Tell Jesus. He's the One who said He was THE way.”

Loving and accepting of people where they are,is Christ like.
Jesus loves sinners.

Afraid to speak the truth,is quite another thing.

Saying it doesn't matter what someone believes just as long as they are sincere, is not what the Bible says.
It's not your sincerity that gets you to Heaven. ...It's Jesus.

Jesus didn't say He was one of the ways. He said He was THE way.

An angel of light, who appeared to Mohammad 500 years LATER, started Islam by giving "another revelation" called the Qur'an.

This was in direct contradiction to what was written by John at the end of the Bible. He wrote: *"If anyone adds anything to what is written here, God shall add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone subtracts any words of this book of prophecy, God will take away his share in the Tree of Life, and in the Holy City just described."* Revelation 22:18-19

I'll let you decide which angel of light appeared to Mohammad, but I suggest you read II Corinthians 11:14 which says:
*"And don't be surprised,
Satan can change himself into an angel of light."*

You can argue all you want,
but Jesus Himself made your choice clear.
It is reinforced in divine concrete.
Jesus is the only way to Heaven.

You can love every one.
You should be accepting.
But be truthful.

Jesus said, He was THE truth,
share Him.

We still serve with the same
power and authority as Peter.
The authority rests with
Jesus of Nazareth, who is the
Messiah.

Serve Him with confidence.
Love in His name.
Encourage, rebuke, and
challenge with His authority.

Share Jesus who is the only
One who gives life.



58 Settled In Your Mind

Psalms 112: 1, 6-9

“ Praise the Lord. For all who fear God and trust in Him are blessed beyond expression.

Such a man will not be overthrown by evil circumstances.

God’s constant care of him will make a deep impression on all who see it.

He does not fear bad news, nor live in dread of what may happen.

For he is SETTLED IN HIS MIND that Jehovah will take care of him.

That is why he is not afraid, but can calmly face his foes.

His deeds will never be forgotten... ”

+++++

Manic. Panic. Worried. Addicted. Depressed. Upset.

Whew.... What a list of things we carry.

What a list of things on our minds.

Now try on the scripture for today. Settled in your mind.....How?

“fear God and trust in Him (and you will be) blessed beyond expression” (settled because you know) “Jehovah will take care of you.”

Ok, easy enough. Trust Him because He will take care of me.

Got it..... But don’t miss the next part.

“Such a man will not be overthrown by evil circumstances.

God’s constant care of him..”

Are you seeing this? God has offered proof. God has shown up already, and you know it. That’s why you can be settled in your mind.

Your trust is not a “grab bag” experience of faith.

Not knowing who He is, or what He can do, or has done.

God HAS protected you already. Time and again.

He HAS taken CONSTANT CARE OF YOU.

He has not allowed evil circumstances to overthrow you.

So He wants you to remember what He has done already, and what He does every day.

You woke up this morning didn’t you?

His constant care of you still has you breathing.

Tough day scheduled? Ok. Walk with Him.

Don’t look down at the waves,

keep walking on the water, with your eyes fixed on Him.

It is this man who "...will make a deep impression on all who see it".
This includes your own faith.
Watching Him take care of you should strengthen your faith.

Blessed beyond expression. A peace that is beyond explanation.
"..God's peace which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will keep your thoughts and your hearts quiet and at rest as you trust in Jesus." Philippians 4:6

Want to have that settled mind?
Trust in your God, and remember what He has done for you.
You can be fearless, and unafraid of bad news.
You can calmly face your foes.
External, and emotional.

59 The Spirit World

Colossians 1: 16 *"Christ Himself is the Creator who made everything in heaven and earth, the things we can see and the things we can't, THE SPIRIT WORLD with its kings and kingdoms, its rulers and authorities, all were made by Christ, for His own use and glory."*

Ephesians 6: 12-13 *"For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against persons without bodies—the evil rulers of the unseen world, those mighty satanic beings and great evil princes of darkness who rule this world, and against huge numbers of wicked spirits in THE SPIRIT WORLD. So use every piece of God's armor to resist the enemy whenever he attacks, and when it is all over, you will be standing up."*

+++++

Question:
Does the ruler of your region know your name?

If you're asking "What ruler?", then you didn't read the scripture for this week. Try again. Then think about my question.

What's your answer?..... Hmmm?
Yes. No. I don't know.

If you are an active Christian who is trying to introduce others to your Lord Jesus, then you already should know, that the ruler of your region definitely knows your name.

This ruler has a mission as well as you.
His mission is to stop you.
He will try anything to get you distracted, or defeated.
He'll use any means to get you off track.
Negative things, and positive things.

We live within an active spirit world that has increasing involvement with us. Once you begin to notice them, or their influence, your vision and perception changes.

The Bible tells us all about how Lucifer fell and took a third of Heaven with him. Someone has said:
"That means there are twice as many good angels as bad!"

I like that. It's cute.
But there's nothing cute about the warfare that is going on, and the plans made and carried out within this spirit world.

Past devotional email number 36 "Armies Of Heaven",
we talk about this fight.
Past devotional email number 48 "Your Shepherd Protects You",
we go over how you are protected by Jesus Christ.

Am I on a theme?
Yea, I am.
I want you to become aware of the spirit world.
And I want your actions to make them aware of you.

I want you to get active in the work of the Lord, and in the power of His name, start kicking butt and taking names.

Is that clear enough for you?

Send the ruler of your region a message.
"I'm here. I'm active, and I'm not afraid,
because I know who I am in Jesus. You can't stop me.
And if you want to know my name, it is spelled _____."



60 The Blind Man

John 9: 25, 31-33, 38

(This passage is about a man who had been blind since birth, and who is healed by Jesus. The Pharisees think Jesus is an evil man, and not from God. They do not want to believe in Him despite the miracle. Here is what the blind man says:)

“I don’t know whether He is good or bad’, the man replied, ‘but I know this: I was blind and now I see!’ ‘God doesn’t listen to evil men, but God does listen to those who honor Him and do His will. Since the world began there has never been anyone who could open the eyes of someone born blind. If the man were not from God, He couldn’t do it.....I believe’And he worshiped Jesus.”

John 9:39

“Jesus said, ‘I have come into the world to give sight to those who are spiritually blind, and to show those who think they see, that they are blind.’....”

+++++

“Since the world began there has never been anyone who could open the eyes of someone born blind.”

Boy did this guy say a mouthful.

It’s Jesus who gives sight.

He is the only one who can take someone blind since birth, and give them new eyes. Eyes that can now see for the first time.

The issue here is that it is Jesus alone who saves.

In Old Testament times God “covered” sin when someone believed and obeyed Him. The Old Testament sacrifices were performed for this reason. They had their purpose.

They pointed to the ultimate sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

The Messiah was promised, and many believed what God said.

Their obedience to God, their faithfulness to His law, and their belief in the coming Messiah is what God was looking for.

Scriptures state that after Jesus died on the cross,

He lead “*captivity captive*” (Ephesians 4:8).

Many think that means the Old Testament believers were taken from “*Abraham’s bosom*” (Luke 16:22) to Heaven at that point in time, because the issue of sin was finally resolved by Jesus.

Think what you want on this issue,
but the fact is that everything centers on Jesus.
Jesus came to pay the full penalty of sin, and remove it forever.

He is the only one since the world began who could accomplish this.
He brought light into a dark world,
and came to give sight to all who believe in Him.

Now we can see clearly.
We were born spiritually blind,
but He has touched us, and now we see.

The story of the blind man is a great one.
But I now want to take a left turn on this story, so stay with me.

I want to challenge your perception about your new eye sight.

Ever been lead by the Lord into the dark?
Even with your new sight, you still can't see?
Can't figure out what's ahead?
Wondering what He is doing?

He's given you new 'eyes', and now you can't use them.
He's making you walk by 'blind faith'.

The Lord sometimes leads us into the "dark room"
.....to help "develop" us.
The experience definitely changes you.

Ever watch how a blind man holds on to a person who is leading?
Think about it for a moment.
You can even practice the experience if you want.
There is an exercise where you have to blindfold yourself and be lead
by another, then change places and do the leading.

If you've ever done this exercise you would notice that you have to
trust them to take care of you. You would notice that it's a tough thing
to follow, without making contact, and holding on.

And you also would notice how much more sensitive your hearing
gets, as you follow blind folded, one step behind another person.

So does God sometimes lead us into the dark to make us hear Him?

Does He make us hold on, to increase our faith,
.....so we will trust Him absolutely?

The verses that directly follow the story of the blind man state:
“..the sheep hear His voice and come to Him, and He calls His own sheep by name and leads them out. He walks ahead of them and they follow Him, for they recognize His voice.” John 10: 3-4

If you notice, the verse says that the sheep HEAR His voice
...and come to Him
...to follow Him
...while He is leading.

Being lead is an ongoing process, as you listen to His voice.

Isn't it wonderful that Jesus gives us new sight,
and also increases our hearing?

Former blind person,
may we suggest you keep your eyes, ...and ears on Him.



61 Read This Letter

I Thessalonians 5: 27 *“I command you in the name of the Lord to read this letter to all the Christians.”*



What?

I'm supposed to read the book of I Thessalonians to other Christians?

Correct. You are.

Strange verse, don't you think?

There are plenty of verses, plenty of books of the Bible.

Why this verse, about this book?

Well let's look.

First of all, these are the words from God, not just Paul. ...Right?

I mean, think about this.

Paul writes a letter to the church at Thessalonica.

Before he signs his name, he writes the above sentence.

Let me ask you a question.

The last time you wrote your mama, did you command her to read your dumb letter to everyone on her block? ...Huh?

Well if you did, then you're nuts.

But Paul did the same kind of thing.

He writes a letter,

and then commands them to read it to everybody in town.

There are still those who think these words, written by Paul, are just his words. ...Just his letter.

Some say the Bible is just a book of men's words.
Not God's words.
They don't think it's a book that has God telling us something.
They say it's a book filled with the words of men only.

Do you think that?

I believe as many of you do that the Holy Spirit moved Paul, as he wrote this letter.
The Holy Spirit wanted this verse written, about this particular letter.
It's more than Paul's instruction to the church at Thessalonica.
These words, are words from God to us, and we should obey them.

Can we do what God says? Can we read this letter to other Christians?
I'd say yes. How hard is it to read the verses of this book?
Only 5 short chapters. Not that tough a job.

But why? Why read this book to other Christians?
Well, what does the book talk about?
The repeated major theme is about the return of Jesus Christ.
It tells us what happens to believers when they die.
And then says:
"So comfort and encourage each other with this news." 4:18

So we're supposed to comfort and encourage each other,
.....with this letter.

"Watch for His return and stay sober...Let us who live in the light keep sober, protected by the armor of faith and love, and wearing as our Helmet, the happy hope of salvation." I Thessalonians 5: 6, 8

A happy hope of salvation. I like that.
This is what the return of Jesus is all about to believers.
It's something to look forward to.
We're watching for the return of Jesus with smiles on our faces.
And if we die before He comes back,
it says we're coming back with Him. (4:14.)

So it is good news indeed.

"He died for us so that we can live with Him forever, whether we are dead or alive at the time of His return. So encourage each other to build each other up, just as you are already doing." (4:10-11)

So, as Paul commands in the name of the Lord,
READ THIS TO SOMEONE!

62 Work Happily Together

Romans 12: 16

*“Work happily together. Don’t try to act big.
Don’t try to get into the good graces of important people,
but enjoy the company of ordinary folks.”*

+++++

You know when you’re out working a job in the winter and you are freezing your socks off, or you are working in the summer 100 degree temperature, and you’re sweating on the pavement,there’s nothing more ordinary.

The trick is to “enjoy the company” and “work happily together”.

Man oh man, this Christian stuff is tough. How do you do it?

I heard a man say that he had been trying to improve himself concerning these things. He said he wanted the Lord to help him do better. Then he finally realized that the Lord was doing something else.

The Lord was trying to kill him.

What?

You heard me. The Lord was trying to kill him.

So that the natural man is dead on the cross,
and the Holy Spirit fills us and lives inside the body.

All this Christian stuff gets a whole lot easier when you let Him live it through you. I know it’s easy to say and hard to do, but it is something you strive for.

With a bag of nails in your pocket, you keep nailing the old man back up on the cross. He has a way of coming down off of there.

You know what?

This is another reason why we stay close together with other believers. Because I might have a few extra nails for you today.

“Work hard and CHEERFULLY at all you do, just as though you were working for the Lord and not merely for your boss, remembering that is the Lord Christ who is going to pay you...” Colossians 3: 23

There it is again. Cheerfully.
Are they nuts?
How can the words Work and Cheerfully
be used in the same sentence?
Answer: The Spirit filled believer works cheerfully for the Lord.

Remember we are cleverly disguised missionaries. (Dev #11)
Our mission field is our work place.
And we work it happily with each other, as unto our Lord Jesus.
Cheers.

63 Forgiveness

Psalms 78: 34-39

"..They turned around and followed Him. They remembered that God was their Rock- that their Savior was the God above all gods.

But it was only with their words they followed Him, not with their heart; their hearts were far away. They did not keep their promises. YET HE WAS MERCIFUL AND FORGAVE THEIR SINS and didn't destroy them all. Many and many a time He held back His anger.

For He remembered that they were merely mortal men, gone in a moment like a breath of wind."

I John 1: 9

"If we confess our sins to Jesus, He can be depended on to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong."

+++++

God forgives.
Yes, God forgives.
We say one thing, then do the opposite.
We try to follow, then daily forget our promises.
If it wasn't for the mercy of God, none of us would live another day.

I don't know about you, but I have to quote I John 1: 9 every day.
Then pick myself off the canvas, and go do what God has said.
I will not allow the Devil to take me out of action.
I am not going to waste the rest of the day, or the rest of the week,
while Jesus is willing to forgive immediately, and use me today.

The greatest spiritual victory of my life,
may occur in the same afternoon,
after my worse defeat in the morning.

How is that possible?
Because it's all about His power.

It's all about His forgiveness.
It's all about Him, living through me.
It's Him, who will perform the victory. Not me.
All I have to do is be willing, and available.

Are you willing and available?

Ask God to have mercy on you. Ask Him to forgive you.
He will.

Then get busy again in the work God has given you to do.
Don't waste another minute lamenting the past.
Obey Him today.

*He can be depended
on to forgive us .*

1 Jn 1:9

64 The Book of Antioch

We'll read the entire thing since it is short.

+++++

Today's devotional will be Bible verses from the Book of Antioch.

Huh, you say? ...I saw some of you raise an eye brow.
And for those of you who didn't react, this is a pop quiz.

A letter written to the church at Rome with Holy Spirit inspired words:We call it the book of Romans.

A letter written to the church at Galatia with Holy Spirit inspired words: ...We call it the book of Galatians

A letter written to the church at Ephesus with Holy Spirit inspired words: ...Book of Ephesians
You get the point.

So how about the letter written to the church at Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, that has Holy Spirit inspired words, which are in your present New Testament? It is God's Word.
The Book of Antioch. Right?

Ok, ok..... quit mumbling to yourself.
Let me help you.

The above mentioned letter to Antioch is given to us in its entirety in the book of Acts 15: 23-29. Here it is:

"This is the letter they took along with them:

From: The apostles, elders and brothers at Jerusalem.

To: The Gentile brothers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia. Greetings!

We understand that some believers from here have upset you and questioned your salvation, but they had no such instructions from us. So it seemed wise to us, having unanimously agreed on our decision, to send to you two official representatives, along with our beloved Barnabas and Paul. These men--Judas and Silas, who have risked their lives for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ-- will confirm orally what we have decided concerning your question.

For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay no greater burden of Jewish laws on you than to abstain from eating food offered to idols and from unbled meat of strangled animals, and, of course, from fornication. If you do this, it is enough. Farewell."

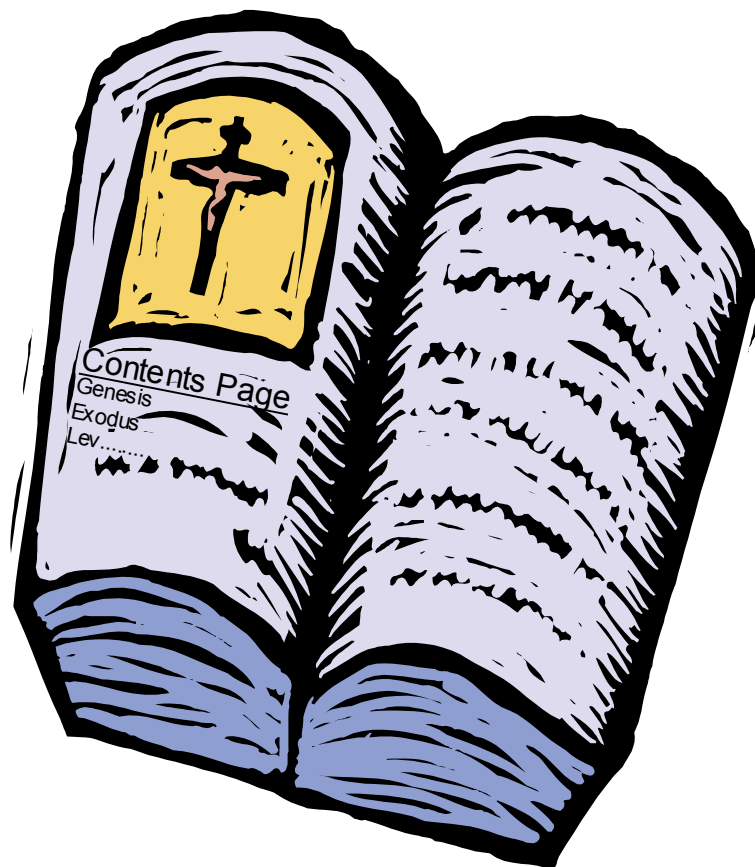
.....
Ok, so how did you do?
Did you pass this pop quiz?
Did you know this passage?

Yea, I know there is no real book of Antioch.
But it is an interesting letter within a letter isn't it?
Hope you learned something today that you never saw in Scripture.
God's Word is fun to study.
Read it. Learn it. Share it.

How well do you know your Bible?
Did the last devotion make you realize that you
don't know the books of the Bible as well as you
thought?

When was the last time you looked at the
Contents page in the front of your Bible?

“the what?” The Contents page.
Take another look to remind yourself.
This is good for you.



65 How Clear Can I Be?

Mark 9: 31-32

“ ‘I, the Messiah, am going to be betrayed and killed and three days later I will return to life again.’ But they didn’t understand and were afraid to ask Him what He meant.”

+++++

Come on now, how clear could Jesus have been?
I am the Messiah. I’m going to be betrayed and killed.
But 3 days later I will live again.

Jesus told them as clear as He could, what was going to happen.
Yet His death caught the disciples by surprise.
And His rising from the dead, they could scarcely believe.

He told them so they would know the plan,
yet they still didn’t understand.
They just weren’t listening. They ignored His words.

One of the reasons why they couldn’t understand, was because they had expectations of Jesus being King, as the prophets had predicted. Of course they chose to read over what Isaiah and the other prophets said about the death of the Lamb of God.

The next 3 verses in Mark say that the disciples were arguing over who was going to be the greatest. Now get this.
They missed what Jesus said, because of their own agenda.
They wondered who was going to be number one under King Jesus.
Who was going to be the next Governor.
Who among them would be in charge of this region of the country, or that part of the city. And so on.

You know we’re the same way. We have our own hidden agenda that keeps us from hearing what Jesus is trying to say to us today.

Let me be clear. I’ll say it again.
We have our own hidden agenda that keeps us from hearing what Jesus is trying to say to us today.

We have our expectations. We have our plans.....My plans are:

- 1)Get up and do such and such today.
- 2)Take my next pay check and spend it on this and that.
(I got bills you know.)
- 3)On my next day off, I’m going to go here and there, and have fun.
- 4)Dinner date with so in so.
- 5)And maybe go to church on Sunday, got to put in an appearance.

Hear Jesus say, 'Go and to speak to your friend this afternoon'.
Well, I didn't quite hear that. And what's the rush?
They can wait until I can fit them in on my schedule. ..I'm busy.

The verse above says the disciples were afraid to ask Jesus what He meant. Do you think they were afraid of Jesus?.....Hmmm?

Or were they afraid that His answer would spoil their plans of who would be over whom in the Kingdom rule that they wanted.
His answer might mess up their day.

Now, let's bring this home.
God has given us clear answers on many things.
Heaven, Hell, what's important in life, what happens after death,
the spiritual fight we're in, the importance and power of the Holy Spirit, salvation in Christ alone, the truths of the Bible,
the events of the last days.

It's all clear.
His voice is as clear today, as was that day He spoke to His disciples.
If you really believe in Him, like you say you do, then you won't let your personal agenda keep you from hearing, understanding, and obeying Him.



66 Powerful Prayers

James 5: 16-18

“Admit your faults to one another and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous man has great power and wonderful results.

Elijah was as completely human as we are, and yet when he prayed earnestly that no rain would fall, none fell for the next three and one half years! Then he prayed again, this time that it would rain, and down it poured and the grass turned green and the gardens began to grow again.”

James 4: 2-3

“..the reason you don't have what you want is that you don't ask God for it. And even when you do ask you don't get it because your whole aim is wrong—you want what will give you pleasure.”

+++++

When was the last time you prayed for a miracle, and it happened?
A miracle that would honor God, demonstrate His power,
and give Him pleasure.

It says *“Elijah was as completely human as we are...”*
but look what happened when he prayed.



Do you think God is still answers powerful prayers?
If He is, then the questions for today are:
Do you pray with "*great power*"?
Are your prayers answered with "*wonderful results*"?

Some good questions, right?
This subject is something God obviously wants us to consider.

- 1) Earnest prayer.
(Do you pray passionately? Or is it quick and random?)
- 2) Righteous man.
(Are you a believer who is living for the Lord Jesus?)
- 3) Great power.
(When you pray do things happen?)
- 4) Wonderful results.
(Results that glorify God, are all wonderful.)

Pray like this, and you will find yourself praising God.
When God moves in your life,
.....you can't help but bubble with testimony.
When God moves in direct relation to your prayers to Him,
...you gotta shout!

Ever been around someone who seems on fire with the desire to tell
you what God has done? Can't shut up about it.
Full of energy and excitement over God showing up!

Let me ask you,
....when was the last time that obnoxious person was you?
You're way over due.

In a world of apathy and disbelief,
it is time we show them that we serve a living God.

Knowing God changes everything,
because nothing is impossible for Him.

He controls the weather.
He controls time.
He can move the planet with a word.
Everything is subject to Him, from a sparrow, to a lighting bolt.

God is a mighty God, and our Friend, Savior, and Father.
If we could only get a glimpse of this truth,
we could change the world with our prayers.

There are several full sermons here,
but we're only going to hit one more thing.

Did you notice when you read the verses above that you jumped right
over something very important? Let me give you a hint.
(And this isn't going to be pretty, so hang on.)

*"Admit your faults to one another and pray for each other so that you
may be healed. The earnest prayer..."*

What does it say that we are praying about?
Well here comes the answer, so listen up.
You need to find a spiritual friend whom you trust,
and who is walking with the Lord.
Why?
So that they will pray, for you, and with you earnestly.
Over what?
Your secret sin.
And why admit to that?
So that you may be healed.

Sounds easy, huh?
Just admit my faults to another believer, and pray.
Right. Got it.
.....Are you out of your mind?
Maybe.
But this is the Word of the Lord, and He knows what's best.

Powerful prayers receive monumental answers,
and God is waiting for you to pray one.



67 Seeing A Greater Purpose In Adversity

Acts 16: 18

“But Paul shouted, ‘Don’t harm yourself! We are all here.’”

+++++

Paul and Silas had been thrown into prison.
An earthquake erupted and the jail cell was opened.
It’s Paul and Silas’ opportunity.
“Deliverance! Praise God!” might be the appropriate response.
But this is not what Paul and Silas did.
In fact, rather than leave, they sat quietly in their cell area.



The guard, in fear of his life, knew that it would be automatic death, if prisoners escaped. It sounds like the guard was ready to kill himself. But Paul intervened.....Why?

Having your enemy kill themselves is pretty good fortune, isn't it?



“But Paul shouted, ‘Don’t harm yourself! We are all here.’”

Paul and Silas did not leave, because they saw a higher purpose for which they were in prison.
They were not looking at their circumstance;
they were much more concerned about the unsaved guard.

The story goes on to explain how Paul and Silas went home with the guard. Not only did the guard get saved, but his entire household as well. What a lesson this is for us.

How often we are so busy looking for deliverance from our circumstance, that we miss God completely.
God is looking to do miracles in our circumstances,
if we will only look for them.

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68 Untroubled

John 14: 1-3 Jesus is speaking:
“Let not your heart be troubled. You are trusting God, now trust in me. There are many homes up there where my Father lives, and I am going to prepare them for your coming. When everything is ready, then I will come and get you, so that you can always be with me where I am. If this weren't so, I would tell you plainly.”

+++++

Worried?
Let not your heart be troubled... I will come and get you.

Sad and crying?
Let not your heart be troubled... I will come and get you.

Impatient?
Let not your heart be troubled... I will come and get you.

Afraid?
Let not your heart be troubled... I will come and get you.

Angry?

Let not your heart be troubled... I will come and get you.

One Christ. One Heaven. One Truth. One Comfort.

Jesus Christ will come so *"you can always be with me where I am"*

Jesus is trying to tell you something,
that can make all the difference in the world.

Emotions come and go.
Jesus is the same.

Job stress. Financial stress. Family stress. Health stress. Death.
Jesus is coming to get you, and take you to Heaven,
to be with Him forever.

What compares to that?

Nothing.

What trouble measures up to that?

None.

That's why we can be untroubled.

He is asking you to trust Him.

He is telling you the plain truth to uplift you.

Look up, and cheer up.Jesus is coming.



69 Jesus and Demons

Mark 1: 23-27

*“A man possessed by a demon was present and began shouting,
‘Why are you bothering us, Jesus of Nazareth—have you come to
destroy us demons? I know who you are—the Holy Son of God.’*

*Jesus commanded the demon to say no more and to come out of the
man. At that the evil spirit screamed and convulsed the man violently
and left him.*

*Amazement gripped the audience, and they began discussing what
had happened.”*

+++++

Look how this passage ends:

“they began discussing what had happened “.

Discuss this subject all you want, but in the end, you must choose an
explanation. This debate hasn't stopped to this day.

Some think that demons aren't real.

They say anyone stating that demons are real, or anyone who talks
about demons, is in dire need of psychotropic medication.

I guess I missed my pill.

Amazingly, some Christians seem to have the same mind set,
that demons don't exist.... But I have a question.

If they existed when Jesus was on the earth, then where did they go?

Are the Biblical events recorded concerning demons simply stories of
fabrication? Were the Biblical writers either confused, or lying?
Or maybe you think Jesus needed medication also?

This might be a strange devotion,
but I am sure you can follow my thought.

Here's my premise:

Present demon activity proves Jesus is real and alive.

Present day occult activity shows a spirit world....
as real as our visible physical realm.

ANY evidence of SPIRIT BEINGS,
means you MUST CHOOSE an explanation for such.

Do you understand what I am saying? You start with two choices.

1) This world is filled with ONLY visible and physical.

or

2) This world ALSO has invisible spirit beings that are present.

I'm saying that once you accept **any evidence** of the presence of invisible spirit beings, then there are only so many possible answers to explain those spirit beings.

It boils down to explanations that use, or don't use the Bible.

Eventually you're right back to today's passage showing Jesus and invisible spirit beings called demons.

Like I said, you must choose an explanation.

Are you a little like me? Do you look around at all the people going to work, people buying cool things at the mall, seeing movies, meeting friends, eating dinner, all the physical and visible things that we do, and you think out loud,

"Where is Jesus? Point Him out to me."

Or at least show me a miracle to prove that Jesus is still active, yet invisible. Ask Jesus to make a plate float off the coffee table, over to the kitchen counter. Show me something I can see.

And don't just show me your Bible as something you can see because maybe I have my doubts about it. I've DECIDED it's just a book.

.....Well? What do you show them?

Isn't that why many people are so fascinated by poltergeist activity, séances, mediums, those who can talk to the dead, witchcraft, and "extra"-terrestrial life?





Everyone wants to see some evidence that there is “life” beyond us.
Some spirit experience here and now. Visible evidence we can see.
“..Amazement gripped the audience..”,
We love a good show don’t we?

Today’s issue isn’t about us doubting the existence of spirit beings;
it’s about the fact that few want JESUS to be real.

If HE is, then I have to bend my knee, repent of my sin, and confess
Him Lord. And that just doesn’t fit into my plans for ME being the
lord of my own life.

Oh, there are plenty of examples of the invisible to show that we
definitely live within an active, yet invisible spirit world.
There’s more proof than we’d like to admit.

The point is, many are still trying to explain all of this, and still deny
Jesus. Many choose not to believe in Jesus Christ, and what the Bible
says. The Bible doesn’t pull any punches.
“A man possessed by a demon..” No debate.
The Bible just states it as fact.

It is clear on who Jesus is. Even the demons know.
“I know who you are—the Holy Son of God.”

And it’s clear on how to be saved.
The passage for today shows a real Jesus involved directly with real
demons that were causing real problems.
The only real answer is a real savior,Jesus.

70 Fearful = No Confidence
In The Lord

Mark 4: 40
"And Jesus asked them,
'Why were you so fearful?
Don't you even yet have
confidence in me?'"



II Timothy 1: 7
"For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power..."

Psalms 23 "...I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me,
guarding, guiding all the way."

+++++

So you claim Jesus as your Savior and Lord, right?
He has saved you, filled you with His Spirit,
and promised you Heaven.
Do you have confidence in Him?

I hope you answered yes.

Mark chapter four tells how Jesus was with the disciples on a ship that enters a storm. They still don't understand who He is. Make sure you get this point..... They already were His disciples. They believe in Him. They know He is the Messiah.

Yet, their actions and reactions show they lack confidence in Him. Their behaviors and emotions show they still don't know who He is. After they wake Jesus, He speaks to the storm and the wind calms down. They have once again been shown who He is.

When you finally figure out that Jesus IS God,
.....your fear will disappear.

How many times does Jesus have to calm your storm....
before you will sail with Him unafraid through it?

Jesus is God.
He made everything. He is in control of everything.
What can you possibly be afraid of when He is close beside you?

"If God be for us, who can be against us?" Rom 8:31

71 Guess This Riddle

Who am I?

*“ The Lord formed me in the beginning,
before He created anything else...
I was there when He established the heavens and formed the great
springs in the depths of the oceans.
I was there when He set the limits of the seas and gave them His
instructions not to spread beyond their boundaries.
I was there when He made the blueprint for the earth and oceans.
I was always at His side like a little child.
I was His constant delight, laughing and playing in His presence. ...
For whoever finds me finds life and wins approval from the Lord.
But the one who misses me has injured himself irreparably.
Those who refuse me show that they love death.”*

+++++

Who am I?

Now think about it.

The above passage is found in Proverbs 8.

And the answer to Who am I?

Is found in verse 14.

“I am WISDOM, and give good advice and common sense.”

Find the Lord,... and put Him first.

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” Proverbs 9:10

72 Respect Them. Obey Them.

I Peter 2:18

“ Servants, you must respect your masters and do whatever they tell you, not only if they are kind and reasonable, but even if they are tough and cruel.”

+++++

Oh I don't like this verse. Do you?
What a strange idea that God is giving us.
This verse was written to slaves.
Why wouldn't God just free all the slaves,
instead of telling them to obey?

How about you? Do you feel like a slave at your job?
With guidelines, and schedules,
and supervisors who are tough and cruel?

Well apparently God says,
“Get over it! Quit whining and obey them.”

Oooo... I don't think they're fair Lord! Why is this happening to me?

“It is God's will that your good lives should silence those who foolishly condemn the Gospel without knowing what it can do for them, having never experienced its power.”

“This suffering is all part of the work God has given you. Christ, who suffered for you, is the example. Follow in His steps.....He left His case in the hands of God who always judges fairly.”

I Peter 2: 15,21,23

Get it? God is in control. You are His slave. Obey Him by obeying them. If He changes everything to make your life easier.... Great. And if He doesn't? Then this *“IS PART OF THE WORK GOD HAS GIVEN YOU.”*

Easy to write. Easy to read.... Tougher to do.

And why does God want us to do this?
“IT IS GOD'S WILL THAT YOUR GOOD LIVES SILENCE THOSE WHO FOOLISHLY CONDEMN THE GOSPEL.”

You're an obedient slave to shut them up, so they will SEE how Jesus can change a life.

When I get “done wrong” I want justice!
I want to be the loud one to cry out!
“They can’t get away with that! It’s not fair!”

Are you a little like me? Do you say the same things?

“Trust in the Lord with all of your heart and don’t lean on your own understanding, in everything acknowledge God and put Him first, then He will direct your path and crown your efforts with success.”
Proverbs 3:6

And crown your efforts with what?
Success.

“And we know that all that happens to us will work out for our good, if we love God and are fitting into His plans.” Romans 8:28

And how do we fit into His plans?
We obey Him.
So do what He says.

Obey them.

73 To Keep You From Becoming Fainthearted

I Thessalonians 3: 1-3

“Finally, when I could stand it no longer, I decided to stay alone in Athens and send Timothy, our brother and fellow worker, God’s minister, to visit you to strengthen your faith and encourage you, and to keep you from becoming fainthearted in all the troubles you were going through.”

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Group A

Strong in the Lord, Bold in the Holy Spirit, Focused,
Confident because of the Scriptures, Determined, Productive.

Group B

Fainthearted, weakened, apathetic, unsure of self, doubtful of beliefs,
ineffective

You know you can move between these two groups.
Which group are you in this week?

If you're in group A, would you help someone in group B?

If God asked you to help keep a fellow believer at work from becoming fainthearted, what would be your answer?

I'm sure everyone out there reading this just said, "I'll do it Lord".
The next question is: Do you mean it?

Will your actions confirm your words?

James 2: 17, 20

"It isn't enough just to have faith. You must also do good to prove that you have it. Faith that doesn't show itself by good works is no faith at all—it is dead and useless.....Faith that does not result in good deeds is not real faith."

So the Bible tells us that faith without works is dead. You must ACT.
Will you place yourself out there, and allow yourself to be used by the Lord, to keep someone from becoming fainthearted?

I pray you will see how you are to fulfill this mission.
To speak to one believer who needs encouragement.
Do something that shows you care about them.
Try to connect with them, lift them up, and activate them.

If together we lift each other up, and decide to reach out to the lost that work right beside us, we could change lives for eternity.

Do you see the vision?
Will you help?
Is your answer still, "I'll do it Lord" ?



74 Holy Spirit Direction

Acts 8: 26-27, 29

“As for Philip, an angel of the Lord said to him, ‘Go over to the road that runs from Jerusalem through the Gaza Desert, arriving around noon’, so he did, and who should be coming down the road but the Treasurer of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority,...

The Holy Spirit said to Philip,

“Go over and walk along beside the chariot’, Philip ran over...”

When was the last time God told you to do something very specific?

Look at the details in this passage.

Go to a certain road, at a specific time, and walk beside the chariot.

Even you could do this one.

The real question is: Are you listening for the Holy Spirit’s direction?



God is still in the business of giving detailed instruction to us.

He is not locked in His Heavenly mansion out near the planet Saturn.

He is here now. If you are a believer, then His Spirit is in you. He possesses you. He can whisper to you anytime He wants. Are you listening?

He also knows the future.

Look again at the passage. *“arriving around noon”*

God knew the Ethiopian was going to be there at that specific time.

God also knows who is going to be at your road tomorrow at noon.

The Lord God made Time.
The Bible says He is the Alpha and Omega,
the beginning and the end.
He is the ultimate time traveler.

If you've ever watched a movie about time travel the main theme is always the same. Someone is timing an entrance into an event at a specific time and place. They know what is going to happen, so they want to change the result of something.

When this person walks out of the building and somebody else drives up, that is when we will enter the picture and say and do such and such. So we watch the movie and we say "cool".

Well God knows exactly where you're going to be next year on the 23rd of the month. You will pray a prayer that morning. It's no problem for Him to arrange the answer to that prayer. He has already set things in motion so that HE steps through time, and the exact event happens at that moment. Just like you asked Him.

Maybe He has planned something for someone else and you're that answer. This devotion written years before you read it starts this chain of events. Now, ...will you listen to His specific instruction? Will you follow the direction of the Holy Spirit?

75 Don't Sweat The Small Stuff

Colossians 3: 1-2, 11-12

"Since you became alive again, so to speak, when Christ arose from the dead, now set your sights on the rich treasures and joys of Heaven where Jesus sits in the place of honor and power.

LET HEAVEN FILL YOUR THOUGHTS; DON'T SPEND YOUR TIME WORRYING ABOUT THINGS DOWN HERE."

"In this new life one's nationality or race or education or social position is unimportant; SUCH THINGS MEAN NOTHING. WHETHER A PERSON HAS CHRIST IS WHAT MATTERS, He is equally available to all. Since you have been chosen by God who has given you this new kind of life, and because of His deep love and concern for you, you should practice tenderhearted mercy and kindness to others."

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Don't sweat the small stuff, for example,
.....your life here on planet earth.

Your mind, heart, and vision should be set towards Heaven.
Your focus set towards Jesus Christ.
Finding and serving Him comes first.
Nothing else really matters.

Find salvation in Jesus Christ during your lifetime, and everything
else is gravy. So you don't have to worry about anything down here.

We just shared a devotion on this subject entitled, "Untroubled" from
John 14: 1-3. Same message. Nothing can bother us if we look up.
Our redemption draws close.

Oh don't get me wrong, you are still supposed to pay your bills, brush
your teeth, and do your job as unto the Lord. In fact, in this same
chapter, Colossians 3 verse 23, we are told to work hard at our jobs as
if we were working for the Lord not just for our boss.

We are supposed to work hard at the job which God has given us and
that means paying attention to the details.
But the key is we are doing it, ...looking at Jesus in Heaven.

We are busy fulfilling His commands,
not worrying over earthly problems.

In the service of Jesus, with an attitude of worship to,
and daily connection with, Him.
Jesus is in complete control of everything about our lives.

We just serve Him, and He handles at the rest of the details.

That's why we don't have to worry about stuff.
If we could grasp this idea and get a glimpse of "*the rich treasures
and joys of Heaven where Jesus sits*", we would live differently here.

We could do the mundane with a smile on our face, as unto our God.
We would have the same peace in our hearts on Monday morning
driving to work, as we do driving to a week of vacation.
We could listen quietly to the Holy Spirit directing us.

And how do we act down here while we wait for Jesus to come and
get us?....."*because of His deep love and concern for you, you should
practice tenderhearted mercy and kindness to others,*"

Once you experience His life changing love, and start seeing Heaven off in the distance, the only natural thing is to want to show someone else that door to freedom.

It's not how rich you are, how important, or how smart;
it's not what color your skin is, or where you're from that means anything. It's where you're going that's important.

Where you spend eternity is the most important thing to concentrate on in your brief physical lifetime.
No. 2 is helping another find Christ.
Everything else is small stuff.

LET HEAVEN FILL YOUR THOUGHTS...
and your actions will be Christ-like.
Show the same mercy you've been shown,
.....by introducing others to the Savior.



76 Open The Door

Revelation 3: 20

“Look! I have been standing at the door and I am constantly knocking. If anyone hears me calling him and opens the door, I will come in and fellowship with him and he with me.”



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If a salesman or a debt collector is at the door we become selectively deaf, don't we? Some how we over look the need to go and open the door.

Now put someone there with a 10 million dollar check, and we dive for the door. We can't wait to open it to get our money.

It's a choice we make.

Jesus is at the door.

If we do nothing, we have done something. We've rejected the Lord. Everything He is. Everything He can give us. Everything He can save us from. Call it whatever you want. Born Again. Saved. Becoming a believer. Opening the door.

It is a choice we make to allow Jesus to come into our heart and life.

Notice it says, *“I have been standing at the door”*.

It does not say He is busting the door down.

It says He is standing there waiting for you to open it.

It's a choice He is giving you. And it's a HUGE decision.

I think that's the reason why you have a lifetime of chances to make the choice. The offer is always there.

Notice it says, *“I am constantly knocking”*.

Jesus is not giving up on you.

As long as you have breath in your body, you can open that door.

And Jesus will make it all better.

Open the door, and your life changes now, and forever.

You will know Jesus well. You can be close.

You can sense His presence daily.

It says, *“I will come in and fellowship with him and he with me.”*

My prayer for you is that you will open the door of your heart, and that you will experience the daily fellowship of the Savior.

77 What A Day Makes

Genesis 1:1

"In the beginning, God.."

Genesis 1 tells us the order in which God made things.

On day ONE, GOD separated light from darkness.

On day six, God made man.

It's no coincidence that six is the number for man.

One is the number for God.

Six plus one equals seven, the number for perfection.

On day seven, God rested and called the day Holy.

Seven. Rest. Perfection.

Hold that thought.

On the first day of the week, Jesus rose from the dead.

The Light of the world creating a new beginning.

Like we said on day ONE, God started it all separating light,
from darkness.

No coincidence that on the FIRST day of the week,

Jesus made everything new.

He will separate all who are in the Light, from those in the darkness.

The Lord God has been working everything from a planned design.

He planned the universe.

He planned salvation.

He planned you.

Nothing is by random chance.

He even planned day seven as a day of rest.

God has a plan to give us ultimate rest in Christ.

God promises us Heaven.

A perfect place for perfect rest. The last thing on His agenda.

There is an order to this universe.

And you fit into that plan.

*"You saw me before I was born and scheduled each day of my life
BEFORE I began to breathe. EVERY DAY was recorded in your
Book." Psalms 139:16*

Today is one of those days.

My question for you is, what does God want from you this day?

Make contact with Him, and find out.

See part two
for devotions 78-153