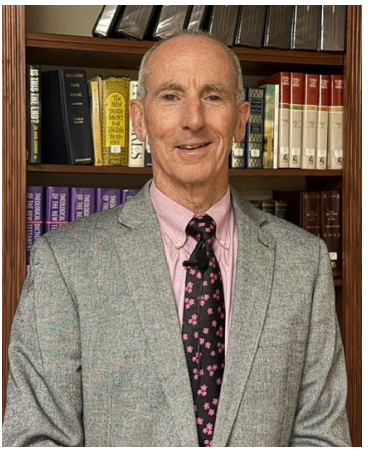
November 2026
Daily Devotional



Vistoso Community Church

Foreword

This month we begin with two more devotionals on the full armor of God and then return at the end of the month to finish up that discussion. In between, we continue our readings in the Psalms and the Gospel of John. We'll also pause to consider both Veteran's Day and Thanksgiving—although giving thanks to the Lord for His goodness and mercy is always in season.



May God bless your time in His Word this month, and give you insight into His infinite character and matchless deeds!

In His grace,

Kevin Redig

All Scripture quotes have been taken from either the NKJV (1992 edition) or the NIV (1984 edition).

Ephesians: The Armor of God

Monday, November 2: Read II Peter 1

Just one more thing about the *shield of faith*—a small thing, but I trust you will be blessed. In the NKJV, Ephesians 6:16 starts by saying,

… above all, <u>taking</u> the shield of faith …

The word translated *taking* literally means to *take up,* and is usually translated that way. That makes sense in the context, for a Roman soldier would normally carry his shield strapped to his body and wouldn't *take it up* until danger threatened. How about for the Christian, what truth are we to extract from this little idea of exercising faith in a moment of crisis? Consider the following:

- From God's side, He has provided everything!

  His divine power has given us <u>everything</u> we need for life and godliness … He has given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. II Peter 1:3-4

  Then, failure must reside on man's side when it comes to <u>*knowing*</u> and <u>*taking up*</u> God's promises! Will we, over time, be diligent to collect promises from God's Word and will we allow them to loom larger in our thinking than circumstances during a time of crisis?

- Is there anything more common to failure than a lack of faith? Consider all the Biblical examples: Adam and Eve, the Exodus generation, Israel at the First Coming of Jesus, to name just a few.

Continued on the next page.

Ephesians: The Armor of God

Monday, November 2: Read II Peter 1

(Continued)

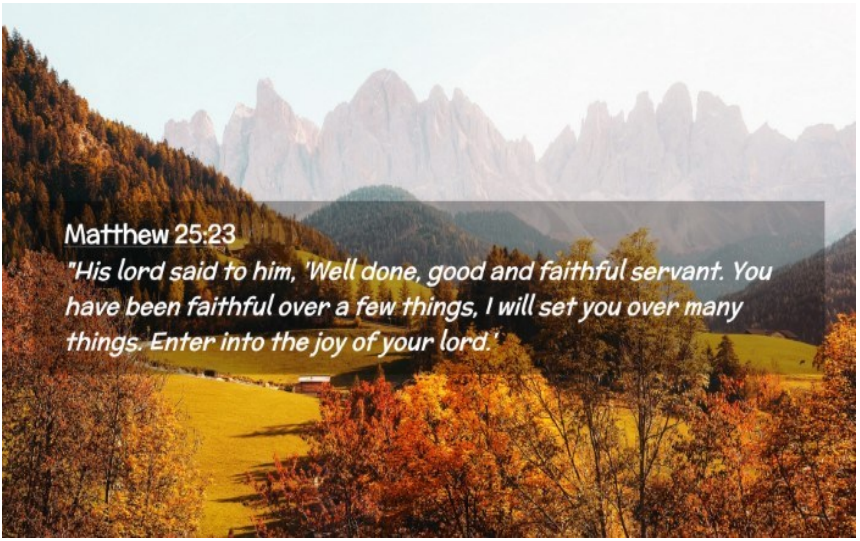
- Then, is there anything more noteworthy in practice than the exercise of faith? Consider Abraham trusting in the promise of God and being declared righteous or Job commenting:

  "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him. …" Job 13:15

  What is the reward for faith? It is the blessedness of hearing a judgment day declaration from the Lord Himself:

  "… 'Well done, good and faithful servant …'
  Matthew 25:23

- In many ways, we can reduce our spiritual lives to this: Will we face each challenge that comes our way by turning to the Lord in faith and then taking up His promises and holding firmly to them?



Ephesians: The Armor of God

Tuesday, November 3: Read Isaiah 30

Just a few more items to note on *taking up the shield of faith,* beginning where we left off yesterday:

- Trusting in the promises of God's Word is part of the defensive nature of the entire armor metaphor. In other words, we are to *stand firm* in the faith, *rest* in faith, *receive* that which prompts our faith, and *wait* in faith. This is beautifully summarized in Isaiah 30:15:

  This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel, says: "In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength …"

- We study this because it is possible to be justified before God and yet spiritually defenseless. That is exactly the situation if we fail to take up the shield of faith by leaving the promises of God unclaimed! It is possible for us to have peace with God and yet succumb to temptation. That's what happens if we fail to stop Satan's fiery darts with the *shield of faith*.
- It is also possible to be seated with Christ in the heavenly realms and yet walk in an unworthy manner. You see faith is the modus operandi of the Christian. Learning to live dependent upon the sovereign, omnipotent, loving Creator of all things is what *shields* us from temptation and doubt in enemy territory. Furthermore, to be in fellowship with other saints who are also *taking up the shield of faith* is what allows us to stand firm despite the winds of politics, persecution, worldliness, and the like.

God's people are not meant to be scattered by the drama of this world, but united in taking up the *shield of faith* as we hold fast to the Word of God! And all God's people said, "Amen!"

Returning to the Psalms

Wednesday, November 4:
Read Psalm 69

The psalms are very practical. What I mean by that is that they address the nitty-gritty issues of life. They also talk about two kinds of salvation: salvation from the evils of this world and, less frequently, salvation from an eternal destiny apart from God to one in His presence. We'll spend the next several days looking at examples of both.

Consider David's predicament in today's reading:

> **Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck. I sink in the miry depths … I have come into the deep waters; the floods engulf me.** Psalm 69:1-2

David is certainly asking for deliverance, but deliverance from what? We cannot say with certainty to what aspect of his life David is referring, but let me suggest that at this point he has physical deliverance in mind. As the psalm continues, David reveals two aspects of his character. First, he acknowledges that he is a sinner:

> **You know my folly, O God; my guilt is not hidden from you.** Psalm 69:5

He is revealing to us his understanding of grace, for he understands that God does not *owe* him deliverance. Yet he comes to Him in faith anyhow.

Second, note how sensitive he is to his personal witness:

> **… may those who hope in You not be disgraced because of me … may those who seek You not be put to shame because of me.** Psalm 69:6

Returning to the Psalms

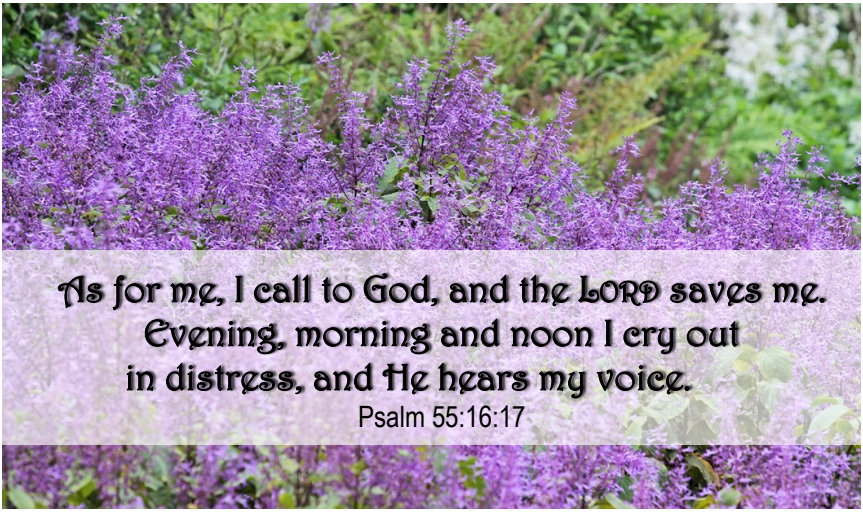
Wednesday, November 4:
Read Psalm 69 (Continued)

David does not want to bring disrepute upon God's people, in part, because that would bring disrepute upon His God. I pray that we would be as sensitive to our personal witness among the lost people who watch our lives ever so closely.

Now despite his shortcomings, here is David's steadfast plea to God:

> **... I pray to You, O Lord, in the time of your favor; in Your great love, O God, answer me with Your sure salvation.** Psalm 69:13

What is David relying upon? He is relying upon God's favor (grace) and His great love! Let me suggest that is sometimes all we have—and all we need!



Returning to the Psalms

Thursday, November 5:
Read Psalm 71

This psalm should catch our attention for its references to aging. It starts with a call to God as refuge and deliverer:

> **In You, O Lord, I have taken refuge … Rescue and deliver me in Your righteousness …** Psalm 71:1-2

The psalmist then traces his relationship to the Lord back to the very beginning:

> **For You have been my hope … my confidence since my youth.** Psalm 71:5

Then he moves to the present, near the end of his life:

> **Do not cast me away when I am old; do not forsake me when my strength is gone … Be not far from me, O God; come quickly, O my God, to help me.** Psalm 71:9,12

So what do you think, is it possible that God would set us aside because of failing physical or mental capabilities? It might seem like that from our perspective at times, but the Bible is quite clear that will never happen on God's side of our relationship:

> **Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil, for you are with me …** Psalm 23:4

> **… God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"** Hebrews 13:5-6

For nothing,

> **… in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus.** Romans 8:39

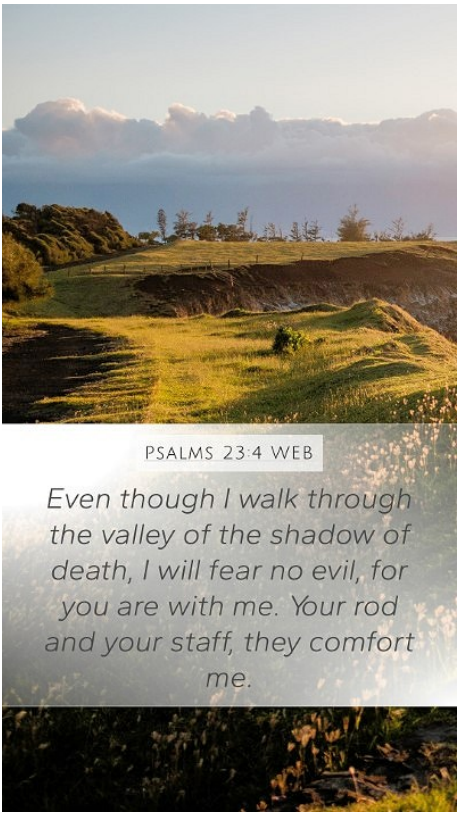
Returning to the Psalms

Thursday, November 5:
Read Psalm 71 (Continued)

And, to show you that the psalmist knows this as well,

> **Though you have made me see troubles, many and bitter, you will restore my life again; from the depths of the earth you will bring me up. You will increase my honor and comfort me once again.** Psalm 71:20-21

To be restored from the depths of the earth is to be raised from the dead. The increase in honor and comfort is a reference to conditions in the eternal state which are part of our future hope simply by virtue of being in God's presence! In a real way, this is the pattern of life: Often, the Lord sees us through a physical trial of some kind so that we might *praise Him in the land of the living!*



But eventually, we are going to step out of this life and into the presence of the Lord. Like the psalmist, we can look forward to that time when:

> **My lips will shout for joy when I sing praise to You—I, whom You have redeemed.** Psalm 71:23

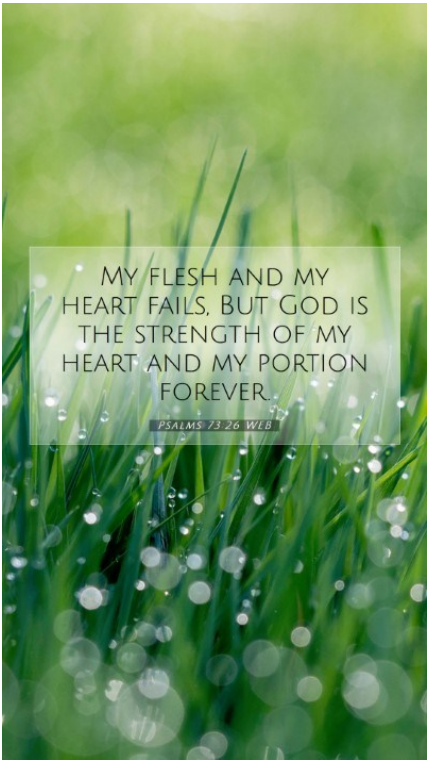
Returning to the Psalms

Friday, November 6: Read Psalm 73

Asaph, the author of this psalm, had a problem! He knew it, and he did exactly the right thing. He didn't take it up with other people, he took it to the Lord. In His timing, the Lord enlightened Asaph with something we all need—Divine Truth to fit our circumstances. (By the way, Asaph was a worship leader during the time of kings David and Solomon.

Let's see how things unfold. First, Asaph stated his problem:

> **But as for me, my feet had nearly slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold.**
> Psalm 73:2



In short, he feels himself close to spiritual failure! Here is the reason why:

> **For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.** Psalm 73:3

Asaph develops this much further, but we should be able to grasp the issue right away. It can be very vexing to the righteous when wickedness goes unpunished and, worse than that, when it seems to pay off! Is it worth trying to live a godly life if that is the way things are going to work out? Asaph realizes this is an issue he must settle.

Returning to the Psalms

Friday, November 6:
Read Psalm 73 (Continued)

Second, at this point, Asaph avoids what could have been a terrible mistake:

> **If I had said, "I will speak thus," I would have betrayed your children.** Psalm 73:15

Asaph is saying that to take this up with the people of God would have caused them to doubt as well. As a spiritual leader in Israel, he knew it was wrong to drag others down with him.

Third, what was Asaph's solution?

> **When I tried to understand all this, it was oppressive to me till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny.** Psalm 73:16-17

Asaph is saying, "*I couldn't figure this out on my own, until I got into the presence of God and then He revealed the truth to me!*" The parallel for me is to get someplace quiet, Bible in hand, and give the Lord my full attention.

Asaph learned that the wicked may prosper for a time, but their outcome is nicely summarized in Proverbs 24:

> **… for the evil man has no future hope, and the lamp of the wicked will be snuffed out.** Proverbs 24:20

With that kind of end coming, should the prosperity of the wicked cause us to stumble in our own walk? Perish the thought! Much better to align with Asaph's much improved attitude:

> **Whom have I in heaven, but You? And earth has nothing I desire besides You. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.** Psalm 73:25-26

Returning to the Psalms

Monday, November 9:
Read Psalm 84

Psalm 84 begins with the yearning of the spiritual heart:

> **How lovely is Your dwelling place, O Lord Almighty!**
> **My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord;**
> **my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.**
>
> Psalm 84:1-2

For the Jewish pilgrim, this was a longing to visit the Temple in Jerusalem. God dwelt in the Holy of Holies within the Temple, and it was a blessing to gather with fellow Israelites and worship at various times throughout the year.

Although we don't follow the same practices during this the time of the Church, might I suggest that we also set aside a time and a place to give the Lord our full attention. I am suggesting we grab our Bible and spend some time seeking the Lord—which is to say seek to know Him better by sharing His thoughts, affections, and purposes as revealed in His Word.

This is something we should do daily: with coffee first thing in the morning, at a quiet time in the afternoon, or watching the sun set each evening! It doesn't matter when, it does matter that it be a regular part of our routine and that the intent is to better know the *living God!* Am I sure about this?

> **Blessed are they whose strength is in You, who have set their hearts on pilgrimage.** Psalm 84:5

For the Jewish believer, this was a blessing pronounced on those who made the effort to travel to Jerusalem to worship. I am suggesting God will bless us if we make our own *pilgrimage* to spend time daily with the *Living Word*

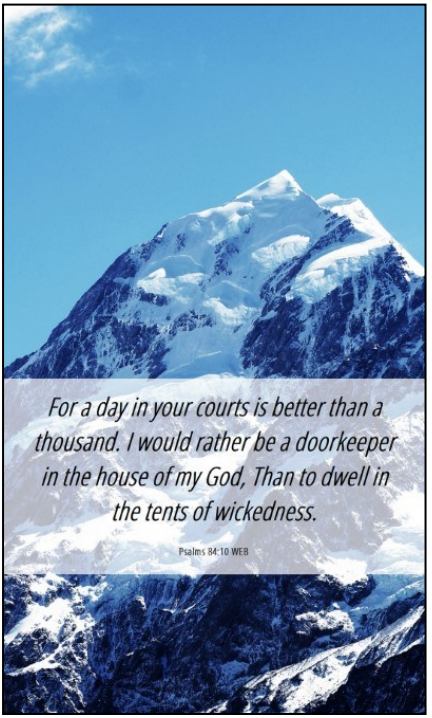
Returning to the Psalms

Monday, November 9:
Read Psalm 84 (Continued)

that stands behind the *written word*. Perhaps you have better things to do and more interesting places to be. The psalmist thinks otherwise:

> **Better is one day in Your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord, than dwell in the tents of the wicked. For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor; no good thing does He withhold from those whose walk is blameless … blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord.** Psalm 84:10-12

You decide if it is justified to apply the above to your personal quiet time. But I can tell you this, it is infinitely better to spend time with the Lord in contrast to the other uses of our time that define our culture, for it is the Lord who bestows favor and blessing comes from trusting Him. You cannot trust someone you do not know. So once again, I suggest that you get to know Him through His Word and you will grow to trust Him:



> **For faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.** Romans 10:17

Returning to the Psalms

Tuesday, November 10:
Read Psalm 85

Today's subject is revival. The word often translated as *revival* in Verse 6 can mean both to have life or to have a return of health and vitality. Let me suggest that as used in Psalm 85, it is talking about restoration of something that has been lost.

In the context, it refers to the spiritual life of Israel. I would like to see if we can apply this to the spiritual life of a believer during this Church age, for I think it would be a very good idea for the church in America to pray for revival as taught in this psalm! How about if we start by praying:

> **Restore us again, O God our Savior, and put away Your displeasure toward us.** Psalm 85:4

Before we can pray any such thing, there is much by way of sin we must confess, for we have let a terrible amount of worldliness into the church. We must exclude the sins of our culture from our midst, and as Paul quotes,

> **"Come out from them and be separate … Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you."** II Corinthians 6:17

If we collectively ask the Lord to search us and show us any wicked way in our midst and, if we confess as the Holy Spirit reveals those wicked ways, then we can continue on to the hope expressed in the Psalm:

> **Will you not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You?** Psalm 85:6

Returning to the Psalms

Tuesday, November 10:
Read Psalm 85 (Continued)

This is a prayer asking for something that is very much on the heart of the Lord Jesus. It reminds me of His offer to the lukewarm church of Laodicea. Although this church was about to undergo terrible discipline, the offer of mercy is ever so clear:

> **"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with Me."** Revelation 3:20



Jesus doesn't belong on the outside of His church asking to be let in! So, this nearly dead church certainly does need *revival*. But, if they will just respond and make the Lord Jesus the center of all things, He promises to come in and have fellowship. We find the same promise in Psalm 85:

> **... He promises peace to His people, His saints—but let them not return to folly. Surely His salvation is near those who fear Him, that His glory may dwell in our land.** Psalm 85:8-9

This is the same promise He made to His Church. Oh, that His glory would be found in our midst!



Remembering Veterans Day

Wednesday, November 11: Read Romans 5:1-11

For me, Veteran's Day is one of our national holidays that has a clear-cut connection to Biblical truth! Veteran's Day contains a measure of both remembrance and thankfulness towards those who sacrificed that we might benefit, and that brings me right to the text of today's reading.

> **Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man … But God demonstrated His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.** Romans 5:7-8

I am thankful for those in our armed forces who made the sacrifices in the past that have provided the present freedoms I so enjoy. But what the Lord Jesus did is different. I was not one of His countrymen, I was an enemy because of sin and rebellion. Yet He died for me! He provided the one thing I needed most—a way of being reconciled to my Creator—at the greatest of personal sacrifices to Himself.

Why would He do such a thing? Our text tells us, His love for the work of His hands—the fallen human race. Why did He have to die? The justice of God the Father demanded it,



Remembering Veterans Day

Wednesday, November 11: Read Romans 5:1-11 (Continued)

for the wages of my sin was death. Someone was going to pay the penalty in order to satisfy the perfect justice of God. Jesus chose to pay that debt on my behalf and on your behalf, and therein lies our forgiveness for sin.

The work of Jesus on the cross is a sufficient work and an efficacious work. It is efficacious in that the payment was so satisfactory to the Father that He raised His Son to the place of greatest honor in the entire universe—His right hand. It is a sufficient work in that it has provided forgiveness for every last member of the human race who will simply turn and put their trust in what Jesus provided on their behalf.

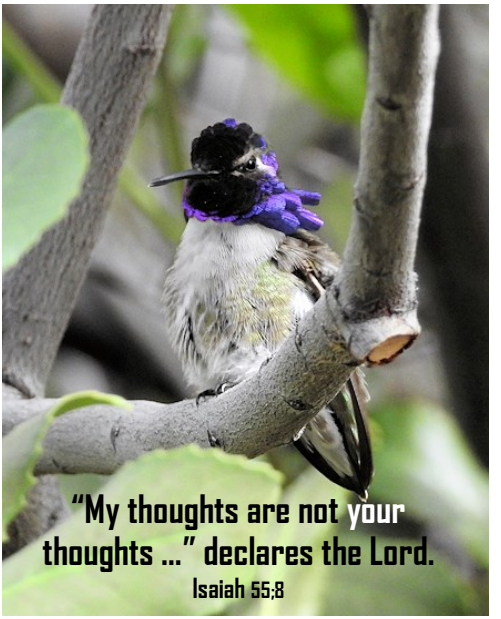
What is it that saves? It takes the right person—the Lord Jesus Christ; the right work—His substitutionary death on the cross; and the right response—faith on our part in the person and work of Jesus. Veteran's Day always leads me to faith alone in Christ alone, and an appreciation for His perfect work on my behalf!

Lessons from John's Gospel

Thursday, November 12:
Read John 7:1-36

I have two observations for you to consider from this chapter. First, in Verses 1-9, we see what I call *world viewpoint* in full operation. Jesus' brothers are thinking, "If you are trying to gain a following, Jerusalem is the place to be. And, it is even better at a feast day as there will be more people to whom to present yourself. Put your miracles on display to the largest possible audience." Yet, as we have seen so many times:

> **"My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways," declares the LORD.** Isaiah 55:8



Jesus wasn't trying to gain a following, at least not in the way his brothers envisioned. He was trying to help people come to grips with their need of a Savior and, once convicted, getting them to turn to Him in dependent trust for their salvation.

Lessons from John's Gospel

Thursday, November 12:
Read John 7:1-36 (Continued)

The second thing to consider is how clearly we see one of the *strands* about which John's Gospel is constructed:

The intimacy, congruence, and single-mindedness of purpose within the Trinity!

Did you catch that Jesus said:

… "My teaching is not My own. It comes from Him who sent Me." John 7:16

"… You do not know Him, but I know Him because I am from Him and He sent Me." John 7:28-29

The Son knows the Father and reveals Him to us. He has done so in terms of His nature, His love for His creation, and His incredible plan of salvation. Furthermore, He has done so in perfect conformity to the will of God. As Jesus later says in John 14:9:

"… Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father. …"

Anyone who has heard His message has heard the will of the Father. Here is one application: The call of God upon our lives to be His witnesses is not about making a big *splash*. Instead, it is about carrying a message from the Father to lost humanity, a group that most certainly should be on our hearts!

Lessons from John's Gospel

Friday, November 13
Read John 7:37-52

After refusing to go to Jerusalem in order to meet worldly expectations or for purposes of self-promotion, Jesus eventually does go. Halfway through the seven-day Feast of Tabernacles, He begins to teach. The people are astounded by the authority with which He teaches. Then:

> **On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." By this He meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were later to receive ...** John 7:37-39



Lessons from John's Gospel

Friday, November 13:
Read John 7:37-52 (Continued)

Note first that Jesus calls those who thirst to come to Him and drink and then immediately interprets drinking to be equivalent to believing in Him. This is exactly the way we interpreted eating and drinking in Chapter 6.

The second thing for you to realize is that this statement would have been an absolute *shocker* for those who heard it. Save exceptional cases, the Holy Spirit was not given to believers in the Old Testament.

This is a promise for the Spirit to be given to not just a particular king or prophet, but to every single person who places his or her faith in the person and work of Christ. I think this caught the attention of everyone who heard it!

There is much more to say about the Holy Spirit than we have room for in a devotional. Instead, let me draw your attention to the second part of Verse 39:

> **... Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.**

Even though the next few chapters of John will show Jewish rejection, even now Jesus is able to speak of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit which is going to follow His glorification that comes after His work of the cross. He did the work, and we receive the Spirit. That's grace!

Lessons from John's Gospel

Monday, November 16:
Read John 8:1-24

As we progress through John's Gospel you should be able to tell that the tension between Jesus and the Pharisees steadily increases. For example, in Verse 12 Jesus claims:

> **… "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."**

The Pharisees come right back in Verse 13 and claim the words of Jesus carry no weight for He has no witness to His claims, apart from the many miracles which have clearly authenticated His message. Jesus comes right back:

> **"… My other witness is the Father, who sent Me … You do not know Me or My Father. …"** John 8:18-19

No doubt the Pharisees burned with anger at these statements, for Jesus made it clear that these religious, revered leaders of the people did not have a personal relationship with God.

There is much to learn from this dialogue:

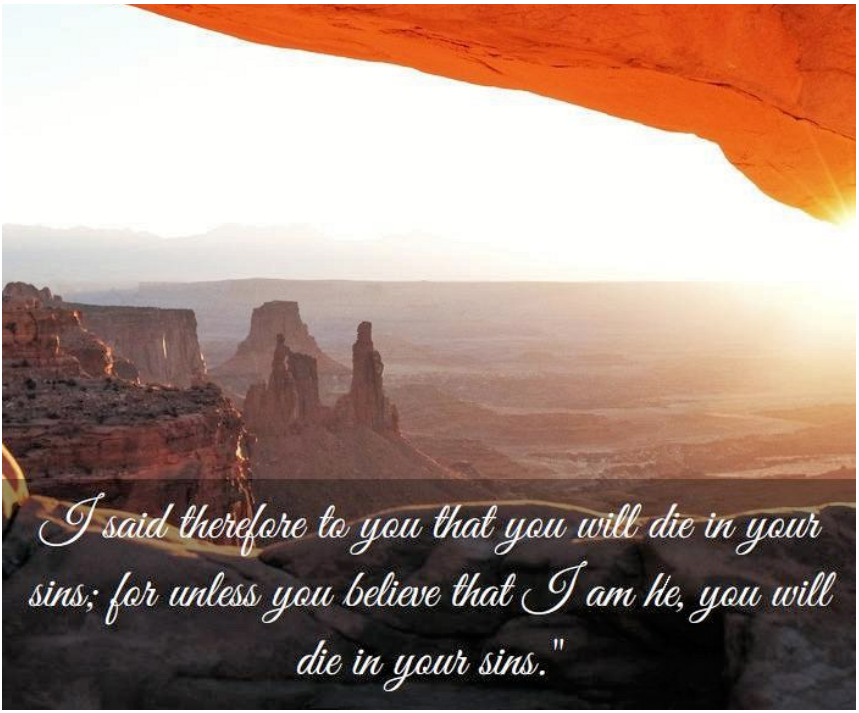
- Each member of the human race is born in *darkness*. (John 1:5)
- Jesus is the one true light. We either choose (through faith) to follow Him or we remain in darkness.
- Those in darkness deny the reality of their situation. In fact, they will often argue vociferously with you, call you judgmental, and all kinds of other things. Lost mankind tends to deeply resent being labeled as lost.

Lessons from John's Gospel

Monday, November 16:
Read John 8:1-24 (Continued)

The Pharisees of Jesus' day were not the only ones with this problem, you will find the same attitudes in our day as well. The good news is that the Holy Spirit takes on the role of convicting a lost person's heart of their need for a Savior. (John 16:8) Our part is to simply proclaim the truth—that man is lost in sin but can be saved through faith:

"I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be … " John 8:24



Lessons from John's Gospel

Tuesday, November 17
Read John 8:25-47

As we saw yesterday, Jesus exhorts His listeners to believe in Him as Messiah lest they die in their sins. And, as we see in Verse 30, many do:

> **Even as He spoke, many put their faith in Him.**

What follows is a dialogue between Jesus and a mixed group of believers and skeptics. The skeptics pounce on His words when Jesus tells those who had believed:

> **… "If you hold to My teaching, you are really My disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free."** John 8:31-32

The skeptics then claim they have never been slaves. Skeptics typically tend to show how out of touch with reality they really are, especially in terms of spiritual things. At that very moment, the Roman eagle flew over the City of Jerusalem, they were enslaved to a religious system that would persecute a man for healing someone on the Sabbath, and they were good and truly enslaved to sin!

Let me draw your attention to two very important things in Verses 31-32. First, we have another mark of what it means to be a disciple, to hold to the teaching of Jesus. I take this to include the Word of God in general, since it is said to be the mind of Christ. (I Corinthians 2:16) If we are not in the Word and attempting to live our lives by it, we don't meet the definition of what it means to be a follower of Jesus!

The second thing is that we all bring baggage to the Christian Life in terms of worldliness in its many forms. We are bound or enslaved to those things. How do we free ourselves from these entanglements? We must turn to the Word and learn the truth as the Spirit teaches us in order to be set free!

Lessons from John's Gospel

Wednesday, November 18: Read Colossians 1

I want to explore the issue of freedom versus slavery as it applies to spiritual matters. Romans 6:17 states:

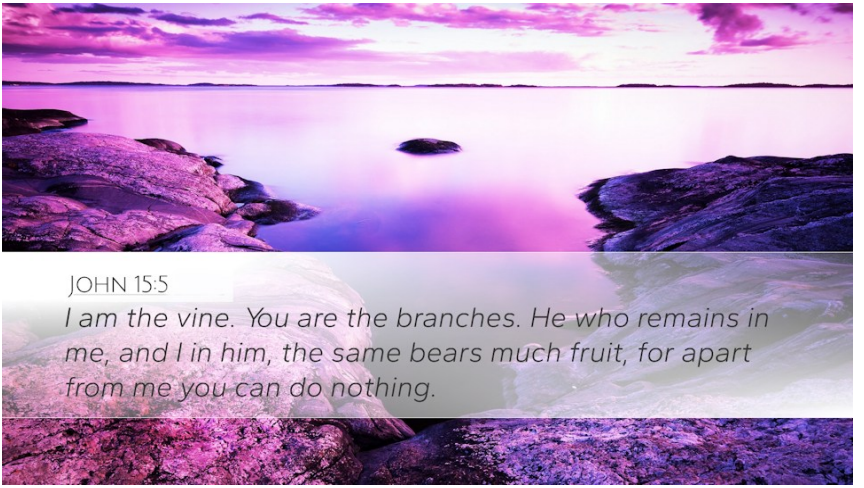
… though you used to be slaves to sin …

Paul is talking about every single member of the human race, for the Scripture is very clear. We are all born:

… dead in trespasses and sins … Ephesians 2:1

… by nature objects of wrath. Ephesians 2:3

In short, human beings are born, and live their days, spiritually in the *slave market of sin*. How is it that we can be set free? Jesus has already told us that we must abide in His Word and that means starting with the Gospel of His grace!



To begin, the Gospel is to put one's faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, specifically regarding who He is (the Son of God) and what He did (died on the cross bearing the sin of mankind and receiving unto Himself the judgment from God that we deserved).

Continued on the next page.

Lessons from John's Gospel

Wednesday, November 18:
Read Colossians 1 (Continued)

Colossians 1:13-14 tells us the result of having that faith:

> **… He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.**

The word translated *redemption* means to purchase an individual, often a captured family member, from the slave market and set him or her free. That's exactly what the Blood of Christ did. It purchased all who believe from the slave market, transferring them from the dominion of Satan into the Kingdom of the Son.

Furthermore, His work on the cross results in the complete remission of sins for all who believe. Mark it down and hold onto it dearly! If you have placed your faith in the person and work of Christ then you are *free from the penalty of sin* both now and for eternity!



Lessons from John's Gospel

Thursday, November 19:
Read Romans 6

I know we have read this chapter before,
but you cannot meditate upon it too often.

Yesterday we learned that freedom from the penalty of sin is part of the salvation that is available to all those who place their faith in the person and work of Christ. But the freedom we have in Christ doesn't stop there, for there is an additional aspect of freedom that God has in mind for His children. Namely, it is freedom from the power of sin.

By this, I mean that the new Christian is very soon going to find out that he or she has an adversary in the flesh who would like to control the soul. There are those who falsely teach that the truly saved Christian no longer has a struggle with sin. The Bible and the experience of Christians everywhere contradict such nonsense.

> **For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.** Galatians 5:17

Thanks be to God that He has provided for even victory over the sin nature. His provision is the cross. Today's reading, Romans Chapter 6, makes it clear that every child of God has been identified with the death and burial of Christ so that they too might walk in newness of life.

Our co-crucifixion with Christ is the key:

> **… because anyone who has died with Christ has been freed from sin.** Romans 6:7

Continued on the next page.

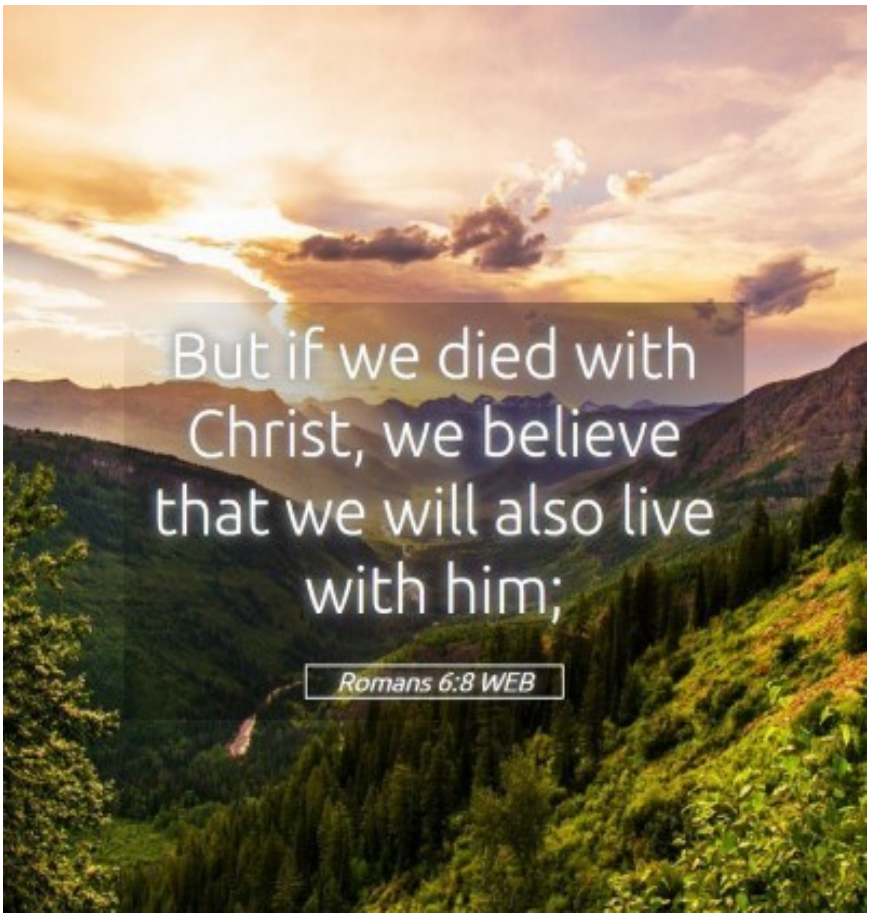
Lessons from John's Gospel

Thursday, November 19:
Read Romans 6 (Continued)

Because we are free from the power of sin is the reason we are told to:

> **... reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive unto God in Christ Jesus.** Romans 6:11

Praise God for the spiritual freedoms, one after the other, that are available to us in Christ Jesus!



Lessons from John's Gospel

Friday, November 20:
Read Philippians 3

As part of His plan of salvation, there is yet one more area of freedom that God has provided. It is future. It is, in fact, part of our confident expectation as God completes His plan of redemption for mankind. This final aspect of redemption is interwoven with the resurrection body that we are to one day receive. Philippians 3:20-21 says it this way:

> **But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables Him to bring everything under His control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body.**

I Corinthians 15 provides more information about this resurrection body just like our Lord's. We will have freedom from the presence of sin. The resurrection body will have no sin nature. What a glorious condition, for we will have a body that will be imperishable, glorious, and spiritual. What a hope for the future to know that:

> **… There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. ..He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making all things new!"** Revelation 21:4-5

This takes us back to John 8 and the words of Jesus:

> **… "If you hold to My teaching, you are really My disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." …** John 8:31-32

It is that very truth that teaches us that the redeemed child of God is free from the penalty of sin, the power of sin, and one day in the future, the very presence of sin.

> **So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed!** John 8:36

Lessons from John's Gospel

Monday: November 23
Read John 10:1-21

Let's consider three verses of Scripture. First, John 10:9:

> **"I am the gate; whoever enters through Me will be saved."**

This verse is about as straightforward a declaration of how a person can be saved as you will find. Let's make sure we understand it. How is Jesus *the gate?* He is the one and only way by which lost mankind can come to the Father. We must go through Him in order to be reconciled to God—for He is the one and only *mediator* between God and man. (I Timothy 2:5)

How do we *enter through Him?* Over and over John tells us—by faith. In fact, in nearly every one of the first nine chapters you will find a call to faith. For example:

> **"I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not <u>believe</u> that I am the one I claim to be ..."** John 8:24

Now, consider a second verse:

> **"The reason My Father loves Me is that I lay down My life—only to take it up again."** John 10:17

These verses refer to the death and resurrection of our Lord. They lay out for us the object of the faith that allows us to pass through the gate that is Jesus Christ. We trust Him to have paid our sin debt by going to the cross in our place.

Lessons from John's Gospel

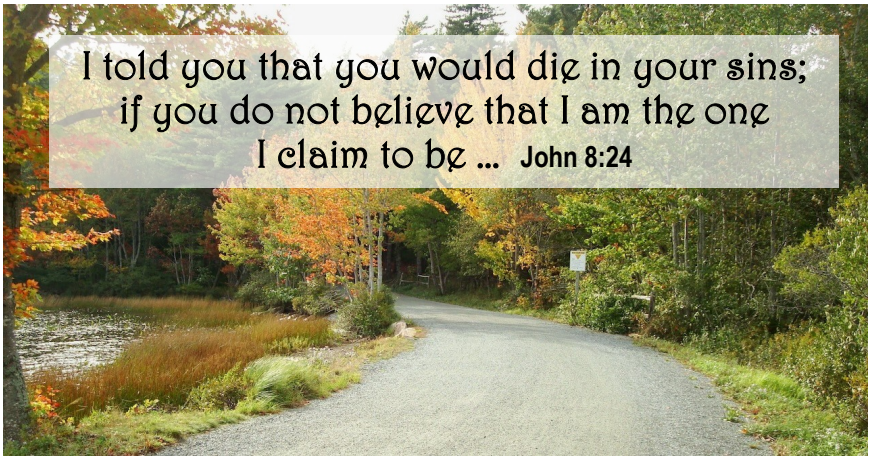
Monday: November 23

Read John 10:1-21 (Continued)

Finally, the third verse to consider:

> **"… If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you did not believe. …"**
>
> John 10:24-25

Jesus has been telling them in narrative after narrative, message after message that He is the One sent to save. In this chapter, He has again made it clear that you can only come to the Father through Him! The means of coming to Him is faith. Unbelief towards Christ leaves you no real options other than to die in your sin. When you see this happen, pray for the Spirit to convict the heart of its need to turn and believe! (John 16:8-9)



Lessons from John's Gospel

Tuesday, November 24:
Read John 10:10

That's right, just one verse for today's reading, for two reasons: First, because of its significance and second, so that you might take the time to memorize it, for it is an awesome promise from our Savior! Here is our text for today:

"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."
John 10:10-ESV

Let's start with the word *abundantly*. The Greek word from which this is translated carries the connotation of: filled to overflowing, of superior quality, and of great benefit.

Jesus is declaring that the quality of life that He came to bring is on a completely different level than the physical life shared by all of lost humanity. It is superior in every way. It is the source of great blessing to all who receive it, and it is capable of filling and overflowing a life to the blessing of all in the vicinity.

Now, let me be clear, this is not a verse that is promising something for the future. It is not about heaven. Jesus is promising a quality of life that is spiritual through and through, and is intended to be the norm for every believer in Jesus Christ as they live out their Christianity!

What is this *Abundant* Life? It is developed extensively throughout much of the remainder of the New Testament. Let me run through a few aspects of what it means to experience such a life of *abundance*. The *Abundant Life* includes:

- Having Christ Himself abide in the believer (John 15:4)
- Having the Holy Spirit produce the fruit of Christlike character in our lives (Galatians 5:22-23)

Lessons from John's Gospel

Tuesday, November 24:
Read John 10:10 (Continued)

- Having every spiritual blessing on reserve for us in the heavenlies such that we can draw upon them while here on this earth (Ephesians 1:3)
- Being able to accomplish all that God has called us to do through the Christ within that strengthens us (Philippians 4:13)
- Having the Holy Spirit as a seal upon our lives such that He is a deposit guaranteeing our glorious future inheritance (Ephesians 1:14)

There are many, many more that could be mentioned. But this should be enough for us to understand that the quality of life that Jesus came to bring cannot be found in this world and is infinitely above it.

Let me leave you with two thoughts as we close today's devotional. First, why has God done such a marvelous thing? Let me suggest that it is to enhance our witness! I find those living such an abundant spiritual life to be very attractive. They draw me, I want what they have. God has left us here and given us a superior quality of life in order to create spiritual hunger in others.

Second, perhaps you are thinking, "*Jesus might have come to bring the Abundant Life, but I don't seem to be experiencing it!* If you have trusted in Christ for eternal life, the *Abundant Life* is available to you, but you and I must grow into it. We must learn to walk by faith and be willing to do things God's way. We must sit under good teaching, gather with other believers to worship, and the *Abundant Life* will come. It is God's plan for you!

Lessons from John's Gospel

Wednesday, November 25: Read Exodus 3

For today, I want to draw your attention to Exodus 3:14 in this well-known narrative of Moses and the burning bush:

> **God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: I AM has sent me to you."**

This is how God answered Moses' query about the name for God that he should report to the Israelites. If the Hebrew words for *I AM* were translated into Greek, they would be ego ami—I AM. This phrase is used seven times in the Gospel of John and I believe it to be very intentional. In the same way that John's Gospel started with the words of Genesis 1:1, these seven references are meant to connect Jesus with the *I AM* of Exodus 3. Today, consider all seven of the I AM references and their significance:

1. *"I AM the bread of life."* (John 6:35) Christ alone is our source of spiritual sustenance.
2. *"I AM the light of the world."* (John 8:12) He is the one source of revelation from God to man. (Colossians 2:3)
3. *"I AM the gate ..."* (John 10:7,9) He is he only way by which mankind can come to God.
4. *"I AM the good shepherd ..."* (John 10:11,14) Salvation begins with Jesus seeking us and providing what we need, not us seeking Him.
5. *"I AM the resurrection and the life."* (John 11:25) In no one else is there new life and hope of a future body that is eternal.
6. *"I AM the way, the truth, and the life. ..."* (John 14:6) Jesus is an exclusive Savior.
7. *"I AM the true vine. ..."* (John 15:1, 5) Jesus is the only source of life.

Happy Thanksgiving

Thursday, November 26:
Read Psalm 136

Let's start by fixing in our thinking Verse 1 of our reading:

> **Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good. His mercy** (love) **endures forever.**

As you read through the rest of the psalm, you can clearly see the history of Israel being described. For this Thanksgiving Day, I would like us to follow the same pattern. Start by thanking the Lord for His innate goodness and enduring mercy, and then go back and let your mind review your life. Ask the Spirit to point out the many instances of the Lord's mercy and lovingkindness to you. I think you will find many times when you did not receive from the hand of the Lord what you deserved, but instead received undeserved blessing you could never have earned.

That's our God! He is good and He is worthy of thanksgiving from those to whom He has been so faithful. So set aside a few minutes today to give the Lord His due. That would be to give Him thanks for His goodness, and His ongoing interest and intervention in our lives.



Lessons from John's Gospel

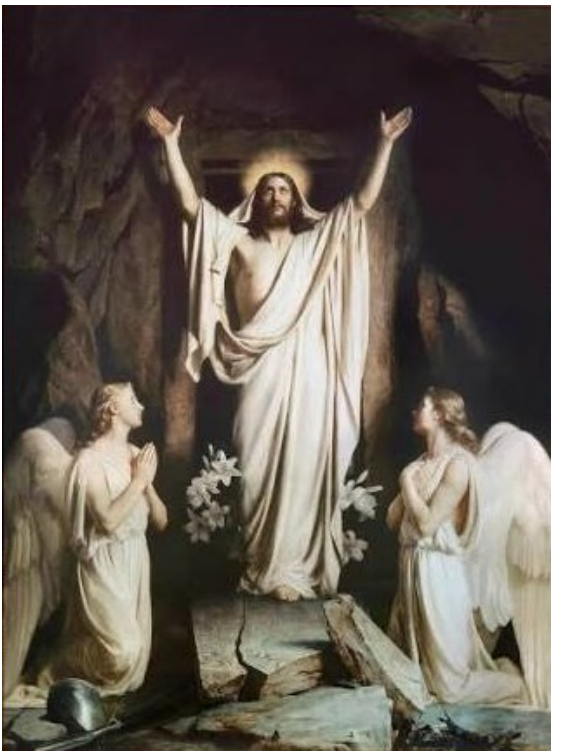
Friday, November 27: Read Acts 3

There is something from our earlier reading in John 10 to which I want to draw your attention, consider it an item of apologetics. Jesus says in John 10:11:

> **"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep."**

Then He adds in Verses 17-18:

> **" … I lay down My life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of My own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again."**



Lessons from John's Gospel

Friday, November 27: Read Acts 3

(Continued)

The skeptic begins by talking as if Jesus is a mythical person who never actually lived. This is impossible to support given the immense amount of historical data. If you get by that hurdle, the skeptic will speak of Jesus as if He was a cult figure who lost control of the situation—accidentally let things go too far—and was killed as the result. Jesus addressed this before the skeptics of our day were born:

> **"I lay down My life … No one takes it from Me … I have the authority to take it up again."** John 10:17-18

Peter addresses this equally clearly in Acts 2:23-24:

> **This man** (Jesus) **was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put Him to death by nailing Him to the cross. But God raised Him from the dead … because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on Him.**

The point of apologetics is this: *God's set purpose and fore-knowledge!*

That's why Christ went to the cross. It was an essential part of God's great plan of redemption. This doesn't in any way abrogate the evil of those who railroaded Jesus through two separate trials in order to hold on to their positions of power. But, it most certainly does make it clear that it would never have happened apart from the plans and purposes of God.

When you encounter skeptics, have them read Acts 2 and John 10 and see what they have to say. In the meantime, hold these truths dear in your own heart!

Finishing Ephesians

Monday, November 30: Read Hebrews 2

We are back to complete our investigation of Ephesians, with an admonition to:

> **Take the helmet of salvation …** Ephesians 6:17

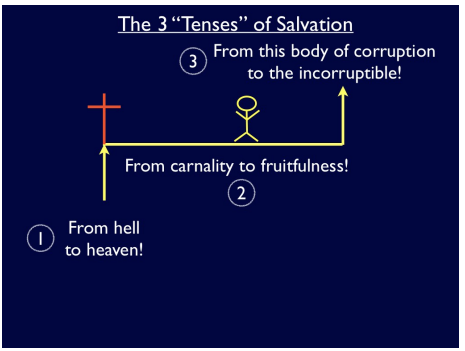
Our reading in Hebrews Chapter 2 reminds us:

> **We must pay careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away … how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation?** Hebrews 2:1,3

I want us to combine these two Scriptures and think about the importance of our salvation in the context of spiritual warfare and the importance of not *drifting away* from the so-great salvation that is ours in Christ.

If you ask most people, including Christians, to define salvation, you are very likely to get an answer that centers on going to heaven. To see our salvation solely in terms of going to heaven at some future point is to have a totally inadequate view of what has been accomplished in the past, what God desires to do in the present, and what He has in store for the future! The Scriptures provide wonderful details on so much more.

Consider our diagram of The *Tenses* of Salvation. Let's start with the first tense of our salvation, that which happened in the *past,* at the point we placed our faith in the person and work of Christ.



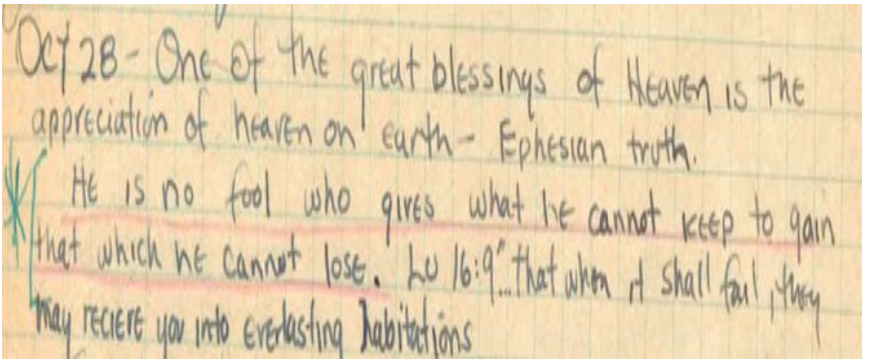
Finishing Ephesians

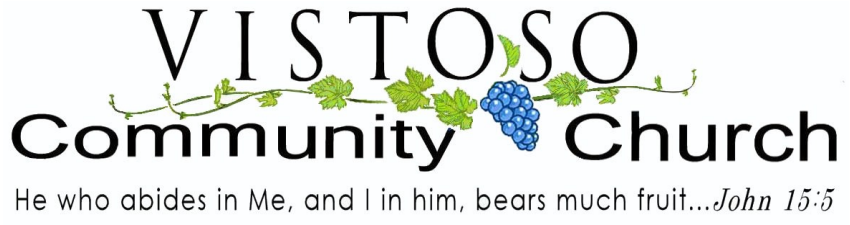
Monday, November 30:
Read Hebrews 2 (Continued)

Just stand back in awe for a minute as you recall that, when you believed, you:

- Received eternal life
- Were justified before a holy God
- Became a new creation in Christ
- Were adopted as a son or daughter
- Had an inheritance set aside in heaven
- Were completely accepted in the Beloved—Jesus Christ
- Were reconciled to God
- Were sealed with the Spirit unto eternity
- Were indwelt by the Spirit
- Became holy and blameless in God's sight

In reality, there is much more! If we regularly think through these things, they will definitely help us to stand firm in our daily spiritual battles. Is it any wonder that missionary Jim Elliot was able to face martyrdom for the sake of ministry after writing the following in his diary?





He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit...*John 15:5*

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