

A Great While Before Day

PART TWO:
July 1–December 31

A New Devotional from
DON & PEARL ANDERSON

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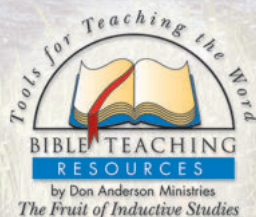
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A GREAT WHILE BEFORE DAY

Volume IX (July – December)

Daily Devotional

by Don Anderson

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Bible Teaching Resources

by Don Anderson Ministries

What Do We Do?

Formed in 1972 as a nonprofit organization, the Ministries is dedicated to excellence in the communication of the Scripture, camping, and counseling. Our ministry verse is Colossians 3:11b: "*Christ is all and in all.*" This, perhaps more than any other verse, sums up the Ministries' philosophy.

Communicating God's Word accurately and clearly is our primary focus. Bible classes are held annually in more than 20 cities in Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana. These classes – conducted in homes, businesses, banks, cafeterias, and public auditoriums – open and free of charge to anyone who is interested in learning more about the Scripture and its relevance to daily life. By design, class environments are warm, friendly, and non-threatening.

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A GREAT WHILE BEFORE DAY

Ghe gospel writer Mark records that Jesus “rising up a great while before day... went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.” (1:35 KJV). Whenever and wherever you spend your time with the Father each day, we hope that these devotional verses and thoughts will be encouraging. Each Scripture selection from the New Testament comes from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD and the Old Testament selections come from the NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION.

July 1—Sacrifice

The word for today is *sacrifice*.

“But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all” (Phil. 2:17).

“But He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God” (Heb. 10:12).

“For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins” (Heb. 10:26).

“Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name” (Heb. 13:15).

“But Samuel replied: ‘Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams’ (1 Sam. 15:22).

“You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise” (Ps. 51:16-17).

“To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice” (Prov. 21:3).

“And walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma” (Eph. 5:2).

“I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship” (Rom. 12:1).

Join me in singing “Is Your All on the Altar?”: “You have longed for sweet peace, and for faith to increase, And have earnestly, fervently prayed; But you cannot have rest or be perfectly blest Until all on the altar is laid. Is your all on the altar of sacrifice laid? Your heart, does the Spirit control? You can only be blest and have peace and sweet rest, As you yield Him your body and soul.”

Prayer: Lord, thank You that sacrifice is nothing more than the sheer ecstasy of giving the best we have to the One we love the most.

July 2—Character

The word for today is character.

Prayer: Lord, the longing of my heart is for the Christlike character: mold me and make me after Thy will, while I am waiting, yielded and still.

“Even if these three men—Noah, Daniel and Job—were in it, they could save only themselves by their righteousness, declares the Sovereign Lord. ... as surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, even if Noah, Daniel and Job were in it, they could save neither son nor daughter. They would save only themselves by their righteousness” (Ezek. 14:14, 20).

“Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away” (Gen. 5:24).

“This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God” (Gen. 6:9).

“Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness” (Gen. 15:6).

“This is what the Lord says: ‘Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,’ declares the Lord” (Jer. 9:23-24).

“Then the Lord said to Satan, ‘Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil’” (Job 1:8).

“Righteousness guards the man of integrity, but wickedness overthrows the sinner” (Prov. 13:6).

Prayer: Lord, crush me, break me and melt me in the furnace of affliction so that I become soft and pliable clay in Your hands.

July 3—Strength

The word for today is strength.

“So he said to me, ‘This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: “Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,” says the Lord Almighty’” (Zech. 4:6).

“But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint” (Isa. 40:31).

“Strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously” (Col. 1:11).

“But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded” (2 Chron. 15:7).

“Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all” (1 Chron. 29:12).

“It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect” (Ps. 18:32).

“The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song” (Ps. 28:7).

“The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace” (Ps. 29:11).

“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble” (Ps. 46:1).

“Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always” (Ps. 105:4).

“And He has said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me” (2 Cor. 12:9).

I am singing a verse of “He Giveth More Grace”: “When we have exhausted our store of endurance, When our strength has failed ere the day is half done, When we reach the end of our hoarded resources, Our Father’s full giving is only begun. His love has no limit; His grace has no measure; His pow’r has no boundary known unto men. For out of His infinite riches in Jesus, He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again!”

Prayer: Lord, I am joining Paul in his testimony to the Philippians: “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”

July 4—A Pearl for Today

“When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you” (Deut. 8:10).

AMERICA, AMERICA, GOD SHED HIS GRACE ON THEE

On July 4, 2003, I wrote in my journal: “Don is at work on the devotional book. I am having a good time being at home doing some work and relaxing. I feel grateful and thankful for all I have. God is truly good to us.”

My thoughts turn to how privileged I am to live in this great country.

It is difficult for me not to take umbrage the remarks of ungrateful Americans criticizing the U.S. My younger brother retired from the Air Force after serving 20 years. My older brother served in and retired from the Army. He received a medal for driving a tank to rescue soldiers pinned down under enemy gunfire. One of my cousins was killed in World War II. A great price has been paid for our freedom. Let’s take every opportunity to thank our military personnel and their families.

Please:

- Pray for our country.
- Pray for our President.
- Pray for those in leadership.

“I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

July 5—Tolerance

The word for today is *tolerance*.

“And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, ‘The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness’” (Exod. 34:6).

“But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness” (Ps. 86:15).

“Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?” (Rom. 2:4).

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness” (Gal. 5:22).

“With all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love” (Eph. 4:2).

“And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you” (Col. 3:12-13).

“But you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance” (2 Tim. 3:10).

“Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction” (2 Tim. 4:2).

“The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9).

Prayer: Lord, thank You for Your promise in Psalm 89:33: “But I will not take my love from him, nor will I ever betray my faithfulness.”

July 6—Promises

The word for today is promises.

“And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:49).

“Praise be to the Lord, who has given rest to his people Israel just as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave through his servant Moses” (1 Kings 8:56).

“From the offspring of this man, according to promise, God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus” (Acts 13:23).

“In the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago” (Titus 1:2).

“For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, ‘I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply you.’ And thus, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise” (Heb. 6:13-15).

“Therefore, let us fear lest, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it” (Heb. 4:1).

“For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust” (2 Pet. 1:4).

“For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised” (Heb. 10:36).

“Not one of all the Lord’s good promises to the house of Israel failed; every one was fulfilled” (Josh. 21:45).

Join me in singing: “Standing on the Promises”: “Standing on the promises that cannot fail, when the howling storms of doubt and fear assail, By the living Word of God I shall prevail, Standing on the promises of God. Standing, standing, Standing on the promises of God my Savior; Standing, standing, I’m standing on the promises of God.”

Prayer: Lord, greater than the promise is the One who promises: “God is not a man, that he should be, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Doth he promise and not fulfill?”

July 7—Presence

The word for today is *presence*.

“I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you” (Gen. 28:15-16).

“The Lord replied, ‘My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest’” (Exod. 33:14).

“You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand” (Ps. 16:11).

“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me” (Ps. 23:4).

“The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged” (Deut. 31:8).

“Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, ‘Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,’ even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you” (Ps. 139:7-12).

“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble” (Ps. 46:1).

“Let your character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, ‘I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,’ so that we confidently say, ‘The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?’” (Heb. 13:5-6).

“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand” (Isa. 41:10).

I am singing the refrain of “Never Alone”: “No, never alone! No, never alone! He promised never to leave me, Never to leave me alone; No, never alone! No, never alone! He promised never to leave me. Never to leave me alone.”

Prayer: Lord, what a comfort to know that You have promised to never leave us or forsake us. You will always be there for us.

July 8—Protection

The word for today is *protection*.

“After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: ‘Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward’” (Gen. 15:1).

“The Lord said to Joshua, ‘Do not be afraid of them; I have given them into your hand. Not one of them will be able to withstand you’” (Josh. 10:8).

“All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord’s, and he will give all of you into our hands” (1 Sam. 17:47).

“For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways” (Ps. 91:11).

“I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety” (Ps. 4:8).

“But let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you. For surely, O Lord, you bless the righteous; you surround them with your favor as with a shield” (Ps. 5:11-12).

“The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?” (Ps. 27:1).

“‘No weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and this is their vindication from me,’ declares the Lord” (Isa. 54:17).

Join me in a verse of “Soldiers of Christ, Arise”: “Soldiers of Christ, arise, And put your armor on, Strong in the strength which God supplies Thru His eternal Son; Strong in the Lord of hosts, And in His mighty pow’r Who in the strength of Jesus trusts Is more than conqueror.”

Prayer: Lord, what peace prevails when I think of Jesus’ words on the night He was arrested: “He will at once put at my disposal more than 12 legions [7,200] of angels.”

July 9—Worship

The word for today is worship.

“He said to his servants, ‘Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you’” (Gen. 22:5).

“Do not worship any other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God” (Exod. 34:14).

“At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship and said: ‘Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised.’ In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing” (Job 1:20-22).

“But the Lord, who brought you up out of Egypt with mighty power and outstretched arm, is the one you must worship. To him you shall bow down and to him offer sacrifices” (2 Kings 17:36).

“Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness” (Ps. 29:2).

“All the earth bows down to you; they sing praise to you, they sing praise to your name. Selah” (Ps. 66:4).

“Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care. Today, if you hear his voice” (Ps. 95:6-7).

“Exalt the Lord our God and worship at his footstool; he is holy” (Ps. 99:5).

“Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east, and have come to worship Him” (Matt. 2:2).

“And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, ‘Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come.’ And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, ‘Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created’” (Rev. 4:8-11).

Prayer: Lord, I find myself singing with Charles Wesley: “O for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer’s praise, the glories of my God and King, the triumphs of His grace.”

July 10—Provision

The word for today is *provision*.

“Abraham answered, ‘God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.’ And the two of them went on together. ... Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place The Lord Will Provide. And to this day it is said, ‘On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided’” (Gen. 22:8, 13-14).

“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever” (Ps. 23:5-6).

“God’s voice thunders in marvelous ways; he does great things beyond our understanding” (Job 37:5).

“The Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes” (Ps. 118:23).

“Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all” (1 Chron. 29:12).

“For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you” (Matt. 6:32-33).

“Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall” (Ps. 55:22).

“And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:19).

“Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us” (Eph. 3:20).

Prayer: Lord, joy abounds in knowing that You fed the multitudes with five loaves and a couple of fish and then had twelve baskets full left over. You sure do it up right!

July 11—A Pearl for Today

“If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:6-7).

FELLOWSHIP WITH THE SHEPHERD AND OUR FELLOW SHEEP

One evening on our way home from a Bible study, Don informed me that I had embarrassed him in front of a large audience. Before I could work up a full head of steam, he explained. While sitting in his chair, teaching, he had crossed his legs, and, to his chagrin, noticed he had on one obviously black sock and one obviously blue sock. Those of you who have only been the recipients of neatly stacked socks in your drawer will not appreciate this

but my fellow laundry workers will know exactly what I mean. One can get severe eyestrain separating a pile of black and blue socks in artificial light. Well, my friends, I have found the answer: send one dollar plus ten cents for handling and one label from Fruit of the Loom socks and I'll tell you! Just kidding—I wouldn't do that to you! I will remind you of some old song lyrics, though: "Step into the sunshine, get out of the shade." Stepping into the sunlight takes care of the matchless sock problem beautifully. I now take the laundry basket outside into the bright sunshine and each pair of socks practically mates itself. (Except, of course, those socks eaten by the washing machine ... but that is another inside story for my fellow laundry workers.)

Some folks prefer walking in darkness. About two hours before a wedding at which Don was to officiate in Dallas, I checked his suit to make sure it was not wrinkled. I opened the suit coat to find no pants hanging underneath! I quickly checked through the other clothes in the hotel room closet and, sure enough, no pants! When I told Don, he rushed over and searched the suit coat as if he could *will* a pair of trousers to be there. Don was not amused—and it's just as well he couldn't see the horrified expression on his face. Things turned out fine though. We found out where the wedding party had rented their tuxedos, and the shop had a pair of pants in the right size. The lady was kind enough to hem them while we drove over to pick them up. In the church's black robe, Don looked even more distinguished than usual. I suggested at the reception that Don gravitate to the darkest corner in the room where very few people would notice he had on a blue suit coat and black pants.

1 John tells us to walk in the light. If we say we have fellowship with Christ, and do not walk in the light, we do not practice the truth. We are like mismatched clothes. When we "walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1:7). Then we make a matching pair with Jesus.

Matching up with Jesus helps us coordinate with the folks around us.

July 12—Eternity

The word for today is *eternity*.

“For this is what the high and lofty One says—he who lives forever, whose name is holy: ‘I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite’” (Isa. 57:15).

“The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. He will drive out your enemy before you, saying, ‘Destroy him!’” (Deut. 33:27).

“And not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption” (Heb. 9:12).

“And behold, one came to Him and said, ‘Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?’” (Matt. 19:16).

“And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life” (Matt. 25:46).

“Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses” (1 Tim. 6:12).

“To those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life” (Rom. 2:7).

“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 6:23).

“Even as Thou gavest Him authority over all mankind, that to all whom Thou hast given Him, He may give eternal life. And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent” (John 17:2-3).

Prayer: Lord, with Paul I am keeping my focus on the eternal: “While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

July 13—Rest

The word for today is rest.

“What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me. I have no peace, no quietness; I have no rest, but only turmoil” (Job 3:25-26).

“So I declared on oath in my anger, ‘They shall never enter my rest’” (Ps. 95:11).

“Be at rest once more, O my soul, for the Lord has been good to you” (Ps. 116:7).

“As I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest’ ... And to whom did He swear that they should not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient?” (Heb. 3:11, 18).

“This is what the Lord says: ‘Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you said, “We will not walk in it”’” (Jer. 6:16).

“To whom he said, ‘This is the resting place, let the weary rest’; and, ‘This is the place of repose’—but they would not listen” (Isa. 28:12).

“The Lord replied, ‘My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest’” (Exod. 33:14).

“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light” (Matt. 11:28-30).

I am singing a verse of “Jesus, I Am Resting, Resting”: “Jesus, I am resting, resting In the joy of what Thou art; I am finding out the greatness Of Thy loving heart. Thou hast bid me gaze upon Thee, And Thy beauty fills my soul, For by Thy transforming power, Thou has made me whole. Jesus, I am resting, resting In the joy of what Thou art; I am finding out the greatness Of Thy loving heart.”

Prayer: Lord, My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from Him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; He is my fortress; I will never be shaken.

July 14—Blood of Christ

The words for today are *blood of Christ*.

“Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ” (1 Pet. 1:18-19).

“And through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven” (Col. 1:20).

“For this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins” (Matt. 26:28).

“Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him” (Rom. 5:9).

“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace” (Eph. 1:7).

“But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ” (Eph. 2:13).

“And not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption” (Heb. 9:12).

“How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Heb. 9:14).

“And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (Heb. 9:22).

“And I said to him, ‘My lord, you know.’ And he said to me, ‘These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb’” (Rev. 7:14).

I am singing a verse of “There Is Power in the Blood”: “Would you be free from the burden of sin? There’s pow’r in the blood, pow’r in the blood; Would you o’er evil a victory, win? There’s wonderful pow’r in the blood. There is pow’r, pow’r, wonder-working pow’r In the blood of the Lamb; There is pow’r, pow’r, wonder-working pow’r In the precious blood of the Lamb.”

Prayer: Lord, thank You for sending Your Son to purchase our salvation and to make peace through the blood of His Cross.

July 15—Conversion

The word for today is *conversion*.

“Therefore, being sent on their way by the church, they were passing through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and were bringing great joy to all the brethren” (Acts 15:3).

“My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth, and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death, and will cover a multitude of sins” (James 5:19-20).

“Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you” (Ps. 51:13).

“And said, ‘Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven’” (Matt. 18:3).

“Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord” (Lam. 3:40).

“Repent therefore and return, that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19).

“The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple” (Ps. 19:7).

“Say to them, ‘As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, O house of Israel?’” (Ezek. 33:11).

“Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come” (2 Cor. 5:17).

I am singing the third verse of “There Is Power in the Blood”: “Would you be whiter, much whiter than snow? There’s pow’r in the blood, pow’r in the blood; Sin-stains are lost in its life-giving flow; There’s wonderful pow’r in the blood. There is pow’r, pow’r, wonder-working pow’r In the blood of the Lamb; There is pow’r, pow’r, wonder-working pow’r In the precious blood of the Lamb.”

Prayer: Lord, I am reminded of Your words to the Gerasene man: “Go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He had mercy on you.”

July 16—New Birth

The words for today are *new birth*.

“‘Come now, let us reason together,’ says the Lord. ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool’” (Isa. 1:18).

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12-13).

“For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God” (1 Pet. 1:23).

“My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you” (Gal. 4:19).

“If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him” (1 John 2:29).

“No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother” (1 John 3:9-10).

“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith” (1 John 5:4).

“We know that no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of God keeps him and the evil one does not touch him” (1 John 5:18).

“Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again’” (John 3:7).

Prayer: Lord, Your invitation recorded in Revelation 3:20 is on my mind: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me.”

July 17—Greed

The word for today is greed.

“Achan replied, ‘It is true! I have sinned against the Lord, the God of Israel. This is what I have done: When I saw in the plunder a beautiful robe from Babylonia, two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. They are hidden in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath’” (Josh. 7:20-21).

“All day long he craves for more, but the righteous give without sparing” (Prov. 21:26).

“And they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality, for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness” (Eph. 4:19).

“Not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, uncontentious, free from the love of money. ... Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain” (1 Tim. 3:3, 8).

“They are like a lion hungry for prey, like a great lion crouching in cover” (Ps. 17:12).

“Such is the end of all who go after ill-gotten gain; it takes away the lives of those who get it” (Prov. 1:19).

“A greedy man brings trouble to his family, but he who hates bribes will live” (Prov. 15:27).

“They are dogs with mighty appetites; they never have enough. They are shepherds who lack understanding; they all turn to their own way, each seeks his own gain” (Isa. 56:11).

Prayer: Lord, we recall Your words to David following his sin: “And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more.”

July 18—A Pearl for Today

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45).

A SERVANT FOR JESUS’ SAKE

This verse describes our Lord as a suffering servant. What an example He left us to follow. Let me give you a servant-heart litmus test. You know you have a servant’s heart when you are treated like a servant and don’t resent it! A second test of Christlike service is when you feel that nothing needing to be done is beneath you.

Years ago, as a young mother, I was the recipient of the loving care of a special servant. Grant and Bernice Whipple were the directors of The Firs, where we were on staff. I was sick as the “proverbial dog” with the flu. Bernice came to help me with Andy, who was a baby at the time. I was embarrassed because it was all I could do to keep Andy changed and put the diapers in the pail. Before long I heard her in the bathroom, rinsing out

those dirty diapers. Here was the camp director's wife in my bathroom, handling soiled diapers! Her kind service made an unforgettable impression on me.

Bernice was willing to get her hands dirty, the type of sacrifice which recalls Matthew 20:26, 27 on servanthood: "It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become GREAT among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave" (emphasis added). Bernice will always remain, in my mind and heart, a GREAT woman and servant of God. She saw a need and she met it!

Remember our Lord in the upper room? Dirty feet needed to be washed. Jesus felt no act of service was beneath Him. He got up from the supper table and began to wash the disciples' feet, wiping them with a towel.

A pastor's wife told me the following story. The church needed someone to clean the coffee pot on Sundays. The small church had no kitchen and only a tiny bathroom, so washing the pot was a difficult task. One man kept saying, "Someone needs to clean the coffee pot. It grows mold if it is left from week to week." He obviously felt the task was not for him. The pastor's wife told me that, while driving home from church that day, she began to think critically of this man. "Lord, he is just like the disciples sitting around with dirty feet!" she exclaimed. Then the Lord quickly reminded her, "*You* left with the coffee pot still dirty." She now happily cleans the coffee pot every Sunday!

Do you know any coffee pots, diapers, or feet that need to be washed?

Most people wish to serve God, but only in an advisory capacity.

July 19—Sower of Discord

The words for today are sower of discord.

A scoundrel and villain, who goes about with a corrupt mouth, who winks with his eye, signals with his feet and motions with his fingers, who plots evil with deceit in his heart—he always stirs up dissension. Therefore disaster will overtake him in an instant; he will suddenly be destroyed—without remedy. There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers" (Prov. 6:12-19).

“Your tongue plots destruction; it is like a sharpened razor, you who practice deceit. You love evil rather than good, falsehood rather than speaking the truth. Selah. You love every harmful word, O you deceitful tongue!” (Ps. 52:2-4).

“A fool’s lips bring him strife, and his mouth invites a beating. A fool’s mouth is his undoing, and his lips are a snare to his soul. The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to a man’s inmost parts” (Prov. 18:6-8).

“Words from a wise man’s mouth are gracious, but a fool is consumed by his own lips. At the beginning his words are folly; at the end they are wicked madness—and the fool multiplies words. No one knows what is coming—who can tell him what will happen after him?” (Eccles. 10:12-14).

“And I say to you, that every careless word that men shall speak, they shall render account for it in the day of judgment. ‘For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned’” (Matt. 12:36-37).

“All day long they twist my words; they are always plotting to harm me” (Ps. 56:5).

“His speech is smooth as butter, yet war is in his heart; his words are more soothing than oil, yet they are drawn swords” (Ps. 55:21).

“They sharpen their tongues like swords and aim their words like deadly arrows. They shoot from ambush at the innocent man; they shoot at him suddenly, without fear” (Ps. 64:3-4).

Prayer: Lord, Paul’s words to the Ephesians are on my mind: “Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth, each one of you, with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.... Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear.”

July 20—Jealousy

The word for today is *jealousy*.

“Now his older son was in the field, and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. And he summoned one of the servants and began inquiring what these things might be. And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he

has received him back safe and sound.’ But he became angry, and was not willing to go in; and his father came out and began entreating him. But he answered and said to his father, ‘Look! For so many years I have been serving you, and I have never neglected a command of yours; and yet you have never given me a kid, that I might be merry with my friends; but when this son of yours came, who has devoured your wealth with harlots, you killed the fattened calf for him.’ And he said to him, ‘My child, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to be merry and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live, and was lost and has been found’” (Luke 15:25-32).

“In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. Then the Lord said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it’” (Gen. 4:3-7).

“For you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?” (1 Cor. 3:3).

“Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? We are not stronger than He, are we?” (1 Cor. 10:22).

“For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin” (2 Cor. 11:2).

“Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame” (Song of Sol. 8:6).

“Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant” (1 Cor. 13:4).

Prayer: Lord, jealousy ceases to be an issue in the heart of a broken servant who has discovered the joy of giving, with no thought of return. Make me a blessing!

July 21—Filling of the Spirit

The words for today are *filling of the Spirit*.

“And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak the word of God with boldness” (Acts 4:31).

“And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ” (Eph. 5:18-21);

“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh” (Gal. 5:16).

“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God” (Rom. 8:16).

“But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back some of the price of the land?’” (Acts 5:3).

“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption” (Eph. 4:30).

“Do not quench the Spirit” (1 Thess. 5:19).

“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body” (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

“Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God” (Col. 3:16).

Join me in singing the little chorus “Spirit of the Living God”: “Spirit of the Living God, Fall fresh on me, Spirit of the Living God, Fall fresh on me, Melt me, mold me, Fill me, use me. Spirit of the Living God, Fall fresh on me.”

Prayer: Spirit of God, I would not grieve You by sin or quench You by saying no. Cleanse my heart and fill me, so that Your words are on my lips, Your works are the labor of my hands, and Your way is the pathway of my feet.

July 22—Weakness

The word for today is *weakness*.

"I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

"And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Cor. 2:3-4).

"In your unfailing love you will lead the people you have redeemed. In your strength you will guide them to your holy dwelling" (Exod. 15:13).

"I will refresh the weary and satisfy the faint" (Jer. 31:25).

"But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint" (Isa. 40:31).

"And He has said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.' Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:9-10).

"But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded" (2 Chron. 15:7).

"Be exalted, O Lord, in your strength; we will sing and praise your might" (Ps. 21:13).

"It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect" (2 Sam. 22:33).

"The Lord is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. He is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him" (Exod. 15:2).

"Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might" (Eph. 6:10).

"Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us" (Eph. 3:20).

Join me in a verse of "Day by Day": "Day by day and with each passing moment, Strength I find to meet my trials here; Trusting in my Father's wise bestowment, I've no cause for worry or for fear. He whose heart is kind beyond all measure Give unto each day what He deems best.

Lovingly, its part of pain and pleasure, Mingling toil with peace and rest.”

Prayer: Lord, thank You that Your strength is more than adequate when we are submissive to Your sovereignty.

July 23—Radiance

The word for today is *radiance*.

“When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the Testimony in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the Lord. When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, his face was radiant, and they were afraid to come near him. But Moses called to them; so Aaron and all the leaders of the community came back to him, and he spoke to them. Afterward all the Israelites came near him, and he gave them all the commands the Lord had given him on Mount Sinai. When Moses finished speaking to them, he put a veil over his face. But whenever he entered the Lord’s presence to speak with him, he removed the veil until he came out. And when he came out and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, they saw that his face was radiant. Then Moses would put the veil back over his face until he went in to speak with the Lord” (Exod. 34:29-35).

“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace” (Num. 6:24-26).

“To whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27).

“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified” (Rom. 8:29-30).

“And fixing their gaze on him, all who were sitting in the Council saw his face like the face of an angel” (Acts 6:15).

“But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:18).

“Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is” (1 John 3:2).

Prayer: *Lord, Romans 12:2 fills my thoughts: “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”*

July 24—Hospitality

The word for today is hospitality.

“An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach” (1 Tim. 3:2).

“But hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled” (Titus 1:8).

“Be hospitable to one another without complaint” (1 Pet. 4:9).

“Now as they were traveling along, He entered a certain village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. And she had a sister called Mary, who moreover was listening to the Lord’s word, seated at His feet. But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up to Him, and said, ‘Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me.’ But the Lord answered and said to her, ‘Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her’” (Luke 10:38-42).

“And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, ‘If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay.’ And she prevailed upon us” (Acts 16:15).

“Contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality” (Rom. 12:13).

“So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith” (Gal. 6:10).

“Let love of the brethren continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it” (Heb. 13:1-2).

Prayer: Lord, may You find an open heart and an open home as You examine me. May I find joy in serving others.

July 25—A Pearl for Today

“So He said, ‘I know! I’ll tear down my barns and build bigger ones. Then I’ll have room enough to STORE EVERYTHING’” (Luke 12:18 NLT).

BALANCE IN THE CHECKBOOK

It is amazing how the Depression years affected those of us who went through them. Just in case you are thinking, “I didn’t know Pearl was that old,” bless you! Actually, our Great Depression lasted longer than most. It took several years for word to filter back to Oklahoma that the Depression was over. We finally figured it out when the WPA wouldn’t dig us any more cellars or build any more outhouses. It really came home when there was no longer that big pot of beans cooking on the wood stove for our school lunch.

We learned never to throw anything away. One could never tell when something might come in handy. This kind of thinking carried over into my later life. I even lost a roommate in college because of my habit of using half a Kleenex and saving the other half for later use. Sometimes I would have a dozen or so lying on my dresser before I would get around to using them.

When we lived in Bellingham, Washington, I finally broke one “saving” habit. A lady spread this gossip news over the neighborhood: “Pearl leaves dirty dishwater in her sink all day.” It seemed so wasteful to throw out that warm sudsy water. I will have to admit that, by the time she got there, the water had lost some of its winsomeness.

Hoarding things is a temptation for people who have been through stressful financial times. This was the problem of the rich man in Luke 12. “Store everything.” The idea almost sounds good doesn’t it? Yet there is a delicate line between being frugal, saving, and hoarding. Balance is crucial. As Christians we are to be obedient to God who, over and over in His word, instructs us to care for the poor. Many wonderful organizations not only need financial support but can also use the goods we cannot use anymore. We need to ask the Lord if there are possessions we need to pass on to others. I remember taking an old sewing machine to be fixed. The repairman told me it was beyond hope, and he mentioned a Christian

organization that accepted old sewing machines and used the parts in Mexico.

May I ask you, with an empathetic heart, if there are some things of yours that could be used to minister to others in need? Don't hold onto anything too tightly. The tighter we hold on, the more it hurts when God pries our fingers loose.

When it comes to giving, some people stop at nothing.

July 26—Conflict

The word for today is *conflict*.

“What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. And you are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God” (James 4:1-4).

“For you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?” (1 Cor. 3:3).

“I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord. Indeed, true comrade, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel, together with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life” (Phil. 4:2-3).

“I wrote something to the church; but Diotrophes, who loves to be first among them, does not accept what we say. For this reason, if I come, I will call attention to his deeds which he does, unjustly accusing us with wicked words; and not satisfied with this, neither does he himself receive the brethren, and he forbids those who desire to do so, and puts them out of the church” (3 John 9-10).

“Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds” (2 Tim. 4:14).

“But He knew their thoughts, and said to them, ‘Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and a house divided against itself falls’” (Luke 11:17).

“Then I will answer the one who taunts me, for I trust in your word” (Ps. 119:42).

“For even when we came into Macedonia our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted on every side: conflicts without, fears within” (2 Cor. 7:5).

“No weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and this is their vindication from me,” declares the Lord” (Isa. 54:17).

Join me in singing a couple of verses of “The Servant Song”: “Brother, let me be your servant, Let me be as Christ to you; Pray that I may have the grace to Let you be my servant too. We are pilgrims on a journey; We are brothers on the road. We are here to help each other Walk the mile and bear the load.”

Prayer: Lord, keep me focused on the conflict with Satan instead of conflicts with the saints.

July 27—Judgment Seat

The words for today are judgment seat.

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10).

“So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Rom. 14:12).

“Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment” (James 3:1).

“Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work. If any man’s work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward” (1 Cor. 3:12-14).

“But there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. Accordingly, whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in the inner rooms shall be proclaimed upon the housetops” (Luke 12:2-3).

“You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not complain, brethren, against one another, that you yourselves

may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door” (James 5:8-9).

“See, the Sovereign Lord comes with power, and his arm rules for him. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him” (Isa. 40:10).

“In the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing” (2 Tim. 4:8).

“I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, in order that no one take your crown” (Rev. 3:11).

“Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done” (Rev. 22:12).

“And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory” (1 Pet. 5:4).

Prayer: Lord, help me to be diligent to present myself approved unto You as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.

July 28—Tribulation Period

The words for today are *tribulation period*.

“Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming. It is close at hand—a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness. Like dawn spreading across the mountains a large and mighty army comes, such as never was of old nor ever will be in ages to come” (Joel 2:1-2).

“The great day of the Lord is near—near and coming quickly. Listen! The cry on the day of the Lord will be bitter, the shouting of the warrior there. That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of trouble and ruin, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness, a day of trumpet and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the corner towers” (Zeph. 1:14-16).

“Alas for that day! For the day of the Lord is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty” (Joel 1:15).

“The Lord thunders at the head of his army; his forces are beyond number, and mighty are those who obey his command. The day of the Lord is great; it is dreadful. Who can endure it?” (Joel 2:11).

“And I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, ‘Come’” (Rev. 6:1).

“And when He broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. And I saw the seven angels who stand before God; and seven trumpets were given to them” (Rev. 8:1-2).

“And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels who had seven plagues, which are the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished” (Rev. 15:1).

“And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war” (Rev. 19:11).

“Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land, you who do what He commands. Seek righteousness, seek humility; perhaps you will be sheltered on the day of the Lord’s anger” (Zeph. 2:3).

Join me in a verse of “Work, for the Night Is Coming”: “Work, for the night is coming, Work through the morning hours; Work while the dew is sparkling, Work ‘mid springing flowers; Work while the day grows brighter, Under the glowing sun; Work, for the night is coming, When man’s work is done.”

Prayer: Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him.

July 29—Living Water

The words for today are living water.

“My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water” (Jer. 2:13).

“Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, “From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.”’ But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified” (John 7:37-39).

“As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?” (Ps. 42:1-2).

“O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water” (Ps. 63:1).

“With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation” (Isa. 12:3).

“And He said to me, ‘It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost’” (Rev. 21:6).

“And he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Rev. 22:1).

“And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost” (Rev. 22:17).

Let’s do a verse of “Springs of Living Water”: “I thirsted in the barren land of sin and shame, And nothing satisfying there I found, But to the blessed cross of Christ one day I came, Where springs of living water did abound. Drinking at the springs of living water, Happy now am I, My soul they satisfy; Drinking at the springs of living water, O wonderful and bountiful supply.”

Prayer: Lord, what a glorious day it will be when the Lamb in the center of the throne shall be our Shepherd, shall guide us to the springs of the water of life, and shall wipe every tear from our eyes.

July 30—Faithfulness

The word for today is *faithfulness*.

“Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness” (Lam. 3:22-23).

“Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands” (Deut. 7:9).

“Many a man claims to have unfailing love, but a faithful man who can find?” (Prov. 20:6).

"A faithful man will be richly blessed, but one eager to get rich will not go unpunished" (Prov. 28:20).

"God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1:9).

"Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass" (1 Thess. 5:24).

"But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one" (2 Thess. 3:3).

"If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself" (2 Tim. 2:13).

"But I will not take my love from him, nor will I ever betray my faithfulness" (Ps. 89:33).

"It is good to praise the Lord and make music to your name, O Most High, to proclaim your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night" (Ps. 92:1-2).

Prayer: Lord, in the words of the wonderful old hymn, "Great is Thy Faithfulness": "Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father, there is no shadow of turning with Thee; Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not; as Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be."

July 31—Distractions

The word for today is *distractions*.

"Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God really say, "You must not eat from any tree in the garden"?' ... When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it" (Gen. 3:1, 6).

"Little children, guard yourselves from idols" (1 John 5:21).

"Samson went down to Timnah and saw there a young Philistine woman. When he returned, he said to his father and mother, 'I have seen a Philistine woman in Timnah; now get her for me as my wife'" (Judg. 14:1-2).

"One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful" (2 Sam. 11:2).

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal” (Matt. 6:19).

“And during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him” (John 13:2).

“In order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes” (2 Cor. 2:11).

“But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ” (2 Cor. 11:3).

Prayer: Lord, thank You that greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world. You have already won the victory at the cross.

August 1—A Pearl for Today

“And the Lord’s bondservant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all” (2 Tim. 2:24).

SPREADING MANURE OR FERTILIZER

When Don was speaking at a church on a special occasion, a lady came up afterwards and gushed on and on about what a wonderful sermon Don had preached—it was the best message she had ever heard—etcetera, etcetera. Pretty soon, I began to suspect that she was delivering another sort of message. I mean, Don had done a good job, but he said himself that the sermon had not been one of his better efforts.

I looked around, and sure enough, not ten feet away stood the woman’s pastor, listening to her.

In 1 Samuel 18:7, we read that David sang, “Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten thousands.” The next verse continues, “Then Saul became very angry,” and later the text reads, “And Saul looked at David with suspicion from that day on.” These women, with their insensitivity in praising David before Saul, added fuel to the fire igniting in Saul’s heart. They fanned the flames by complimenting one man at the expense of another.

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 1:12, “Now I mean this, that each of you is saying, ‘I am of Paul,’ and ‘I of Apollos,’ and ‘I of Cephas,’ and ‘I of Christ.’”

I adjure you. I beseech you. If you have a multiple church staff, popular adult Sunday school teachers, or visiting speakers, please show genuine

appreciation to **ALL** of them. Even if some do not minister to your specific age group, do not tear down one person by overly complimenting another. Doing so is sowing discord. Proverbs 6:19 contains a list of seven things God hates. Number seven is “And one who spreads strife among brothers.” Be a person who pours on the oil that keeps **ALL** the members of the body of Christ working smoothly together.

Just because we were created from dust does not give us the right to treat people like dirt.

August 2—Opportunities

The word for today is *opportunities*.

“And this do, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to be awakened from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we first believed” (Rom. 13:11).

“Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest” (John 4:35).

“We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work” (John 9:4).

“For a wide door for effective service has opened to me, and there are many adversaries” (1 Cor. 16:9).

“Now when I came to Troas for the gospel of Christ and when a door was opened for me in the Lord” (2 Cor. 2:12).

“Praying at the same time for us as well, that God may open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned” (Col. 4:3).

“I know your deeds. Behold, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut, because you have a little power, and have kept My word, and have not denied My name” (Rev. 3:8).

“He who gathers crops in summer is a wise son, but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son” (Prov. 10:5).

“And when they had arrived and gathered the church together, they began to report all things that God had done with them and how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles” (Acts 14:27).

“The harvest is past, the summer has ended, and we are not saved” (Jer. 8:20).

Prayer: *Lord, Paul's words to Timothy are on my mind today: "Therefore, if a man cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work" (2 Tim. 2:21).*

August 3—Resurrection

The word for today is resurrection.

"Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear shall live" (John 5:25).

"Jesus said to her, 'Your brother shall rise again.' Martha said to Him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?'" (John 11:23-26).

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Pet. 1:3-4).

"He who was delivered up because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification" (Rom. 4:25).

"Knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him" (Rom. 6:9).

"And He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf" (2 Cor. 5:15).

"For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. 1:9-10).

"Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen" (Heb. 13:20-21).

Join me in a verse of “He Lives”: “I serve a risen Savior, He’s the world today; I know that He is living, what ever men may say; I see His hand of mercy, I hear His voice of cheer, And just the time I need Him, He’s always near. He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today! He walks with me and talks with me along life’s narrow way. He lives, He lives, salvation to impart. You ask me how I know He lives, He lives within my heart.”

Prayer: Lord, joy fills my heart, knowing I serve a savior who is alive, aware, and available to fulfill His will in my life today.

August 4—Dependence

The word for today is *dependence*.

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isa. 55:8-9).

“There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death” (Prov. 14:12).

“In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps” (Prov. 16:9).

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight” (Prov. 3:5-6).

“Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, ‘This is the way; walk in it’” (Isa. 30:21).

“Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this” (Ps. 37:5).

“But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations” (Ps. 33:11).

“Direct my footsteps according to your word; let no sin rule over me” (Ps. 119:133).

“The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy” (Ps. 126:3).

“My son, give me your heart and let your eyes keep to my ways” (Prov. 23:26).

“I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please” (Isa. 46:10).

"I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart" (Ps. 40:8).

Prayer: Lord, teach me to do Your will, for You are my God; may Your good Spirit lead me on level ground.

August 5—Retirement

The word for today is *retirement*.

"The Lord said to Moses, 'This applies to the Levites: Men twenty-five years old or more shall come to take part in the work at the Tent of Meeting, but at the age of fifty, they must retire from their regular service and work no longer. They may assist their brothers in performing their duties at the Tent of Meeting, but they themselves must not do the work. This, then, is how you are to assign the responsibilities of the Levites'" (Num. 8:23-26).

"We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work" (John 9:4).

"Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13-14).

"Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4:16-18).

"Now I am about to go the way of all the earth. You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the Lord your God gave you has failed. Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed" (Josh. 23:14).

"Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you" (Isa. 46:4).

"I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread" (Ps. 37:25).

“Show me, O Lord, my life’s end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting is my life. You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Each man’s life is but a breath. Selah” (Ps. 39:4-5).

“He seldom reflects on the days of his life, because God keeps him occupied with gladness of heart” (Eccles. 5:20).

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58).

I am singing “Find Us Faithful”: “O may all who come behind us find us faithful; May the fire of our devotion light their way. May the footprints that we leave Lead them to believe, And the lives we live inspire them to obey. O may all who come behind us find us faithful.”

Prayer: Lord, the prayer of my heart this morning is for You to make me faithful, fruitful, and a strong finisher.

August 6—Fornication

The word for today is *fornication*.

“For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor” (1 Thess. 4:3-4).

“Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality” (Gal. 5:19).

“I am afraid that when I come again my God may humiliate me before you, and I may mourn over many of those who have sinned in the past and not repented of the impurity, immorality and sensuality which they have practiced” (2 Cor. 12:21).

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery’: but I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matt. 5:27-28).

“I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl” (Job 31:1).

“But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints” (Eph. 5:3).

“Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body” (1 Cor. 6:18).

“So as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God” (1 Pet. 4:2).

“No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?” (Gen. 39:9).

“Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry” (Col. 3:5).

Prayer: *Lord, we are reminded that Jesus said this sin flows from evil thoughts: “For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.”*

August 7—Incarnation

The word for today is incarnation.

“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel” (Isa. 7:14).

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times” (Micah 5:2).

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this” (Isa. 9:6-7).

“And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21).

“And the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus’” (Luke 1:30-33).

“And the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people; for today in the

city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:10-11).

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich” (2 Cor. 8:9).

“And by common confession great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Beheld by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory” (1 Tim. 3:16).

Join me in singing a Christmas carol in August. “Hark, the Herald Angels Sing”: “Christ by highest heaven adored; Christ, the everlasting Lord! Late in time behold Him come, Offspring of the virgin’s womb. Veiled in flesh the God-head see; Hail th’ incarnate Deity, Pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel! Hark, the herald angels sing, ‘Glory to the newborn King.’”

Prayer: Lord, it means so much this morning to understand that You cared enough to send the very best. He came and humbled Himself even unto death upon the cross. My heart cries: “Amazing love!”

August 8—A Pearl for Today

“If a man does not repent, He will sharpen His sword” (Ps. 7:12a NASB)

WHEN HYSTERICAL, DON’T GET HISTORICAL

As I approach an intersection on the way from our house to the office, a moment of decision with minor consequences arises. Do I go left or keep going straight? The distance is about the same either way. Most of the time before I have to make the final commitment, I check the lights. If the light is green, I go straight. If there is a green arrow for a left turn, I ease into that lane and turn left. My decision is effortless.

Stop and think how many decisions you make in one day. So many are of little importance—such as, shall I take chicken or hamburger out of the freezer for dinner tonight? Then, right out of the blue, comes the opportunity to make a big choice. You misjudge one of the children and scold him wrongly. When the situation is explained, you stand there with egg on your face. Now you have a big choice. Do you repent, apologize, and get everything straightened out with the one concerned? Or do you think to yourself, “Well, he is always causing some kind of trouble. He

needs to be taken down a notch or two”? It is much easier to dig a trench and set yourself for battle than to admit you have made a mistake. In fact, Psalm 7:15 states, “He has dug a pit and hollowed it out” (NASB).

Rather than saying you are sorry and making amends quickly, it can be tempting to dig up past indiscretions, using the sharp sword of your words to draw a little blood. Perhaps making a lot of noise will conceal the uncomfortable feeling that you have blown it, so you try to draw attention away from your mistake by dragging out an “old red herring” from your child’s past.

Unfortunately, the rest of Psalm 7:15 states that the one who has dug a hole, has also “fallen into the hole which he made.” If you handle such a situation badly, everyone in the house soon knows you are wrong and turns you off. It may take days, or even years, to climb out of that hole you have dug for yourself and straighten things out. Don’t try to justify your position in the hole—just get out! Repent and be proud that your words do not wound—that they, in fact, make for a very dull sword!

“Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good” (Eccles. 9:18).

August 9—Discipleship

The word for today is discipleship.

“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light” (Matt. 11:28-30).

“And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2).

“And He was saying to them all, ‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me’” (Luke 9:23).

“And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age’” (Matt. 28:18-20).

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15).

“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen” (2 Pet. 3:18).

“Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified” (Acts 20:31-32).

“But Jesus said to him, ‘No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God’” (Luke 9:62).

“But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith” (1 Tim. 1:5).

“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?’ And I said, ‘Here am I. Send me!’” (Isa. 6:8).

Let’s sing a verse of “So Send I You”: “So send I you to labor unrewarded, To serve unpaid, unloved, unsought, unknown, To bear rebuke, to suffer scorn and scoffing; So send I you to toil for me alone.”

Prayer: Lord, I am available to go anywhere at any cost to do anything You want me to do. What a privilege it is to serve the KING of kings.

August 10—Power

The word for today is power.

“Ah, Sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you” (Jer. 32:17).

“You are awesome, O God, in your sanctuary; the God of Israel gives power and strength to his people. Praise be to God!” (Ps. 68:35).

“I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory” (Ps. 63:2).

“Strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously” (Col. 1:11).

“Who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Pet. 1:5).

“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves” (2 Cor. 4:7).

“Your right hand, O Lord, was majestic in power. Your right hand, O Lord, shattered the enemy” (Exod. 15:6).

“It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect” (2 Sam. 22:33).

“Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us” (Eph. 3:20).

“Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit” (Ps. 147:5).

“After these things I heard, as it were, a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, ‘Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God’” (Rev. 19:1).

Join me in a verse of “All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name”: “All hail the pow’r of Jesus’ name! Let angels prostrate fall; Bring forth the royal diadem, And crown Him Lord of all; Bring forth the royal diadem, And crown Him Lord of all!”

Prayer: Be exalted, O Lord, in Your strength; we will sing and praise Your might.

August 11—Renewal

The word for today is renewal.

“Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor. 7:1).

“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me” (Ps. 51:10).

“Restore us to yourself, O Lord, that we may return; renew our days as of old” (Lam. 5:21).

“I will refresh the weary and satisfy the faint” (Jer. 31:25).

“Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord” (Lam. 3:40).

“‘Even now,’ declares the Lord, ‘return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning’” (Joel 2:12).

“‘Return, faithless people; I will cure you of backsliding.’ ‘Yes, we will come to you, for you are the Lord our God’” (Jer. 3:22).

“Repent therefore and return, that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19).

“But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint” (Isa. 40:31).

“Who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s” (Ps. 103:5).

“Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day” (2 Cor. 4:16).

“And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind” (Eph. 4:23).

I am singing a verse of “Revive Us Again”: “Revive us again; fill each heart with Thy love; May each soul be rekindled with fire from above. Hallelujah! Thine the glory, Hallelujah! Amen; Hallelujah! Thine the glory, revive us again.”

Prayer: Lord, James tells us how to experience renewal: “Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.”

August 12—Teaching

The word for today is teaching.

“This is what the Lord says—your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: ‘I am the Lord your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go’” (Isa. 48:17).

“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you” (Ps. 32:8).

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:19).

“For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments” (Ezra 7:10 KJV).

“Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long” (Ps. 25:4-5).

“Teach me your way, O Lord; lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors” (Ps. 27:11).

“Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground” (Ps. 143:10).

“And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2).

“Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment” (James 3:1).

“Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name” (Ps. 86:11).

“And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ” (Col. 1:28).

“As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by failing to pray for you. And I will teach you the way that is good and right” (1 Sam. 12:23).

“Teach me what I cannot see; if I have done wrong, I will not do so again” (Job 34:32).

Prayer: Blessed is the man You discipline, O Lord, the man You teach from Your law.

August 13—Risk

The word for today is risk.

“Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the Lord. Then the Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, ‘Now, I have put my words in your mouth’” (Jer. 1:8-9).

“The Lord had said to Abram, ‘Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you’” (Gen. 12:1).

“Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh: Because of my mighty hand he will let them go; because of my mighty hand he will drive them out of his country’” (Exod. 6:1).

“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged because of the king of Assyria and the vast army with him, for there is a greater power with us than with him. With him is only the arm of flesh, but with us is the

Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles.’ And the people gained confidence from what Hezekiah the king of Judah said” (2 Chron. 32:7-8). “Moses answered the people, ‘Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still’” (Exod. 14:13-14).

“You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you, O Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the Lord will be with you” (2 Chron. 20:17).

“Elijah went before the people and said, ‘How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.’ But the people said nothing” (1 Kings 18:21).

How about a verse of “Onward, Christian Soldiers”: “Crowns and thrones may perish, Kingdoms rise and wane, But the Church of Jesus Constant will remain; Gates of hell can never ‘Gainst that Church prevail; We have Christ’s own promise, And that cannot fail. Onward, Christian soldiers, Marching as to war, With the cross of Jesus Going on before.”

Prayer: Lord, Paul’s words to Timothy are on my lips this morning: “For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.”

August 14—Circumstances

The word for today is *circumstances*.

“See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this. How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another” (Isa. 48:10-11).

“‘For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,’ declares the Lord. ‘As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts’” (Isa. 55:8-9).

“But just as it is written, ‘Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him’” (1 Cor. 2:9).

“Praise the Lord; praise God our savior! For each day he carries us in his arms” (Ps. 68:19 NLT).

“The chief cupbearer, however, did not remember Joseph; he forgot him” (Gen. 40:23).

“He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end” (Eccles. 3:11).

“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8:28).

“For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known” (1 Cor. 13:12).

“For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:38-39).

I am singing “All the Way My Saviour Leads Me”: “All the way my Saviour leads me; What have I to ask beside? Can I doubt His tender mercy Who through life has been my Guide? Heavenly peace, divinest comfort, Here by faith in Him to dwell! For I know, whate’er befall me, Jesus doeth all things well.”

Prayer: Lord, thank You that the words of James are true: “Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.”

August 15—A Pearl for Today

“Let your roots grow down into him and draw up nourishment from him, so you will grow in faith, strong and vigorous in the truth you were taught. Let your lives overflow with thanksgiving for all he has done” (Col. 2:7 NLT).

GROW DOWN TO GROW UP

A tree behind a cabin on Ross Avenue in Cannon Beach, Oregon, causes me to ponder the ways of nature and God. Years ago, a tiny seed fell atop a tree stump that was eight feet tall. There the seed found enough nourishment to sprout and grow. The roots, seeking sustenance, moved eight feet down the dead trunk to the ground at the edge of a stream. The tree now is about forty feet tall, growing straight and healthy. We took a picture of this tree, and I have it framed in our home. It is a reminder of the importance of the *work* involved in growing deep to find nourishment and sustenance. The roots of this tree went to great lengths (eight feet!) to anchor themselves in the nourishing soil.

As Christians we are urged in Colossians to let our roots grow by obedience and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. We receive nourishment from Him when we tap into His nourishing source of power.

We are also promised as Christians that, when we put down our roots into God's word, we will be firmly planted and fruitful.

"But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night. And he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season, And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does he prospers" (Ps. 1:2- NASB).

Meditating on God's word to receive the necessary nourishment to develop deep roots takes time and work. But the alternative is little growth. Mark 4:6, describes what happens when we do not sink our roots deeply in our savior and His word, "And after the sun had risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it WITHERED away."

What describes your sap level? Nourished or withered? If you need nourishment, tap into our strengthening savior and His word.

"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13).

If you find yourself zapped, get sapped! Tap into Him!

August 16—Purpose

The word for today is *purpose*.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jer. 29:11).

"The Lord will fulfill [his purpose] for me; your love, O Lord, endures forever—do not abandon the works of your hands" (Ps. 138:8).

“Many are the plans in a man’s heart, but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails” (Prov. 19:21).

“In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps” (Prov. 16:9).

“For there is a proper time and procedure for every matter, though a man’s misery weighs heavily upon him” (Eccles. 8:6).

“Also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will” (Eph. 1:11).

“This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Eph. 3:11).

“Who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity”

(2 Tim. 1:9).

“The one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8).

“I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please” (Isa. 46:10).

“But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations” (Ps. 33:11).

Prayer: Lord, what comfort in knowing that You are causing all things to work together for good to those who love You, to those who are called according to Your purpose.

August 17—Conformity

The word for today is conformity.

“For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus” (Phil. 1:6).

“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren” (Rom. 8:29).

“That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death” (Phil. 3:10).

“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me” (John 15:4).

“In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you” (John 14:20).

“I and the Father are one” (John 10:30).

“And I am no more in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep them in Thy name, the name which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, even as We are” (John 17:11).

“Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” (1 Cor. 3:16).

“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me” (Gal. 2:20).

“But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:18).

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect” (Rom. 12:2).

Prayer: Lord, work within me Your will and good pleasure, making me more like Your Son.

August 18—Usefulness

The word for today is usefulness.

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15).

“Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16).

“Therefore, if a man cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work” (2 Tim. 2:21).

“I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none” (Ezek. 22:30).

“Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor. 7:1).

“And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper” (Rom. 1:28).

“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves” (2 Cor. 4:7).

“And while they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them’” (Acts 13:2).

“I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service” (1 Tim. 1:12).

Prayer: *Lord, I find myself singing “Channels Only” this morning: “Emptied that Thou shouldest fill me, a clean vessel in Thy hand; with no pow’r but as Thou givest graciously with each command. Channels only, blessed Master, but with All Thy wondrous pow’r flowing thro’ us, Thou canst use us ev’ry day and ev’ry hour.”*

August 19—Weariness

The word for today is weariness.

“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, but you would have none of it’” (Isa. 30:15).

“You were wearied by all your ways, but you would not say, ‘It is hopeless.’ You found renewal of your strength, and so you did not faint” (Isa. 57:10).

“I am worn out from groaning; all night long I flood my bed with weeping and drench my couch with tears” (Ps. 6:6).

“I am worn out calling for help; my throat is parched. My eyes fail, looking for my God” (Ps. 69:3).

“And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary” (Gal. 6:9).

“Therefore, let us fear lest, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it” (Heb. 4:1).

“For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart” (Heb. 12:3).

“If you have raced with men on foot and they have worn you out, how can you compete with horses? If you stumble in safe country, how will you manage in the thickets by the Jordan?” (Jer. 12:5).

“I will refresh the weary and satisfy the faint” (Jer. 31:25).

“Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble, and make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed” (Heb. 12:12-13).

“Because the Sovereign Lord helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore have I set my face like flint, and I know I will not be put to shame” (Isa. 50:7).

Prayer: Lord, my meditation comes from Isaiah this morning: “Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The Lord, the Lord, is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation.”

August 20—Gentleness

The word for today is gentleness.

“But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy” (James 3:17).

“But let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God” (1 Pet. 3:4).

“But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children” (1 Thess. 2:7).

“And the Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged” (2 Tim. 2:24).

“To malign no one, to be uncontentious, gentle, showing every consideration for all men” (Titus 3:2).

“This you know, my beloved brethren. But let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger” (James 1:19).

“Now I, Paul, myself urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—I who am meek when face to face with you, but bold toward you when absent!” (2 Cor. 10:1).

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness” (Gal. 5:22).

“Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable” (1 Pet. 2:18).

“He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young” (Isa. 40:11).

Join me in the little chorus “Gentle Shepherd”: “Gentle Shepherd, come and lead us, For we need You to help us find our way. Gentle Shepherd, come and feed us, For we need Your strength from day to day. There’s no other we can turn to Who can help us face another day. Gentle Shepherd, come and lead us, For we need You to help us find our way.”

Prayer: Lord, I long to be like You in this area of my life. It is my nature to kick against the goads. I am surrendering all to You afresh and may Your gentleness flow freely through me.

August 21—Meditation

The word for today is meditation.

“Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful” (Josh. 1:8).

“He went out to the field one evening to meditate, and as he looked up, he saw camels approaching” (Gen. 24:63).

“I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways” (Ps. 119:15).

“In his pride the wicked does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God” (Ps. 10:4).

“But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night” (Ps. 1:2).

“Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5).

“On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night” (Ps. 63:6).

“I remember the days of long ago; I meditate on all your works and consider what your hands have done” (Ps. 143:5).

“Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress may be evident to all” (1 Tim. 4:15).

“May my meditation be pleasing to him, as I rejoice in the Lord” (Ps. 104:34).

“May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer” (Ps. 19:14).

I am singing a verse of “May the Mind of Christ, My Savior”: “May the mind of Christ, my Savior, Live in me from day to day, By His love and pow’r controlling All I do and say.”

Prayer: How great are Your works, O Lord, how profound Your thoughts. My prayer for today is that my thoughts will bring You pleasure.

August 22—A Pearl for Today

“God calls his angels ‘messengers swift as the wind, and servants made of flaming fire.’... But angels are only servants. They are spirits sent from God to care for those who will receive salvation” (Heb. 1:7,14 NLT).

“If You are the Son of God throw Yourself down; for it is written, ‘He will give His angels charge concerning You;’ and ‘on their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone’” (Matt. 4:6).

SILENCE: THE FATHER AND SON’S LOVE

The love of Christ and His choice to die on the cross for sinners overwhelms us. On one Good Friday, our daughter Donna contemplated the lyrics of the song, “He Could Have Called 10,000 Angels.” She realized how this song speaks of God the Father’s great love for us. He could have sent 10,000 angels to stop His Son’s agony and suffering. When we read the verses above, we understand that angels are servants sent from God. How difficult it must have been for God the Father *not* to send His angels to stop the suffering of His Son. For the same reason, His Son did not call for these angels. It was all for Love!

FOR LOVE

Oh, Jesus, Jesus,
Why were you born
In a lowly manger bed
Rather than with a crown of gold
Upon your head?

For
Love!
Oh Jesus, Jesus,
Why did you live
With such simple folk,
When in ages past the world was created
When You spoke?
For
Love!
Oh, Jesus, Jesus,
Why did you die such a hateful death
As a lowly Jew,
When you could have called a million angels
To rescue You?
For
Love!

—*Pearl O. Anderson*

Greater love hath no man than this ...

August 23—God’s Glory

The words for today are *God’s glory*.

“While Aaron was speaking to the whole Israelite community, they looked toward the desert, and there was the glory of the Lord appearing in the cloud” (Exod. 16:10).

“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands” (Ps. 19:1).

“Lift up your heads, O you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. ... Who is he, this King of glory? The Lord Almighty—he is the King of glory. Selah” (Ps. 24:7, 10).

“May the glory of the Lord endure forever; may the Lord rejoice in his works” (Ps. 104:31).

“And they were calling to one another: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory’” (Isa. 6:3).

“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you” (Isa. 60:1).

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased” (Luke 2:14).

“And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was. ... ‘Father, I desire that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, in order that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me; for Thou didst love Me before the foundation of the world’” (John 17:5, 24).

“And though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory” (1 Pet. 1:8).

I am singing “To God Be the Glory”: “To God be the glory, great things He hath done, So loved He the world that He gave us His Son, Who yielded His life an atonement for sin, And opened the Life-gate that all may go in. Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, Let the earth hear His voice! Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, Let the people rejoice! O come to the Father thro’ Jesus the Son and give Him the glory great things He has done.”

Prayer: Lord, to You be all the glory. Great things You have taught us. Great things You have done and great is our rejoicing through Jesus the Son.

August 24—Fear of God

The words for today are *fear of God*.

“And now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul” (Deut. 10:12).

“Fear the Lord your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name” (Deut. 6:13).

“The Lord confides in those who fear him; he makes his covenant known to them” (Ps. 25:14).

“The Lord delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love” (Ps. 147:11).

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline” (Prov. 1:7).

“Then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God” (Prov. 2:5).

“Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil” (Prov. 3:7).

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” (Prov. 9:10).

“The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, turning a man from the snares of death” (Prov. 14:27).

“He will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the Lord is the key to this treasure” (Isa. 33:6).

“Come and listen, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me” (Ps. 66:16).

“But be sure to fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you” (1 Sam. 12:24).

Prayer: Lord, Your servant Job says: “The fear of the Lord ... is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding.”

August 25—Soldier

The word for today is soldier.

“For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:4-5).

“Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier” (2 Tim. 2:3-4).

“For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Heb. 4:12).

“But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess. 5:8-9).

“Prepare your shields, both large and small, and march out for battle! Harness the horses, mount the steeds! Take your positions with helmets on! Polish your spears, put on your armor!” (Jer. 46:3-4).

“He put on righteousness as his breastplate, and the helmet of salvation on his head; he put on the garments of vengeance and wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak” (Isa. 59:17).

Let’s sing a verse of “Soldiers of Christ, Arise”: “Stand them in His great might, With all His strength endued, And take, to arm you for the fight, The panoply of God; That having all things done, And all your conflicts past, Ye may o’ercome thru Christ alone, And stand entire at last.”

Prayer: Lord, I rejoice in Paul’s words to the Corinthians: “but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

August 26—Secret Sin

The words for today are *secret sin*.

“He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy” (Prov. 28:13).

“My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from me, nor is their sin concealed from my eyes” (Jer. 16:17).

“The eyes of the Lord are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good” (Prov. 15:3).

“Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, ‘Where are you?’” (Gen. 3:8-9).

“Test me, O Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind; for your love is ever before me, and I walk continually in your truth” (Ps. 26:2-3).

“Teach me what I cannot see; if I have done wrong, I will not do so again” (Job 34:32).

“And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do” (Heb. 4:13).

“In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men” (Acts 24:16).

“When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Selah. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the Lord’—and you forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah” (Ps. 32:3-5).

“How can I know all the sins lurking in my heart? Cleanse me from these hidden faults. Keep me from deliberate sins! Don’t let them control me. Then I will be free of guilt and innocent of great sin. May the words of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart be pleasing to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer” (Ps. 19:12-14 NLT).

Prayer: Lord, my prayer is the prayer of David: “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

August 27—Zeal

The word for today is zeal.

“Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds” (Titus 2:14).

“For out of Jerusalem will come a remnant, and out of Mount Zion a band of survivors. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this” (2 Kings 19:31).

“My zeal wears me out, for my enemies ignore your words” (Ps. 119:139).

“As to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless” (Phil. 3:6).

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this” (Isa. 9:6-7).

“Jehu said, ‘Come with me and see my zeal for the Lord.’ Then he had him ride along in his chariot” (2 Kings 10:16).

“For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge” (Rom. 10:2).

“For I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the Macedonians, namely, that Achaia has been prepared since last year, and your zeal has stirred up most of them” (2 Cor. 9:2).

“So also you, since you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek to abound for the edification of the church” (1 Cor. 14:12).

Join me in singing “More Love to Thee”: “More love to Thee, O Christ, more love to Thee! Hear Thou the pray’r I make On bended knee; This is my earnest plea: More love, O Christ, to Thee, More love to Thee, More love to Thee! Once earthly joy I craved, Sought peace and rest; Now Thee alone I seek, Give what is best; This all my pray’r shall be: More love, O Christ, to Thee, More love to Thee, More love to Thee!”

Prayer: Lord, may intensity, enthusiasm, excitement, and passionate Christlikeness be seen in me as I live for You today.

August 28—Opposition

The word for today is *opposition*.

“Declare them guilty, O God! Let their intrigues be their downfall. Banish them for their many sins, for they have rebelled against you. But let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you. For surely, O Lord, you bless the righteous; you surround them with your favor as with a shield” (Ps. 5:10-12).

““No weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and this is their vindication from me,” declares the Lord” (Isa. 54:17).

“Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Matt. 5:10-12).

“If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you” (John 15:18-19).

“Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Eph. 6:10-12).

“Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in

your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world” (1 Pet. 5:8-9).

Join me in a couple of verses of “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”: “A mighty Fortress is our God, A Bulwark never failing; Our Helper He, amid the flood Of mortal ills prevailing: For still our ancient foe Doth seek to work us woe; His craft and power are great, And armed with cruel hate, On earth is not His equal. Did we in our own strength confide, Our striving would be losing, Were not the right Man on our side, The Man of God’s own choosing: Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He; Lord Sabaoth His name, From age to age the same, And He must win the battle.”

Prayer: Lord, Paul’s words to the Corinthians are on my mind this morning: “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.”

August 29—A Pearl for Today

“... The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much” (James 5:16).

THE EFFECTIVE PRAYERS OF A RIGHTEOUS MOM

When our children still lived at home, we exhorted one of our sons concerning his habit of leaving the bathtub dirty. One of us commented that he had better change that habit before he got married. “Oh,” he said, half jokingly, “the girl I marry will love me so much that she won’t mind cleaning the bathtub after me.” I shuddered to think of that sweet little girl out there somewhere, dreaming of the big handsome man she would marry who would solve all her problems and give her a wonderful life. She didn’t know he expected her to clean the tub!

As soon as our children were born, I began to pray for the persons they would marry. We have five children, and God has heard those fervent prayers. He has blessed them with wonderful Christian mates.

When our daughter Donna began to consider marriage, she made a list of qualities she desired in a husband. She wrote at the top of the list her desire that he be a strong Christian. While we prayed in Texas, miles away in California, God worked in a young man’s heart. He accepted Christ at the

age of 18! Years later God called him to a seminary and into vocational Christian ministry. It “happened” that God called Donna to the same seminary, where she met Mark.

Our second daughter, Becky, was a diabetic, and it took a special husband for her. The Lord picked the perfect one in Ray, a wonderful gift from God. Becky had a kidney transplant, heart problems, and other health difficulties. But through it all, Ray was the loving husband she needed. Becky went home to be with the Lord December 27, 2006.

Our son Bobby has always loved fixing things and working with his hands. He also loves to eat! God blessed him with Jan, who grew up on a farm. They live with our grandchildren in a fixer-upper farm home. Jan, a great cook who majored in elementary education, home schooled their children. Our son Grant lives in Washington state. He is in a time of transition. Please pray with me that he and his family will know the presence of God in a special way. God is faithful as we continue to pray.

Our baby daughter, Julea, has a precious relationship with the Lord and a burden for young people. She served on the youth staff of the church where she met her husband, Steve. Steve shares Julea’s love of God and His kingdom. They also share a mutual enjoyment of the outdoors and sports and their three children.

For godly partners for your children, go to your knees!

August 30—Perspective

The word for today is *perspective*.

“For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. ... For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known” (1 Cor. 13:9-10, 12).

“But just as it is written, ‘Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him’” (1 Cor. 2:9).

“I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a man was caught up to the third heaven. And I know how such a man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows—was caught up

into Paradise, and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak” (2 Cor. 12:2-4).

“And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as a dead man. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, ‘Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades’” (Rev. 1:17-18).

“‘For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,’ declares the Lord. ‘As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts’” (Isa. 55:8-9).

“‘Don’t be afraid,’ the prophet answered. ‘Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.’ And Elisha prayed, ‘O Lord, open his eyes so he may see.’ Then the Lord opened the servant’s eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha” (2 Kings 6:16-17).

“Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word” (Ps. 119:37).

“I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints” (Eph. 1:18).

Join me in the little church “Open Our Eyes”: “Open our eyes, Lord; We want to see Jesus, reach out and touch Him, And say that we love Him. Open our ears, Lord, And help us to listen. Open our eyes, Lord; We want to see Jesus.”

Prayer: Lord, open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in Your law.

August 31—Tears

The word for today is tears.

“For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning” (Ps. 30:5).

“My intercessor is my friend as my eyes pour out tears to God” (Job 16:20).

“I am worn out from groaning; all night long I flood my bed with weeping and drench my couch with tears” (Ps. 6:6).

“Hear my prayer, O Lord, listen to my cry for help; be not deaf to my weeping. For I dwell with you as an alien, a stranger, as all my fathers were” (Ps. 39:12).

“And He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away” (Rev. 21:4).

“My tears have been my food day and night, while men say to me all day long, ‘Where is your God?’” (Ps. 42:3).

“Record my lament; list my tears on your scroll—are they not in your record?” (Ps. 56:8).

“Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him” (Ps. 126:5-6).

“For the Lamb in the center of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them to springs of the water of life; and God shall wipe every tear from their eyes” (Rev. 7:17).

Let’s sing a verse of “Does Jesus Care?”: “Does Jesus care when I’ve tried and failed To resist some temptation strong; When for my deep grief I find no relief, Though my tears flow all the night long? O yes, He cares; I know He cares, His heart is touched with my grief; When the days are weary, the long nights dreary, I know my Savior cares.”

Prayer: Lord, Your words to Josiah are words I, too, long to hear: “‘Because your heart was responsive and you humbled yourself before God when you heard what he spoke against this place and its people, and because you humbled yourself before me and tore your robes and wept in my presence, I have heard you,’ declares the Lord.”

September 1—Consequences

The word for today is *consequences*.

“Though he brings grief, he will show compassion, so great is his unfailing love. For he does not willingly bring affliction or grief to the children of men” (Lam. 3:32-33).

“Now this I say, he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully. Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:6-7).

“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary” (Gal. 6:7-9).

“‘You acted foolishly,’ Samuel said. ‘You have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. But now your kingdom will not endure; the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him leader of his people, because you have not kept the Lord’s command’” (1 Sam. 13:13-14).

“This is what the Lord says: ‘Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity upon you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight. You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.’ Then David said to Nathan, ‘I have sinned against the Lord.’ Nathan replied, ‘The Lord has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. But because by doing this you have made the enemies of the Lord show utter contempt, the son born to you will die’” (2 Sam. 12:11-14).

“When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Selah. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the Lord’—and you forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah” (Ps. 32:3-5).

Sing with me a few verses of “Just As I Am”: “Just as I am, without one plea, But that Thy blood was shed for me, And that Thou bid’st me come to Thee, O Lamb of God, I come! I come! Just as I am, and waiting not, To rid my soul of one dark blot, To Thee whose blood can cleanse each spot, O Lamb of God, I come! I come! Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind; sight, riches, healing of the mind, Yea, all I need, in Thee to find, O Lamb of God, I come! I come!”

Prayer: Lord, I am reminded of Paul’s words to the Romans: “So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God.” These words

combined with those in Hebrews, “It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God” provide a good dose of reality.

September 2—Complaining

The word for today is *complaining*.

“Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. ... Do all things without grumbling or disputing” (Phil. 2:3-4, 14).

“Why should any living man complain when punished for his sins?” (Lam. 3:39).

“Now the people complained about their hardships in the hearing of the Lord, and when he heard them his anger was aroused. Then fire from the Lord burned among them and consumed some of the outskirts of the camp” (Num. 11:1).

“Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents. Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer” (1 Cor. 10:9-10).

“These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage” (Jude 16).

“Therefore I will not keep silent; I will speak out in the anguish of my spirit, I will complain in the bitterness of my soul” (Job 7:11).

“I pour out my complaint before him; before him I tell my trouble” (Ps. 142:2).

“Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear” (Eph. 4:29).

“Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person” (Col. 4:6).

“Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom. ... They will celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness. The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made” (Ps. 145:3, 7-9).

Let's sing the "Doxology": "Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below; Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host; Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen."

Prayer: Lord, by the power of Your Spirit, keep me positive, with an attitude of gratitude.

September 3—Burdens

The word for today is *burdens*.

"If I have sinned, what have I done to you, O watcher of men? Why have you made me your target? Have I become a burden to you?" (Job 7:20).

"But how can I bear your problems and your burdens and your disputes all by myself?" (Deut. 1:12).

"I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take of the Spirit that is on you and put the Spirit on them. They will help you carry the burden of the people so that you will not have to carry it alone" (Num. 11:17).

"And He was saying to them all, 'If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me'" (Luke 9:23).

"Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ. ... For each one shall bear his own load" (Gal. 6:2, 5).

"Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall" (Ps. 55:22).

"Casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you" (1 Pet. 5:7).

"For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed, but to be clothed, in order that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life" (2 Cor. 5:4).

"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light" (Matt. 11:28-30).

Let's sing a couple of verses of "Burdens Are Lifted at Calvary": "Days are filled with sorrow and care, Hearts are lonely and drear; Burdens are lifted at Calvary, Jesus is very near. Burdens are lifted at Calvary, Calvary, Calvary; Burdens are lifted at Calvary, Jesus is very near. Cast your care on Jesus today, Leave your worry and fear; Burdens are lifted

at Calvary, Jesus is very near. Burdens are lifted at Calvary, Calvary, Calvary; Burdens are lifted at Calvary, Jesus is very near."

Prayer: Lord, the words You spoke to Paul are a comfort to my heart this day: "My grace is sufficient for you for power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me."

September 4—Fasting

The word for today is fasting.

"Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish" (Esther 4:16).

"Declare a holy fast; call a sacred assembly. Summon the elders and all who live in the land to the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord" (Joel 1:14).

"And whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance in order to be seen fasting by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But you, when you fast, anoint your head, and wash your face so that you may not be seen fasting by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you" (Matt. 6:16-18).

"So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer" (Ezra 8:23).

"And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry" (Matt. 4:2).

"My knees give way from fasting; my body is thin and gaunt" (Ps. 109:24).

"So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes" (Dan. 9:3).

"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?" (Isa. 58:6).

After a season of fasting, I experienced verse four of "And Can It Be That I Should Gain." Let's sing it together: "Long my imprisoned spirit lay Fast bound in sin and nature's night; Thine eye diffused a quick'ning ray, I woke, the dungeon flamed with light; My chains fell off, my heart

was free; I rose, went forth and followed Thee. Amazing love! How can it be that thou my God, shouldst die for me."

Prayer: Lord, I have tasted the sweetness of Your presence in a time of fasting. Thank You for the joy of such times.

September 5—A Pearl for Today

"Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus ..." (Rom. 1:1)

"Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus ..." (Phil. 1:1)

"James, a bond-servant of God ..." (James 1:1).

"Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ ..." (2 Pet. 1:1)

BONDED WITH THE SUPER GLUE OF LOVE

We hear a lot about "bonding" these days. At the time of a baby's birth, the new attitude is to have the father significantly involved in the process. Bonding occurs between father and child when that naked, helpless little human being cuddles closely to Daddy's chest.

Bonding occurs between a husband and wife when they live out their vows to love, honor, and cherish. Genesis 2:24 speaks of this bonding, "and they shall become one flesh."

John 15:5 offers a beautiful picture of bonding within the family of God, in Jesus' words: "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing."

There is great security in knowing that we, as branches, are bonded to the vine. This, by far, is the most important bond we can have in life. As we are bonded to God, we have the source of strength and grace to be properly bonded to our children and mates.

Another bond with the Lord is important. This bond is our choice. One of the favorite titles used by New Testament writers to describe themselves is that of "bond-servant," a carryover from the Old Testament. In biblical times, when a servant fulfilled his period of service and was given freedom, the slave could CHOOSE to remain as a servant. He became a bond-servant of his master; voluntary service was his personal choice.

Exodus 21: 5-6 states, "But if the slave plainly says, 'I love my master ... I will not go out as a free man, then his master shall bring him to God, then he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him permanently'" (NASB). These verses are beautiful. Because of love for the master, the servant chooses to

become a servant for life. No wonder many New Testament writers referred to themselves in this way. They were willing servants of the Lord because of their great love for Him.

Spend time in prayer. Tell the Lord of your love for Him and your willingness to serve Him.

The savior never turns away a servant.

September 6—Sanctification

The word for today is sanctification.

“And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth” (John 17:19).

“Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate” (Heb. 13:12).

“For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God” (1 Thess. 4:3-5).

“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess. 5:23).

“But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Cor. 1:30).

“But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth” (2 Thess. 2:13).

“And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified” (Acts 20:32).

“That He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless” (Eph. 5:26-27).

“Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God

our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen” (Jude 24-25).

A couple of verses of “Take Time to Be Holy” would be appropriate: “Take time to be holy; Speak oft with thy Lord; Abide in Him always, And feed on His Word. Make friends with God’s children; Help those who are weak, Forgetting in nothing His blessing to seek. Take time to be holy; The world rushes on; Spend much time in secret With Jesus alone. By looking to Jesus, Like Him thou shalt be; Thy friends in thy conduct His likeness shall see.”

Prayer: Lord, I would not knowingly grieve or quench Your Spirit as He makes me more like Jesus. Do what needs to be done!

September 7—Urgency

The word for today is urgency.

“We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work” (John 9:4).

“O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act! For your sake, O my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name” (Dan. 9:19).

“And working together with Him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain—for He says, ‘At the acceptable time I listened to you, And on the day of salvation I helped you;’ behold, now is ‘the acceptable time,’ behold, now is ‘the day of salvation’” (2 Cor. 6:1-2).

“Turn your ear to me, come quickly to my rescue; be my rock of refuge, a strong fortress to save me” (Ps. 31:2).

“My times are in your hands; deliver me from my enemies and from those who pursue me” (Ps. 31:15).

“This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it” (Ps. 118:24).

“Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work. Do you not say, “There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest?” Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest. Already he who reaps is receiving wages, and is gathering fruit for life eternal; that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together’” (John 4:34-36).

“And seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest’” (Matt. 9:36-38).

“Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done” (Rev. 22:12).

Let’s sing a couple of verses of “Rescue the Perishing”: “Rescue the perishing, Care for the dying, Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave; Weep o’er the erring one, Lift up the fallen, Tell them of Jesus the mighty to save. Rescue the perishing, Duty demands it; Strength for thy labor the Lord will provide; Back to the narrow way Patiently win them; Tell the poor wanderer a Saviour has died. Rescue the perishing, Care for the dying; Jesus is merciful, Jesus will save.”

Prayer: Lord, help me today to live as though this were my last day on earth, knowing that one day I will be right.

September 8—Test

The word for today is test.

“Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, ‘Abraham!’ ‘Here I am,’ he replied. Then God said, ‘Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about’” (Gen. 22:1-2).

“Jesus therefore lifting up His eyes, and seeing that a great multitude was coming to Him, said to Philip, ‘Where are we to buy bread, that these may eat?’ And this He was saying to test him; for He Himself knew what He was intending to do” (John 6:5-6).

“Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?” (2 Cor. 13:5).

“In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 1:6-7).

“Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing” (James 1:2-4).

“Then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from [trial], and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment” (2 Pet. 2:9).

“The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but man is tested by the praise he receives” (Prov. 27:21).

“Test me, O Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind; for your love is ever before me, and I walk continually in your truth” (Ps. 26:2-3).

“See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this. How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another” (Isa. 48:10-11).

“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation” (1 Pet. 4:12-13).

“But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold” (Job 23:10).

Prayer: Lord, I want to be totally cooperative with Your testing program to make me more like my savior.

September 9—Shepherd

The word for today is *shepherd*.

“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want” (Ps. 23:1).

“Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding” (Jer. 3:15).

“I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep” (John 10:11).

“Save your people and bless your inheritance; be their shepherd and carry them forever” (Ps. 28:9).

“For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls” (1 Pet. 2:25).

“And seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd” (Matt. 9:36).

“He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young” (Isa. 40:11).

“And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory” (1 Pet. 5:4).

“Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen” (Heb. 13:20-21).

“For the Lamb in the center of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them to springs of the water of life; and God shall wipe every tear from their eyes” (Rev. 7:17).

How about a verse of “Saviour, Like a Shepherd Lead Us”?: “*Saviour, like a shepherd lead us, Much we need Thy tender care; In Thy pleasant pastures feed us, For our use Thy folds prepare: Blessed Jesus, Blessed Jesus, Thou hast bought us, Thine we are.*”

Prayer: Lord, thank You for the words of the psalmist: “*You led them like sheep through the desert. You guided them safely, so they were unafraid.*”

September 10—Manhood

The word for today is *manhood*.

“A faithful man will be richly blessed, but one eager to get rich will not go unpunished” (Prov. 28:20).

“Each man will be like a shelter from the wind and a refuge from the storm, like streams of water in the desert and the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land. ... But the noble man makes noble plans, and by noble deeds he stands” (Isa. 32:2, 8).

“But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart’” (1 Sam. 16:7).

“Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway” (Prov. 8:34).

“I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none” (Ezek. 22:30).

“Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers” (Ps. 1:1-3).

“Then the Lord said to Satan, ‘Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil’” (Job 1:8).

“Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always” (1 Chron. 16:11).

“Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding” (Prov. 3:13).

“You are my portion, O Lord; I have promised to obey your words. I have sought your face with all my heart; be gracious to me according to your promise” (Ps. 119:57-58).

“O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water” (Ps. 63:1).

“He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8).

Prayer: Lord, the psalmist asks the question: “How can a young man keep his way pure? I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.”

September 11—Womanhood

The word for today is womanhood.

“The Lord God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him’” (Gen. 2:18).

“To the woman he said, ‘I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you’” (Gen. 3:16).

“A wife of noble character is her husband’s crown, but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones” (Prov. 12:4).

“The wise woman builds her house, but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down” (Prov. 14:1).

“He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord” (Prov. 18:22).

“In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. And let not your adornment be merely external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God” (1 Pet. 3:1-4).

“Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord” (Eph. 5:22).

“A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies” (Prov. 31:10).

“Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all. Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate” (Prov. 31:29-31).

“Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame. Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot wash it away. If one were to give all the wealth of his house for love, it would be utterly scorned” (Song of Sol. 8:6-7).

Prayer: Lord, thank You for the beautiful, godly women in my life, my wife and daughters.

September 12—A Pearl for Today

“Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little” (Isa. 28:9-10 KJV).

BUILDING BLOCK CHILD TRAINING

I love to watch Julea and Steve Gulbrandson, our youngest daughter and her husband, work with their small children. These parents are consistent! Their daughter, Tayler, knows how to communicate thanks in sign language. With her hand on her lips she speaks her own special version of thank you. Several years ago we spent a week with Steve, Julea, Justus, and Tayler at the beach. I had forgotten how “daily” child training really is and how important consistency is when training children.

God gives His children a training schedule in Deuteronomy 6:6-7: “And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up” (NASB). Consistent repetition is God’s teaching method. When God desires to teach us a lesson, He usually passes it by us as many times as necessary until we learn. We hear the lesson on the Christian radio station, read about it in scripture, even experience it in our prayer and devotional time. Even the Sunday sermon may be on the same topic! God offers consistent repetition until we learn and can progress to another level of maturity. “Precept upon precept” is the biblical picture Isaiah offers, suggesting that the lessons and truths we learn are built one upon the other.

When Steve and Julea work with their children on a principle or skill, they repeat the lesson throughout the day. Rejoicing abounds when the children finally “get it.” That same joy fills our heavenly Father’s heart when we finally learn a lesson He wants to teach us.

Justus, Ella and Tayler are quick learners. (This unprejudiced grandmother appreciates their superior intellect!) The writer of Hebrews expressed the opposite in his letter: “For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food” (5:12). Ask the Lord for a receptive mind concerning the lesson(s) He wants you to learn.

Be a quick learner! You need this lesson as a building block for the next!

September 13—Laziness

The word for today is *laziness*.

“Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest. How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest—and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man” (Prov. 6:6-11).

“The way of the sluggard is blocked with thorns, but the path of the upright is a highway” (Prov. 15:19).

“One who is slack in his work is brother to one who destroys” (Prov. 18:9).

“Laziness brings on deep sleep, and the shiftless man goes hungry” (Prov. 19:15).

“The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; he will not even bring it back to his mouth!” (Prov. 19:24).

“A sluggard does not plow in season; so at harvest time he looks but finds nothing” (Prov. 20:4).

“Do not love sleep or you will grow poor; stay awake and you will have food to spare” (Prov. 20:13).

“The sluggard’s craving will be the death of him, because his hands refuse to work” (Prov. 21:25).

“Do your best. Work from the heart for your real Master, for God” (Col. 3:23 MSG).

“Our orders—backed up by the Master, Jesus—are to refuse to have anything to do with those among you who are lazy and refuse to work the way we taught you. Don’t permit them to freeload on the rest. We showed you how to pull your weight when we were with you, so get on with it. We didn’t sit around on our hands expecting others to take care of us. In fact, we worked our fingers to the bone, up half the night moonlighting so you wouldn’t be burdened with taking care of us” (2 Thess. 3:6-8 MSG).

“May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us; establish the work of our hands for us—yes, establish the work of our hands” (Ps. 90:17).

Prayer: Lord, Paul’s word to the Colossians is my goal: “Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men.”

September 14—Refining

The word for today is *refining*.

“And the words of the Lord are flawless, like silver refined in a furnace of clay, purified seven times” (Ps. 12:6).

“Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand” (Dan. 12:10).

“But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold” (Job 23:10).

“See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this. How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another” (Isa. 48:10-11).

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Ps. 139:23-24).

“Test me, O Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind; for your love is ever before me, and I walk continually in your truth” (Ps. 26:2-3).

“How can I know all the sins lurking in my heart? Cleanse me from these hidden faults. Keep me from deliberate sins! Don’t let them control me. Then I will be free of guilt and innocent of great sin. May the words of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart be pleasing to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer” (Ps. 19:12-14 NLT).

“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you” (1 Pet. 4:12).

“In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 1:6-7).

“Then will I purify the lips of the peoples, that all of them may call on the name of the Lord and serve him shoulder to shoulder” (Zeph. 3:9).

Prayer: Lord, I am treating my body roughly and making it serve me, lest after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.

September 15—Desire

The word for today is *desire*.

“Then the Lord said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it’” (Gen. 4:6-7).

“Is not my house right with God? Has he not made with me an everlasting covenant, arranged and secured in every part? Will he not bring to fruition my salvation and grant me my every desire?” (2 Sam. 23:5).

“You hear, O Lord, the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry” (Ps. 10:17).

“You have granted him the desire of his heart and have not withheld the request of his lips. Selah” (Ps. 21:2).

“Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you” (Ps. 73:25).

“Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life” (Prov. 13:12).

“Yes, Lord, walking in the way of your laws, we wait for you; your name and renown are the desire of our hearts” (Isa. 26:8).

“Brethren, my heart’s desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation” (Rom. 10:1).

“Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart” (Ps. 37:3-4).

“You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing. ... He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them” (Ps. 145:16, 19).

Join me in the little prayer chorus “My Desire”: “My desire, To be like Jesus, My desire, To be like Him. His Spirit fill me, His love o’erwhelm me; In deed and word To be like Him.”

Prayer: Lord, a longing fulfilled is sweet to the soul, when the longing is from You. A fool detests turning from evil.

September 16—Disobedience

The word for today is *disobedience*.

“For as through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous” (Rom. 5:19).

“In which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2).

“Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience” (Eph. 5:6).

“For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard” (Heb. 2:2-3).

“For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy” (2 Tim. 3:2).

“We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete” (2 Cor. 10:5-6).

“For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another” (Titus 3:3).

“Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered” (Heb. 5:8).

How about a verse of “Trust and Obey”? “When we walk with the Lord in the light of His Word, What a glory He sheds on our way! While we do His good will He abides with us still, And with all who will trust and obey. Trust and obey, for there’s no other way To be happy in Jesus, But to trust and obey.”

Prayer: Lord, show me the things in my life that offend You, so I might deal with my disobedience.

September 17—Debt

The word for today is *debt*.

“And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors” (Matt. 6:12).

“Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law” (Rom. 13:8).

“But if he has wronged you in any way, or owes you anything, charge that to my account; I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand, I will repay it (lest I should mention to you that you owe to me even your own self as well)” (Philem. 18-19).

“He who increases his wealth by exorbitant interest amasses it for another, who will be kind to the poor” (Prov. 28:8).

“Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ” (1 Pet. 1:18-19).

“Dishonest money dwindles away, but he who gathers money little by little makes it grow” (Prov. 13:11).

“He who works his land will have abundant food, but the one who chases fantasies will have his fill of poverty” (Prov. 28:19).

“And not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption” (Heb. 9:12).

“Having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross” (Col. 2:14).

Let’s sing a verse of “Jesus Paid It All”: “For nothing good have I Whereby Thy grace to claim, I’ll wash my garments white In the blood of Calv’ry’s Lamb. Jesus paid it all. All to Him I owe; Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow.”

Prayer: Lord, what joy floods my soul knowing that my debt of sin has been fully paid at the cross.

September 18—Counterfeit

The word for today is *counterfeit*.

“How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High’” (Isa. 14:12-14).

“For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds” (2 Cor. 11:13-15).

“But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back some of the price of the land?’” (Acts 5:3).

“And Jesus answered and said to them, ‘See to it that no one misleads you. For many will come in My name, saying, “I am the Christ,” and will mislead many’” (Matt. 24:4-5).

“Holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and avoid such men as these. ... But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived” (2 Tim. 3:5, 13).

“The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity” (Prov. 11:3).

How about a verse of “Faith Is the Victory”?: “On ev’ry hand the foe we find Drawn up in dread array; Let tents of ease be left behind, And onward to the fray; Salvation’s helmet on each head, With truth all girt about, The earth shall tremble ‘neath our tread, And echo with our shout. Faith is the victory! Faith is the victory! O, glorious victory, That overcomes the world.”

Prayer: Lord, thank You for the victory You have already won over Satan at the cross and by the resurrection. I am declaring my total dependence upon You for victory today over this enemy of my soul.

September 19—A Pearl for Today

“Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if you are asked about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it” (1 Pet. 3:15 NLT).

“Everyone enjoys a fitting reply; it is wonderful to say the right thing at the right time” (Prov. 15:23 NLT).

“We can gather our thoughts, but the Lord gives the right answer” (Prov. 16:1 NLT).

WHEN YOU NEED THE RIGHT ANSWER FAST

Our son-in-law Ray was in Seattle to attend a Microsoft employee workshop a few years ago. Just as he walked in a side entrance of the convention center, an elevator door opened and out walked Bill Gates with his bodyguard. Evidently, the side door was supposed to be locked because the bodyguard cocked a suspicious eye at Ray, walked right over and asked sternly, “What are doing in this area?”

Ray replied, “I was just deciding which way to go to get to my seminar.”

The man responded, “Then you are from the Dallas office?” Ray said he was, and when Bill Gates saw them conversing, he walked over. After being introduced, Ray told Mr. Gates how his wife (our daughter Becky) liked to watch the way he handled the news media.

“I don’t know that I’ve done such a good job lately,” Gates remarked.

They parted. Ray found his way to the seminar, still hardly believing he had had the opportunity to meet Bill Gates.

Just as Ray needed to answer the bodyguard quickly, 1 Peter 3:15 states we are to always be ready to give an answer to every man who asks the reason for our hope of salvation.

Prepare to give an answer for the hope within you so you won’t be unprepared when you get the chance!

September 20—Addiction

The word for today is addiction.

“He will die for lack of discipline, led astray by his own great folly” (Prov. 5:23).

“He who ignores discipline comes to poverty and shame, but whoever heeds correction is honored” (Prov. 13:18).

“Stern discipline awaits him who leaves the path; he who hates correction will die” (Prov. 15:10).

“He who ignores discipline despises himself, but whoever heeds correction gains understanding” (Prov. 15:32).

“All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything” (1 Cor. 6:12).

“Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, that I might not cause my brother to stumble” (1 Cor. 8:13).

“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 15:13).

“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body” (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

“But I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified” (1 Cor. 9:27).

“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. And who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1 John 5:4-5).

How about a verse of “Filly My Cup, Lord”? : “There are millions in this world who are craving The pleasure earthly things afford; But none can match the wondrous treasure That I find in Jesus Christ my Lord. Fill my cup, Lord, I lift it up, Lord! Come and quench this thirsting of my soul; Bread of Heaven, feed me till I want no more, Fill my cup, fill it up and make me whole!”

Prayer: Lord, Paul’s words to the Philippians express my heart today: “according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I shall not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.”

September 21—Consistency

The word for today is consistency.

“Let your eyes look straight ahead, fix your gaze directly before you. Make level paths for your feet and take only ways that are firm. Do not swerve to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil” (Prov. 4:25-27).

“For the waywardness of the simple will kill them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them” (Prov. 1:32).

“I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my work, and this was the reward for all my labor. Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun” (Eccles. 2:10-11).

“Be happy, young man, while you are young, and let your heart give you joy in the days of your youth. Follow the ways of your heart and whatever your eyes see, but know that for all these things God will bring you to judgment” (Eccles. 11:9).

“But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ” (2 Cor. 11:3).

“And He was saying to them all, ‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross **DAILY**, and follow Me” (Luke 9:23 *emphasis mine*).

“Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness” (Lam. 3:22-23).

“And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18).

“But thanks be to God, who always leads us in His triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place” (2 Cor. 2:14).

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58).

Let’s sing a verse of “Great Is Thy Faithfulness”: “‘Great is Thy faithfulness,’ O God my Father, There is no shadow of turning with Thee; Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not; As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be. ‘Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!’ Morning by morning new mercies I see; All I have needed Thy hand hath provided, ‘Great is Thy faithfulness,’ Lord, unto me!”

Prayer: *Lord, I am totally committed to persevere with passion upon the path You have laid out for me.*

September 22—Inheritance

The word for today is inheritance.

“Save your people and bless your inheritance; be their shepherd and carry them forever” (Ps. 28:9).

“But just as it is written, ‘Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him’” (1 Cor. 2:9).

“Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world’” (Matt. 25:34).

“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him” (Rom. 8:16-17).

“He who overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son” (Rev. 21:7).

“Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?” (James 2:5).

“To obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Pet. 1:4).

“And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified” (Acts 20:32).

Prayer: *Lord, this meditation has me singing “A Child of the King”: “My Father is rich in houses and lands, He holdeth the wealth of the world in His hands! Of rubies and diamonds, of silver and gold, His coffers are full, He has riches untold. I’m a child of the King, a child of the King: with Jesus my Savior, I’m a child of the King.”*

September 23—Lord

The word for today is Lord.

“Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should

bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:9-11).

“That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation” (Rom. 10:9-10).

“For if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s” (Rom. 14:8).

“So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is” (Eph. 5:17).

“For the earth is the Lord’s, and all it contains” (1 Cor. 10:26).

“But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one” (2 Thess. 3:3).

“So that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God” (Col. 1:10).

“Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men” (Col. 3:23).

“But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 15:57).

“And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, ‘KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS’” (Rev. 19:16).

Join me in singing “Lord, Be Glorified”: “In my life, Lord, Be glorified, be glorified. In my life, Lord, Be glorified today. In my song, Lord, Be glorified, be glorified. In my song, Lord, Be glorified today. In Your Church, Lord, Be glorified, be glorified. In Your Church, Lord, Be glorified today.”

Prayer: Lord, we exalt You! You are worthy of our praise. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done.

September 24—Light

The word for today is light.

“The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day” (Prov. 4:18).

“Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life’” (John 8:12).

“Many are asking, ‘Who can show us any good?’ Let the light of your face shine upon us, O Lord” (Ps. 4:6).

“The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?” (Ps. 27:1).

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path” (Ps. 119:105).

“For you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness” (1 Thess. 5:5).

“The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light” (Rom. 13:12).

“Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light” (Col. 1:12).

“And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5).

“And there shall no longer be any night; and they shall not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God shall illumine them; and they shall reign forever and ever” (Rev. 22:5).

“Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16).

Let’s do a verse of “Stepping in the Light”: “Trying to walk in the steps of the Savior, Upward, still upward we’ll follow our Guide; When we shall see Him, the King in His beauty, Happy, how happy, our place at His side. How beautiful to walk in the steps of the Savior, Stepping in the light, Stepping in the light; How beautiful to walk in the steps of the Savior, Led in paths of light.”

Prayer: You, O Lord, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light.

September 25—Darkness

The word for today is darkness.

“Some sat in darkness and the deepest gloom, prisoners suffering in iron chains” (Ps. 107:10).

“Even in darkness light dawns for the upright, for the gracious and compassionate and righteous man” (Ps. 112:4).

“He has driven me away and made me walk in darkness rather than light” (Lam. 3:2).

“I saw that wisdom is better than folly, just as light is better than darkness” (Eccles. 2:13).

“And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them” (Eph. 5:11).

“In whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God” (2 Cor. 4:4).

“For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son” (Col. 1:13).

“Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth’” (Matt. 22:13).

“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned” (Isa. 9:2).

“If I say, ‘Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,’ even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you” (Ps. 139:11-12).

“To open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me” (Acts 26:18).

I’m singing a verse of “Jesus, I Come”: “Out of my bondage, sorrow and night, Jesus, I come, Jesus, I come; Into Thy freedom, gladness and light, Jesus, I come to Thee. Out of my sickness into Thy health, Out of my want and into Thy wealth, Out of my sin and into Thyself, Jesus, I come to Thee.”

Prayer: Lord, the psalmist says: “You brought them out of darkness and the deepest gloom and broke away their chains.” What joy it is to walk with You in the light!

September 26—A Pearl for Today

“And now little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming” (1 John 2:28).

SHAME ON YOU?

One morning before the kids had left for school, I realized something was amiss. Usually the very second our bedroom door would open, our dog Sasha, wiggling all over, would bound toward us, waiting for a word of greeting and a pat. That particular morning, I walked out into the hall to find Sasha lying flat, her head on her paws. As I got closer, she rolled over on her back, a sure sign of guilt. I started looking around for her indiscretion. Before I got very far, I heard some “ughs” and “yucks” coming from the kitchen. There was Bobby, our older son, picking up the contents of the garbage container Sasha had tipped over.

Whenever our children came running in the house waving their report cards, yelling, “Look what I made!” we knew all was well. If they sort of slid in with the cards in the bottom of their bags, we knew rough times were ahead.

Our delinquent dog, and at times, our children, shrunk away from us when they were ashamed of some action. 1 John 2:28, tells us when the Lord returns to take His children home, we may shrink away from Him, too. A hymn poses this question of the Lord’s return, “What if it were today?” Would it be a glad day if the Lord were to come today? If not, what must change for us to be able to meet the Lord with the confidence indicated in 1 John 2?

A missionary friend suffered a nearly fatal accident, but God spared his life. Still, just before losing consciousness following the collision, our friend’s panicky last thought was “Oh no, I didn’t have my devotions this morning!” As Christians, do we go bounding eagerly into our time of fellowship with the Lord? If not, why not?

Barbara Johnson asks in her newsletter, “If you were going to die soon and had only one phone call, whom would you call and what would you say? And why are you waiting?”

If the Lord came today would you meet Him with confidence?

Did you come eagerly to your devotional time this morning?

Are you ready to stand before the Lord?

If you answered no to any of the above questions, what needs to change?

And why are you waiting?

When it comes to honoring the Lord—if not today, why not today?

September 27—Success

The word for today is success.

“Then he prayed, ‘O Lord, God of my master Abraham, give me success today, and show kindness to my master Abraham’” (Gen. 24:12).

“In everything he did he had great success, because the Lord was with him” (1 Sam. 18:14).

“Give generously to him and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to” (Deut. 15:10).

“Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful” (Josh. 1:8).

“He brought me out into a spacious place; he rescued me because he delighted in me” (2 Sam. 22:20).

“Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, they will pour into your lap. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return” (Luke 6:38).

“‘Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,’ says the Lord Almighty, ‘and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it’” (Malachi 3:10).

“After Job had prayed for his friends, the Lord made him prosperous again and gave him twice as much as he had before” (Job 42:10).

“Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all” (1 Chron. 29:12).

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you” (Matt. 6:33).

Let’s sing a verse of “There Shall Be Showers of Blessing”: “There shall be showers of blessing;’ Send them upon us, O Lord; Grant to us now a refreshing, Come, and now honor Thy Word. Showers of blessing, Showers of blessing we need Mercy drops round us are falling, But for the showers we plead.”

Prayer: Lord, You crown the year with Your bounty, and Your carts overflow with abundance.

September 28—Second Coming

The words for today are *second coming*.

“You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand” (James 5:8).

“He who testifies to these things says, ‘Yes, I am coming quickly.’ Amen. Come, Lord Jesus” (Rev. 22:20).

“For this reason you be ready too; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will” (Matt. 24:44).

“But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory” (Mark 13:24-26).

“For I say to you, from now on you shall not see Me until you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’” (Matt. 23:39).

“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells” (2 Pet. 3:10-13).

“So that He may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints” (1 Thess. 3:13).

A verse of “My Saviour First of All” speaks to my heart today: “Thro’ the gates to the city in a robe of spotless white, He will lead me where no tears shall ever fall; In the glad song of ages I shall mingle with delight; But I long to meet my Saviour first of all. I shall know Him, I shall know Him, as redeemed by His side I shall stand; I shall know Him, I shall know Him, by the print of the nails in His hand.”

Prayer: Lord, haste the day when our faith shall be sight. Thy kingdom come! Thy will be done! Hallelujah! Our God reigns.

September 29—Revival

The word for today is *revival*.

“Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you? Show us your unfailing love, O Lord, and grant us your salvation” (Ps. 85:6-7).

“Come, let us return to the Lord. He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us; he has injured us but he will bind up our wounds. After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will restore us, that we may live in his presence. Let us acknowledge the Lord; let us press on to acknowledge him. As surely as the sun rises, he will appear; he will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth” (Hos. 6:1-3).

“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. ... Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me” (Ps. 51:10, 12).

“Restore us to yourself, O Lord, that we may return; renew our days as of old” (Lam. 5:21).

“And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind” (Eph. 4:23).

“The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles. The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit” (Ps. 34:17-18).

“To whom he said, ‘This is the resting place, let the weary rest’; and, ‘This is the place of repose’—but they would not listen” (Isa. 28:12).

“Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, until he comes and showers righteousness on you” (Hos. 10:12).

A verse of “Revive Us Again” will help us remember today’s reading:

“We praise Thee, O God! for Thy Spirit of light, Who has shown us our Saviour, and scattered our night. Hallelujah! Thine the glory, Hallelujah! Amen; Hallelujah! Thine the glory, revive us again.”

Prayer: Lord, I come with David’s prayer on my lips: “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.”

September 30—Godliness

The word for today is *godliness*.

“For kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. ... but rather by means of good works, as befits women making a claim to godliness” (1 Tim. 2:2, 10).

“For surely, O Lord, you bless the righteous; you surround them with your favor as with a shield” (Ps. 5:12).

“In the way of righteousness there is life; along that path is immortality” (Prov. 12:28).

“For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish” (Ps. 1:6).

“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise” (Prov. 11:30).

“Know that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself; the Lord will hear when I call to him” (Ps. 4:3).

“For the Lord is righteous, he loves justice; upright men will see his face” (Ps. 11:7).

“Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness” (2 Pet. 3:11).

“But godliness actually is a means of great gain, when accompanied by contentment. ... But flee from these things, you man of God; and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness” (1 Tim. 6:6, 11).

How about a verse of “When We See Christ”?: *“Life’s day will soon be o’er, all storms forever past, We’ll cross the great divide to glory, safe at last; We’ll share the joys of heav’n a harp, a home, a crown, The tempter will be banished, we’ll lay our burden down. It will be worth it all when we see Jesus, Life’s trials will seem so small when we see Christ; One glimpse of His dear face all sorrow will erase, So bravely run the race till we see Christ.”*

Prayer: *Lord, Paul’s words to Titus ring in my heart today: “instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus.”*

October 1—Advocate

The word for today is *advocate*.

“For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony borne at the proper time” (1 Tim. 2:5-6).

“My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world” (1 John 2:1-2).

“His eyes are on the ways of men; he sees their every step” (Job 34:21).

“Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people” (Heb. 2:17).

“Hence, also, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25).

“Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us” (Rom. 8:34).

“And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed” (1 Pet. 2:24).

“And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation” (Rom. 5:11).

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Pet. 1:3-5).

How about a couple verses of “The Solid Rock”?: ***“His oath, His covenant, His blood Support me in the whelming flood; When all around my soul gives way He then is all my hope and stay. When He shall come with trumpet sound, O may I then in Him be found; Dressed in His righteousness alone, Faultless to stand before the throne. On Christ the***

solid Rock I stand; All other ground is sinking sand. All other ground is sinking sand."

Prayer: Lord, I find such peace knowing that when we go to court in heaven, You have already paid the penalty in full. You have redeemed us not with silver and gold but with Your own precious blood.

October 2—Foundation

The word for today is *foundation*.

"In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands" (Ps. 102:25).

"The heavens are yours, and yours also the earth; you founded the world and all that is in it" (Ps. 89:11).

"My own hand laid the foundations of the earth, and my right hand spread out the heavens; when I summon them, they all stand up together" (Isa. 48:13).

"Father, I desire that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, in order that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me; for Thou didst love Me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24).

"Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love" (Eph. 1:4).

"How much more those who live in houses of clay, whose foundations are in the dust, who are crushed more readily than a moth!" (Job 4:19).

"When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Ps. 11:3).

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded upon the rock. And everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not act upon them, will be like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and it fell, and great was its fall" (Matt. 7:24-27).

"Having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also

are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit” (Eph. 2:20-22).

“Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed” (1 Tim. 6:18-19).

“Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, ‘The Lord knows those who are His,’ and, ‘Let everyone who names the name of the Lord abstain from wickedness’” (2 Tim. 2:19).

Let’s sing a verse of “The Church’s One Foundation”: “The Church’s one foundation Is Jesus Christ her Lord; She is His new creation, By water and the word; From heav’n He came and sought her to be His holy bride; With His own blood He bought her, And for her life He died.”

Prayer: Lord, from the ends of the earth I call to You; I call as my heart grows faint. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

October 3—A Pearl for Today

“And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men” (Acts 24:16 KJV).

GUILTY OR NOT GUILTY?

My daughter Donna and I were shopping at the mall in our hometown of Tyler, Texas. Donna found a dress she wanted and, after she had paid for it, we started out of the store. Suddenly a loud buzzer sounded. People turned to stare. A saleslady and security guard converged on us at the same time. Several shoppers stopped to see what the commotion was about. “I paid for this, I paid for this,” Donna kept repeating as she held the sack out as far as possible for the security guard to inspect. He checked the receipt and found she really had paid for the dress. Then he began examining the dress. The cashier had removed the gadget that trips the alarm, but evidently some shoplifter had also figured out how to unclip these devices and had slipped three of them into the pocket of the dress we had purchased.

The security guard explained what happened. Still embarrassed, we were just happy to get out of the store. Perhaps this is what Acts 24:16 means. As we stood before our retail accusers, we felt a bit like we were considered guilty till proven innocent. Even so, we had something stronger

than a feeling to depend on. We knew for a fact that our “conscience was void of offense.”

There are many reasons for guilt. Sin evokes a guilt that is healthy for us spiritually because it prompts repentance. Satan also causes guilt by sometimes encouraging us to set self-imposed, artificial standards. When we break such a standard, he makes us feel guilty and defeated. Another one of Satan’s tools is to cause false guilt over some sin God has already forgiven.

If you feel guilty, ask the Holy Spirit if there is sin that needs to be confessed. If you still feel guilty, read the following promises from scripture about what God has done with your forgiven sins: 1 John 1:9, Isaiah 38:17, Micah 7:19, Isaiah 43:25, Isaiah 1:18, and Psalm 103:12. Spend time in prayer and thank God for these precious promises. Thank God that He has cast your sins into the depths of the sea, as Micah 7:19 reveals.

As Corrie ten Boom once commented, “He cast our sins in the sea and posted a no fishing sign.” Have you been fishing lately? Why?

October 4—Correction

The word for today is *correction*.

“My son, do not despise the Lord’s discipline and do not resent his rebuke, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in” (Prov. 3:11-12).

“Why should you be beaten anymore? Why do you persist in rebellion? Your whole head is injured, your whole heart afflicted. From the sole of your foot to the top of your head there is no soundness—only wounds and welts and open sores, not cleansed or bandaged or soothed with oil” (Isa. 1:5-6).

“It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? ... Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?” (Heb. 12:7, 9).

“You rebuke and discipline men for their sin; you consume their wealth like a moth—each man is but a breath. Selah” (Ps. 39:11).

“Does he who disciplines nations not punish? Does he who teaches man lack knowledge?” (Ps. 94:10).

“Correct me, Lord, but only with justice—not in your anger, lest you reduce me to nothing” (Jer. 10:24).

“Stern discipline awaits him who leaves the path; he who hates correction will die” (Prov. 15:10).

“Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him” (Prov. 22:15).

“Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish him with the rod, he will not die” (Prov. 23:13).

“Blessed is the man whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty” (Job 5:17).

“All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness” (Heb. 12:11).

“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

A couple of verses of “Have Thine Own Way, Lord”: “Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Search me and try me, Master today! Whiter than snow, Lord, Wash me just now, As in Thy presence Humbly I bow. Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Wounded and weary, Help me, I pray! Power all power Surely is Thine! Touch me and heal me, Saviour divine!”

Prayer: Lord, thank You for making available to us a spiritual trainer in the person of the Holy Spirit. He is teaching us all things.

October 5—Direction

The word for today is direction.

“In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps” (Prov. 16:9).

“Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand. You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory” (Ps. 73:23-24).

“Listen, my son, and be wise, and keep your heart on the right path” (Prov. 23:19).

“The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail” (Isa. 58:11).

“To shine upon those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, To guide our feet into the way of peace” (Luke 1:79).

“But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come” (John 16:13).

“The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity” (Prov. 11:3).

“Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, ‘This is the way; walk in it’” (Isa. 30:21).

“Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long” (Ps. 25:4-5).

“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you” (Ps. 32:8).

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight” (Prov. 3:5-6).

How about a verse of “He Leadeth Me”?: *“He leadeth me, O blessed thought! O words with heav’nly comfort fraught! Whate’er I do, where’er I be, Still ‘tis God’s hand that leadeth me. He leadeth me, He leadeth me! By His own hand He leadeth me! His faithful foll’wer I would be, For by His hand He leadeth me.”*

Prayer: *Lord, teach me to do Your will, for You are my God; may Your good Spirit lead me on the level ground.*

October 6—Roots

The word for today is roots.

“Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers” (Ps. 1:1-3).

“But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit” (Jer. 17:7-8).

“I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5).

“As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude” (Col. 2:6-7).

“And if the first piece of dough be holy, the lump is also; and if the root be holy, the branches are too” (Rom. 11:16).

“See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled” (Heb. 12:15).

“So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love” (Eph. 3:17).

“A man cannot be established through wickedness, but the righteous cannot be uprooted. ... The wicked desire the plunder of evil men, but the root of the righteous flourishes” (Prov. 12:3, 12).

Let's do a verse of “Springs of Living Water”: “I thirsted in the barren land of sin and shame, And nothing satisfying there I found; But to the blessed cross of Christ one day I come, Where springs of living water did abound. Drinking at the springs of living water, Happy now am I, My soul they satisfy; Drinking at the springs of living water.”

Prayer: Lord, I want You to be glorified by much fruit in my life.

October 7—Examination

The word for today is examination.

“So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Rom. 14:12).

“Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?” (2 Cor. 13:5).

“Each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work” (1 Cor. 3:13).

“But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup” (1 Cor. 11:28).

“And this He was saying to test him; for He Himself knew what He was intending to do” (John 6:6).

“I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve” (Jer. 17:10).

“Test me, O Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind; for your love is ever before me, and I walk continually in your truth” (Ps. 26:2-3).

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Ps. 139:23-24).

“For a man’s ways are in full view of the Lord, and he examines all his paths” (Prov. 5:21).

“The Lord examines the righteous, but the wicked and those who love violence his soul hates” (Ps. 11:5).

“And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do” (Heb. 4:13).

Two verses of “Cleanse Me” seems appropriate today: “Search me, O God, and know my heart today; Try me, O Saviour, know my thoughts. I pray; See if there be some wicked way in me: Cleanse me from ev’ry sin, and set me free. I praise Thee, Lord, for cleansing me from sin: Fulfill Thy word, and make me pure within; Fill me with fire, where once I burned with shame: Grant my desire to magnify Thy name.”

Prayer: Lord, Solomon’s words are on my mind: “The man of integrity walks securely, but he who takes crooked paths will be found out.”

October 8—Oneness

The word for today is oneness.

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28).

“And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful” (Col. 3:15).

“But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills” (1 Cor. 12:11).

“With a view to an administration suitable to the fulness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth. In Him” (Eph. 1:10).

“Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you” (2 Cor. 13:11).

“How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron’s beard, down upon the collar of his robes. It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore” (Ps. 133:1-3).

“Make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose” (Phil. 2:2).

“And I am no more in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep them in Thy name, the name which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, even as We are. ... that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me. And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given to them; that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and didst love them, even as Thou didst love Me” (John 17:11, 21-23).

Let’s sing the little chorus “The Family of God”: “I’m so glad I’m a part of the fam’ly of God—I’ve been washed in the fountain, cleansed by His blood! Joint heirs with Jesus as we travel this sod; For I’m part of the fam’ly, the fam’ly of God.”

Prayer: Lord, Paul tells the Romans to be devoted to one another in brotherly love. May we, Your children, also be of the same mind toward one another.

October 9—Truth

The word for today is *truth*.

“Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long” (Ps. 25:4-5).

“I have chosen the way of truth; I have set my heart on your laws” (Ps. 119:30).

“The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth” (Ps. 145:18).

“For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen” (Rom. 1:25).

“Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4).

“Then the woman said to Elijah, ‘Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord from your mouth is the truth’” (1 Kings 17:24).

“He whose walk is blameless and who does what is righteous, who speaks the truth from his heart” (Ps. 15:2).

“Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart” (1 Pet. 1:22).

“If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus” (Eph. 4:21).

“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me’” (John 14:6).

“Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name” (Ps. 86:11).

“Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth” (John 17:17).

The first verse of the “Battle Hymn of the Republic” seems appropriate: “Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord; He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored; He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword; His truth is marching on. Glory! Glory, hallelujah! Glory! Glory, hallelujah! Glory! Glory, hallelujah! Our God is marching on.”

Prayer: Lord, the words of Jesus ring in my heart: “And You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

October 10—A Pearl for Today

“And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near” (Heb. 10:24-25).

“For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ But if you bite and devour one another, take care lest you be consumed by one another” (Gal. 5:14-15).

WORTHY OR WORTHLESS WORDS

Don and I have been in ministry for 40-plus years. While most of our ministry has been in Christian camping and a para-church organization, Don has also served as pastor and interim pastor of numerous churches. He is often called to be a guest speaker at churches while the pastor is away.

We are concerned about the state of the church today.

As we travel around, we notice a contrary spirit in some church bodies. Sometimes a spirit of criticism and divisiveness in these churches even threatens to destroy them. Seeing this grieves my heart, because it grieves Jesus Christ, the head of the church.

Read again the verses in Hebrews and Galatians. Which is a description of your local church body? Which describes your words at church? When you feel uneasy about your words and actions, realize that is the Holy Spirit speaking to you. Listen to Him! Stop, now! Confess and repent. To repent means to change direction. Change direction! Obey the Lord. Speak words of encouragement and stimulation to good deeds.

Think about your church family. Are they “stimulated to love” by your words or are they encouraged to hate? Expose your words to the searchlight of the Holy Spirit.

Luke 6:45: “Whatever is in your heart determines what you say” (NLT). The problem originates in our hearts and God is the only One who can change hearts.

Psalms 139:4: “Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O Lord, Thou doest know it all” (NASB). The Lord knows every word on our

tongues before we speak. Ask Him to pluck off any word that needs not to be said.

He who throws dirt loses ground.

October 11—Sowing

The word for today is sowing.

“As I have observed, those who plow evil and those who sow trouble reap it” (Job 4:8).

“He who sows wickedness reaps trouble, and the rod of his fury will be destroyed” (Prov. 22:8).

“The wicked man earns deceptive wages, but he who sows righteousness reaps a sure reward” (Prov. 11:18).

“For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign Lord will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations” (Isa. 61:11).

“Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, until he comes and showers righteousness on you” (Hosea 10:12).

“The sower sows the word” (Mark 4:14).

“Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest. Already he who reaps is receiving wages, and is gathering fruit for life eternal; that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together” (John 4:35-36).

“Now this I say, he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully. ... Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food, will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness; you will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God” (2 Cor. 9:6, 10-11).

“Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him” (Ps. 126:5-6).

Let's sing the old hymn “Bringing In the Sheaves”: “Sowing in the morning, sowing seeds of kindness, Sowing in the noontide and the dewy eve; Waiting for the harvest, and the time of reaping, We shall come

rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves. Sowing in the sunshine, sowing in the shadows, Fearing neither clouds nor winter's chilling breeze; By and by the harvest, and the labor ended, We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves. Bringing in the sheaves, bringing in the sheaves, We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves; Bringing in the sheaves, Bringing in the sheaves, We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves."

Prayer: Lord, I want to be known as a faithful sower of the seed of the word of God, claiming Your promise that it will not return to You empty.

October 12—Youth

The word for today is youth.

"For you write down bitter things against me and make me inherit the sins of my youth" (Job 13:26)

"After I strayed, I repented; after I came to understand, I beat my breast. I was ashamed and humiliated because I bore the disgrace of my youth" (Jer. 31:19).

"For you have been my hope, O Sovereign Lord, my confidence since my youth. ... Since my youth, O God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds" (Ps. 71:5, 17).

"Then our sons in their youth will be like well-nurtured plants, and our daughters will be like pillars carved to adorn a palace" (Ps. 144:12).

"Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, 'I find no pleasure in them'" (Eccles. 12:1).

"Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint" (Isa. 40:30-31).

"Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe" (1 Tim. 4:12).

"Be happy, young man, while you are young, and let your heart give you joy in the days of your youth. Follow the ways of your heart and whatever your eyes see, but know that for all these things God will bring you to judgment" (Eccles. 11:9).

Let's do a verse of "Jesus Loves Me": "Jesus loves me! this I know, For the Bible tells me so; Little ones to Him belong, They are weak but He is strong. Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so."

Prayer: Lord, may the godly youth I know follow in the steps of Jesus: "And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."

October 13—Justice

The word for today is *justice*.

"Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you" (Ps. 89:14).

"For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just, so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him" (Gen. 18:19).

"David reigned over all Israel, doing what was just and right for all his people" (2 Sam. 8:15).

"Does God pervert justice? Does the Almighty pervert what is right?" (Job 8:3).

"When justice is done, it brings joy to the righteous but terror to evildoers" (Prov. 21:15).

"Many seek an audience with a ruler, but it is from the Lord that man gets justice" (Prov. 29:26).

"Praise be to the Lord your God, who has delighted in you and placed you on the throne of Israel. Because of the Lord's eternal love for Israel, he has made you king, to maintain justice and righteousness" (1 Kings 10:9).

"I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me" (John 5:30).

"The Lord within her is righteous; he does no wrong. Morning by morning he dispenses his justice, and every new day he does not fail, yet the unrighteous know no shame" (Zeph. 3:5).

"He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (Mic. 6:8).

The fifth verse of “And Can It Be That I Should Gain” fits here: “No condemnation now I dread; Jesus, and all in Him, is mine! Alive in Him, my living Head, And clothed in righteousness divine, Bold I approach th’ eternal throne, And claim the crown, through Christ my own. Amazing love! How can it be that Thou my God shouldst die for me.”

Prayer: Lord, I am meditating on Revelation 16:7 today: “And I heard the altar saying, ‘Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Thy judgments.’”

October 14—Eternal Life

The words for today are eternal life.

“And behold, one came to Him and said, ‘Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?’” (Matt. 19:16).

“And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life” (Matt. 25:46).

“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it; and he who hates his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal” (John 12:24-25).

“That, as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 5:21).

“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 6:23).

“And this is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life” (1 John 2:25).

“Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life’” (John 6:68).

“And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. ... These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life. ...

And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding, in order that we might know Him who is true, and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life” (1 John 5:11, 13, 20).

Let’s celebrate eternal life by singing “A New Name in Glory”: “I was once a sinner, but I came Pardon to receive from my Lord: This was

freely given and I found That He always kept His word (kept His word). There's a new name written down in glory, And it's mine, O yes, it's mine! And the white-robed angels sing the story, "A sinner has come home." For there's a new name written down in glory, And it's mine, O yes, it's mine! With my sins forgiven I am bound for heaven, nevermore to roam."

Prayer: Lord, your words to Thomas bring such comfort: "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.'"

October 15—Priest

The word for today is *priest*.

"The priest is to make atonement for the whole Israelite community, and they will be forgiven, for it was not intentional and they have brought to the Lord for their wrong an offering made by fire and a sin offering" (Num. 15:25).

"Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High" (Gen. 14:18).

"Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession" (Heb. 3:1).

"Where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek" (Heb. 6:20).

"Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens" (Heb. 8:1).

"And every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God" (Heb. 10:11-12).

"But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb. 9:11-12).

"Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do

not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:14-16).

Let’s do a verse of “At the Cross”: “Was it for crimes that I have done He groaned upon the tree? Amazing pity! grace unknown! And love beyond degree! At the cross, at the cross, where I first saw the light, And the burden of my heart rolled away, It was there by faith, I received my sight, and now I am happy all the day.”

Prayer: Lord, thank You that Jesus is not only the sacrifice but also the faithful priest who provides for us a new and living way to You.

October 16—King of Kings

The words for today are King of kings.

“The Lord is King for ever and ever; the nations will perish from his land” (Ps. 10:16).

“Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom” (Ps. 45:6).

“How awesome is the Lord Most High, the great King over all the earth!” (Ps. 47:2)

“But you, O God, are my king from of old; you bring salvation upon the earth” (Ps. 74:12)

“I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever. Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever. Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom” (Ps. 145:1-3)

“Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:9-11).

“These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful” (Rev. 17:14).

“And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude and as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying,

‘Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.’ ... And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, ‘KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS’” (Rev. 19:6-7, 16).

Let’s sing “Jesus Shall Reign”: “Jesus shall reign where’er the sun Does his successive journeys run; His kingdom spread from shore to shore, Till moons shall wax and wane no more. From north to south the princes meet To pay their homage at His feet; While western empires own their Lord, And savage tribes attend His word. To Him shall endless prayer be made, And endless praises crown His head; His name like sweet perfume shall rise With every morning sacrifice. People and realms of ev’ry tongue Dwell on His love with sweetest song, And infant voices shall proclaim Their early blessings on His name.”

Prayer: Lord, Paul’s words to Timothy are wonderful: “The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.”

October 17—A Pearl for Today

“Casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you” (1 Pet. 5:7).

MEETING THE LORD IN THE AIR

I used to enjoy teasing friends and family as they waited to board an aircraft for a trip. I have been known to make such comments as “It looks like one of the engines is about to fall off the plane,” or “Your Captain’s name is Kangaroo; hope your flight is not too bouncy.” And then there was my favorite, evoking scripture, “The Bible says, ‘The Lord will meet us in the air’; I hope that doesn’t mean while you are in the air!” You know... innocent fun!

I no longer do this! One day, Don and I were on a flight that had been in the air about 20 minutes, when I noticed the flight attendant talking quietly to each passenger. When it was our turn, she calmly stated, “We are experiencing a slight problem and will have to return to Chicago.” Don just smiled, shrugged, and continued to read his book. The engine on our side of the plane was not on fire, and I could not smell smoke. I looked around to see how other people were handling the emergency. The couple in front of

us was obviously on their honeymoon. Had they fallen out of the plane, they would not have noticed until they were halfway down.

I tried to get Don involved by telling him someone probably forgot to fill the plane with fuel in Chicago. “No, a trouble light must have come on and they are going back to get it checked,” he nonchalantly replied. Don’t you just want to shake someone when he acts like that?!

I worried and white-knuckled that plane all the way back to Chicago. Some people just don’t know how to react to an emergency. We found out later that mechanics had de-iced the engines before leaving Chicago, but one engine was icing up. Hence, we needed to return.

You might have heard the joke about the grandfather who was afraid to fly. After much coaxing, his grandkids talked him into coming for a visit. When he got off the plane they commented, “See Grandpa, everything was just fine.” To this, Grandpa replied, “I know, I didn’t put my entire weight down while we were in the air.”

We sometimes have a tendency to treat the Lord this way. We do not cast all our cares on Him. Instead, white-knuckled, we fret and stew about them. The Lord can handle the full weight of our fears or cares. Cast them on Him!

He who remains calm in confusion knows the One who brings calm in the midst of confusion.

October 18—Future

The word for today is future.

“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, ‘who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty’” (Rev. 1:8).

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future’” (Jer. 29:11).

“The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged” (Deut. 31:8).

“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand” (Isa. 41:10).

"I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please" (Isa. 46:10).

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you" (Ps. 32:8).

"The Lord will fulfill [his purpose] for me; your love, O Lord, endures forever—do not abandon the works of your hands" (Ps. 138:8).

"Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know" (Jer. 33:3).

"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" (Ps. 84:11).

"I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!" (Job 19:25-27).

"He who testifies to these things says, 'Yes, I am coming quickly.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20).

Let's do a verse of "I Know Who Holds Tomorrow": "I don't know about tomorrow; I just live from day to day. I don't borrow from its sunshine, For its skies may turn to gray. I don't worry o'er the future, For I know what Jesus said; And today I'll walk beside Him, For He knows what is ahead. Many things about tomorrow I don't seem to understand; But I know who holds tomorrow, And I know who holds my hand."

Prayer: Lord, satisfy us in the morning with Your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.

October 19—Holy Spirit

The words for today are *Holy Spirit*.

"So he said to me, 'This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit," says the Lord Almighty'" (Zech. 4:6).

"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life" (John 6:63).

"Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?" (Gal. 3:3).

"In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:13).

"Consequently, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you" (1 Thess. 4:8).

"Do not quench the Spirit" (1 Thess. 5:19).

"But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come" (John 16:13).

"And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Cor. 2:4).

"But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16).

"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30).

"And the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.' And let the one who hears say, 'Come.' And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost" (Rev. 22:17).

Join me in a verse of "Spirit of God, Descend Prayer: "Spirit of God, descend upon my heart. Wean it from earth; through all its pulses move. Stoop to my weakness, mighty as Thou art, And make me love Thee as I ought to love."

Lord, it is my prayer that the Spirit produce His fruit in me: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

October 20—Lamb of God

The words for today are *lamb of God*.

"Abraham answered, 'God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.' And the two of them went on together" (Gen. 22:8).

"The next day he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!' ... and he looked upon Jesus as He walked, and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God!'" (John 1:29, 36).

"Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this: 'He was led as a sheep to slaughter; And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He does not open His mouth'" (Acts 8:32).

“But with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ” (1 Pet. 1:19).

“And I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, ‘Come’” (Rev. 6:1).

“And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even to death” (Rev. 12:11).

“These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful” (Rev. 17:14).

“For the Lamb in the center of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them to springs of the water of life; and God shall wipe every tear from their eyes” (Rev. 7:17).

“‘Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready’ ... And he said to me, ‘Write, “Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.”’ And he said to me, ‘These are true words of God’” (Rev. 19:7, 9).

Join me in a couple of verses of “There Is a Redeemer”: “There is a Redeemer Jesus, God’s own Son, Precious Lamb of God, Messiah, Holy One. Jesus, my Redeemer, name above all names, Precious Lamb of God, Messiah, O for sinners slain. Thank You, O my Father, for giving us Your Son, And leaving Your Spirit till the work on earth is done.”

Prayer: Lord, worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.

October 21—Man of Sin

The words for today are *man of sin*.

“Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God” (2 Thess. 2:3-4).

“And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven. And it was

given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them; and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him. And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain” (Rev. 13:6-8).

“Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen; from this we know that it is the last hour” (1 John 2:18).

“And every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; and this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world” (1 John 4:3).

“For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds” (2 Cor. 11:13-15).

“And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, ‘I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours’” (Luke 4:5-7).

“And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone” (Rev. 19:20).

“And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever” (Rev. 20:10).

Let’s sing a verse of “When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder”: “When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound and time shall be no more, And the morning breaks eternal, bright and fair; When the saved of earth shall gather over on the other shore, And the roll is called up yonder I’ll be there! When the roll is called up yonder, When the roll is called up yonder, When the roll is called up yonder, When the roll is called up yonder I’ll be there!”

Prayer: Lord, the longing of my heart is to be able to say Hallelujah! for the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him.

October 22—Legacy

The word for today is *legacy*.

“By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin; considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward” (Heb. 11:24-26).

“And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.’ But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?’” (Luke 12:19-20).

“His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master’” (Matt. 25:23).

“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing” (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned” (Rom. 5:12).

“Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish” (Esther 4:16).

“I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!” (Job 19:25-27).

Let's sing a verse of "Higher Ground": "I'm pressing on the upward way, New heights I'm gaining ev'ry day; Still praying as I'm onward bound, 'Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.' Lord, lift me up and let me stand, By faith, on Heaven's table land, A higher plane that I have found; Lord, plant my feet on higher ground."

Prayer: Lord, I want You to be glorified in my life by much fruit. May I leave a legacy for You.

October 23—Delay

The word for today is *delay*.

"Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth" (Prov. 27:1).

"I will hasten and not delay to obey your commands" (Ps. 119:60).

"Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest" (John 4:35).

"We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work" (John 9:4).

"And to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you" (1 Thess. 4:11).

"How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard" (Heb. 2:3).

"And this do, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts" (Rom. 13:11-14).

"For He says, 'At the acceptable time I listened to you, And on the day of salvation I helped you;' behold, now is 'the acceptable time,' behold, now is 'the day of salvation'" (2 Cor. 6:2).

“Come now, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow, we shall go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.’ Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away” (James 4:13-14).

“While it is said, ‘Today if you hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts, as when they provoked Me’” (Heb. 3:15).

“Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end” (Rev. 22:12-13).

Join me in singing “The Savior Is Waiting”: “The Savior is waiting to enter your heart; Why don’t you let Him come in? There’s nothing in this world to keep you apart, What is your answer to Him? If you’ll take one step t’ward the Savior, my friend; You’ll find His arms open wide. Receive Him and all of your darkness will end, Within your heart He’ll abide. Time after time, He has waited before, And now He is waiting again. To see if you’re willing to open the door, Oh, how He wants to come in.”

Prayer: Lord, this is the day You have made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

October 24—A Pearl for Today

“... and you may be sure that your sin will find you out” (Num. 32:23).

BE SURE YOUR SINS WILL FIND YOU IN THE outhouse

My older sister Ardith led me astray one day. Actually, I am not sure which one of us first had the idea of taking a jar of canned sauerkraut from the cellar. Both of us enjoyed eating the stolen kraut, for a little while. We ate and we ate and we ate. I am here to testify that there is a lot of sauerkraut in a quart jar, especially for two young girls. Since we were raised not to waste any food, we ate the entire jar. (Of course we were also raised not to steal—a lesson that momentarily escaped us.)

After eating the sauerkraut we quietly put the jar in the cellar where our step-mom kept the empty jars for next year’s canning. We got away with our theft, or so we thought.

Let me see how to say this delicately. Our sin found us out all right. Out in the outhouse! All night Ardith and I fought for the rights to the outhouse! We were two sick little girls.

Because of God's patience, we, as God's children, think we get away with sin. But as God warns us in Numbers 32, "your sin will find you out."

Unlike our earthly parents, our heavenly Father is omniscient. As Adam and Eve quickly discovered, we cannot hide or deceive Him. "[God] disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness" (Heb. 12:10).

We try to hide from God or cover our sin. Learn from Adam and Eve. It took a blood sacrifice in Genesis 3 to cover their transgressions. It takes the blood of Christ to wash away our sin.

Ask for His cleansing; there still may be consequences, but they will seem easier to bear. Christ took the brunt on the cross.

Don't try to run from God. Read Psalm 139:7-12. Remember Jonah. Choose to obey. Our son-in-law Mark, a pastor, used this outline when teaching on Jonah: "God said 'Go'; Jonah said, 'No'; God said, 'Oh!'"

God is worthy of our obedience. There are no secrets from God.

October 25—Deliverance

The word for today is deliverance.

"But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance" (Gen. 45:7).

"The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." Saul said to David, "Go, and the Lord be with you" (1 Sam. 17:37).

"The righteousness of the upright delivers them, but the unfaithful are trapped by evil desires" (Prov. 11:6).

"And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.]" (Matt. 6:13).

"But the Lord your God will deliver them over to you, throwing them into great confusion until they are destroyed" (Deut. 7:23).

"O Lord my God, I take refuge in you; save and deliver me from all who pursue me" (Ps. 7:1).

"And call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me" (Ps. 50:15).

“But on Mount Zion will be deliverance; it will be holy, and the house of Jacob will possess its inheritance” (Obad. 17).

“May my supplication come before you; deliver me according to your promise” (Ps. 119:170).

“You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you, O Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the Lord will be with you” (2 Chron. 20:17).

“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged because of the king of Assyria and the vast army with him, for there is a greater power with us than with him. With him is only the arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles.’ And the people gained confidence from what Hezekiah the king of Judah said” (2 Chron. 32:7-8).

Let’s sing a verse of “He Is Able to Deliver Thee”: “’Tis the grandest theme thro’ the ages rung; ‘Tis the grandest theme for a mortal tongue; ‘Tis the grandest theme that the world e’er sung, ‘Our God is able to deliver thee.’ He is able to deliver thee, He is able to deliver thee; Tho’ by sin opprest, God to Him for rest: ‘Our God is able to deliver thee.’”

Prayer: Lord, You will keep me from all harm—You will watch over my life; You will watch over my coming and going, both now and forevermore.

October 26—Unbelief

The word for today is *unbelief*.

“And He did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief” (Matt. 13:58).

“What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it?” (Rom. 3:3).

“Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God. ... And so we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief” (Heb. 3:12, 19).

“In whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God” (2 Cor. 4:4).

“Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?”

Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?” (2 Cor. 6:14-15).

“Even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. And yet I was shown mercy, because I acted ignorantly in unbelief” (1 Tim. 1:13).

“To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled” (Titus 1:15).

“And He said to them, ‘O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!’” (Luke 24:25).

“But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (Rev. 21:8).

“And they said, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household’” (Acts 16:31).

Let’s sing a verse of “My Faith Looks Up to Thee”: “My faith looks up to Thee, Thou Lamb of Calvary, Saviour divine! Now hear me while I pray, Take all my guilt away, O let me from this day Be wholly Thine!”

Prayer: Lord, my thoughts turn toward John 20:31: “but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.”

October 27—Law

The word for today is law.

“The Lord said to Moses, ‘Come up to me on the mountain and stay here, and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and commands I have written for their instruction’” (Exod. 24:12).

“Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful” (Josh. 1:8).

“Hear, O earth: I am bringing disaster on this people, the fruit of their schemes, because they have not listened to my words and have rejected my law” (Jer. 6:19).

“Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but blessed is he who keeps the law” (Prov. 29:18).

“For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ” (John 1:17).

“Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses” (Acts 13:38-39).

“For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law” (Rom. 3:28).

“The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple” (Ps. 19:7).

“For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace” (Rom. 6:14).

“Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith” (Gal. 3:24).

A verse of “Once for All!” fits here: “Free from the law, O happy condition! Jesus hath bled, and there is remission; Cursed by the law and bruised by the fall, Grace hath redeemed us once for all. Once for all, O sinner, receive it! Once for all, O brother, believe it! Cling to the cross, the burden will fall; Christ hath redeemed us once for all!”

Prayer: Lord, Your word says: “But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.”

October 28—Reconciliation

The word for today is reconciliation.

“And might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity” (Eph. 2:16).

“Leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering” (Matt. 5:24).

“For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Rom. 5:10).

“Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people” (Heb. 2:17).

“For if their rejection be the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?” (Rom. 11:15).

“For this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins” (Matt. 26:28).

“And that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47).

“And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (Heb. 9:22).

“Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ” (1 Pet. 1:18, 19).

Let's sing a couple of verses of "There Is a Fountain": "There is a fountain filled with blood Drawn from Immanuel's veins; And sinners, plunged beneath that flood, Lose all their guilty stains: Lose all their guilty stains, Lose all their guilty stains; And sinners, plunged beneath that flood, Lose all their guilty stains. Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood Shall never lose its pow'r, Till all the ransomed Church of God Be saved, to sin no more: Be saved to sin no more, Be saved, to sin no more; Till all the ransomed Church of God Be saved, to sin no more."

Prayer: Lord, thank You for the words of Paul in Ephesians 2:13: "But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ."

October 29—Separation

The word for today is separation.

“For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession” (Deut. 7:6).

“Now make confession to the Lord, the God of your fathers, and do his will. Separate yourselves from the peoples around you and from your foreign wives” (Ezra 10:11).

“Throughout the period of his separation he is consecrated to the Lord” (Num. 6:8).

“‘Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate,’ says the Lord. ‘And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you. And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,’ Says the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor. 6:17-18).

“Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God” (Rom. 1:1).

“Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor. 7:1).

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” (Rom. 8:35).

“For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:38-39).

“I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect” (Rom. 12:1-2).

Join me in a couple verses of “I Surrender All”: “All to Jesus I surrender, All to Him I freely give; I will ever love and trust Him, In His presence daily live. All to Jesus I surrender, Lord, I give myself to Thee; Fill me with Thy love and power, Let Thy blessing fall on me. I surrender all, I surrender all. All to Thee, my blessed Savior, I surrender all.”

Prayer: Lord, James tells us what we need to do: “Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom. Humble

yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.” Remind us of these, O Lord!

October 30—Blindness

The word for today is *blindness*.

“I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them” (Isa. 42:16).

“Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit” (Matt. 15:14).

“He has blinded their eyes, and He hardened their heart; lest they see with their eyes, and perceive with their heart, and be converted, and I heal them” (John 12:40).

“But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ” (2 Cor. 3:14).

“And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God” (2 Cor. 4:3-4).

“The Lord gives sight to the blind, the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down, the Lord loves the righteous” (Ps. 146:8).

“But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes” (1 John 2:11).

“Do all things without grumbling or disputing; that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world” (Phil. 2:14-15).

“He therefore answered, ‘Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I do know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see’” (John 9:25).

“Being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to

sensuality, for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness” (Eph. 4:18-19).

Join me in singing “The Light of the World Is Jesus”: “No darkness have we who in Jesus abide, The Light of the world is Jesus; We walk in the Light when we follow our Guide, The Light of the world is Jesus. Come to the Light, ‘tis shining for thee; Sweetly the Light has dawned upon me, Once I was blind, but now I can see: The Light of the world is Jesus.”

Prayer: Lord, open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in Your law.

October 31—A Pearl for Today

“... For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God” (Rom. 13:1).

“The Lord forbid that I should stretch out my hand against the Lord’s anointed” (1 Sam. 26:11 NASB).

PASTORAL CARE

We need more Christians today with hearts like David. He respected God’s anointed leader, Saul, even though Saul was not always worthy of David’s respect. David’s trust was in God, his obedience toward God. God’s command is to respect all authority because authority is from Him.

My heart is burdened for pastors. When we were involved in Christian camping, we would invite pastors and their families to come as campers and be our guests. If you have a vacation cabin, invite your pastor to use it as a retreat.

Let me encourage you to make the following covenant with God.

My heavenly Father, I enter this covenant, knowing You are a covenant-keeping God:

1. I will never speak or write to my pastor personally attacking him.
2. I will never bring up any problem to my pastor before the sermon on Sunday.
3. I will never criticize my pastor to other members of the congregation.
4. I will always treat my pastor with respect.
5. I will faithfully pray for my pastor.

If you have been involved in causing a pastor to leave a church, please get on your knees and repent and make restitution to that pastor. This is serious business. Beware of people who gloat over causing a pastor to leave a church. Actually, stand clear of them! God tells us He has special vindication for His servants in Isaiah 54:17.

Reverend Chuck Smith, a pastor in California made this comment on the radio: "Never go to a church where they have run off a pastor." I agree. In his excellent book *FireStorm*, Ron Susek writes, "God will not bless the church that tries to bring harvest out of poisoned ground." If you attend a church that has run off a pastor, call for repentance as a church, and humbly make restitution. GOD WILL NOT BLESS UNTIL THIS IS FORGIVEN. "He who has an ear, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

A godly flock does not give the pastor flak.

November 1—Rock

The word for today is rock.

"He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he. ... You deserted the Rock, who fathered you; you forgot the God who gave you birth" (Deut. 32:4, 18).

"There is no one holy like the Lord; there is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God" (1 Sam. 2:2).

"Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness and who seek the Lord: Look to the rock from which you were cut and to the quarry from which you were hewn" (Isa. 51:1).

"But the Lord has become my fortress, and my God the rock in whom I take refuge" (Ps. 94:22).

"Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation" (Ps. 95:1).

"For this is contained in Scripture: 'Behold I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious corner stone, And he who believes in Him shall not be disappointed.' This precious value, then, is for you who believe. But for those who disbelieve, 'The stone which the builders rejected, This became the very corner stone,' and, 'A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense'; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed" (1 Pet. 2:6-8).

“From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I” (Ps. 61:2).

“My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken” (Ps. 62:1-2).

“... Careful! I’ve put a huge stone on the road to Mount Zion, a stone you can’t get around. But the stone is me! If you’re looking for me, you’ll find me on the way, not in the way” (Rom. 9:33 MSG).

A couple of verses of “Rock of Ages” would be good: “Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee; Let the water and the blood, From Thy riven side which flowed, Be of sin the double cure, Cleanse me from its guilt and pow’r. While I draw this fleeting breath, When my eyes shall close in death, When I rise to worlds unknown, See Thee on Thy judgment throne, Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee. Amen.”

Prayer: Lord, I find myself singing this morning: “My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness; I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus’ name. On Christ the solid Rock I stand; all other ground is sinking sand. All other ground is sinking sand.”

November 2—Submission

The word for today is *submission*.

“Who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself” (Phil. 3:21).

“Who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him” (1 Pet. 3:22).

“For not knowing about God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God” (Rom. 10:3).

“Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable” (1 Pet. 2:18).

“In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a

word by the behavior of their wives, ... For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands” (1 Pet. 3:1, 5).

“And be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ...But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything” (Eph. 5:21-22, 24).

“Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord” (Col. 3:18).

“You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time” (1 Pet. 5:5-6).

“Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you” (James 4:7-10).

Let's sing a couple verses of “Have Thine Own Way, Lord”: “Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Thou art the Potter, I am the clay. Mould me and make me After Thy will, While I am waiting, Yielded and still. Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Hold o'er my being Absolute sway! Fill with Thy Spirit Till all shall see Christ only, always, Living in me!”

Prayer: Lord, I am trusting You with all my heart and not leaning on my own understanding; in all my ways I am acknowledging You, knowing that the path we take will be Your path.

November 3—Diligence

The word for today is diligence.

“Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them” (Deut. 4:9).

“The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty” (Prov. 21:5).

“Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life” (Prov. 4:23).

“Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless” (2 Pet. 3:14).

“Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth” (Prov. 10:4).

“Diligent hands will rule, but laziness ends in slave labor. ... The lazy man does not roast his game, but the diligent man prizes his possessions” (Prov. 12:24, 27).

“The sluggard craves and gets nothing, but the desires of the diligent are fully satisfied” (Prov. 13:4).

“But be very careful to keep the commandment and the law that Moses the servant of the Lord gave you: to love the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to obey his commands, to hold fast to him and to serve him with all your heart and all your soul” (Josh. 22:5).

“For God is not unjust. He will not forget how hard you have worked for him and how you have shown your love to him by caring for other believers, as you still do. Our great desire is that you will keep on loving others as long as life lasts, in order to make certain that what you hope for will come true” (Heb. 6:10-11 NLT).

“And He was saying to them all, ‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me’” (Luke 9:23).

“I don’t know about you, but I’m running hard for the finish line. I’m giving it everything I’ve got. No sloppy living for me! I’m staying alert and in top condition. I’m not going to get caught napping, telling everyone else all about it and then missing out myself” (1 Cor. 9:26-27 MSG).

Let’s sing my favorite, “My Wonderful Lord”: “I have found a deep peace that I never had known And a joy this world could not afford Since I yielded control Of my body and soul To my wonderful, wonderful Lord. All the talents I have I have laid at Thy feet; Thy approval shall be my reward. Be my store great or small, I surrender it all To my wonderful, wonderful Lord. My wonderful Lord, my wonderful Lord, By angels and

seraphs in heaven adored, I bow at Thy shrine, My Savior divine, My wonderful, wonderful Lord.”

Prayer: Lord, crush me, break me, and melt me in the furnace of affliction, so that I become soft and pliable clay in Your hands.

November 4—Invitation

The word for today is invitation.

“And He said to them, ‘Come away by yourselves to a lonely place and rest a while.’ (For there were many people coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.)” (Mark 6:31).

“Joshua said to the Israelites, ‘Come here and listen to the words of the Lord your God’” (Josh. 3:9).

“Come, my children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord” (Ps. 34:11).

“Come and listen, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me” (Ps. 66:16).

“Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. ... Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker” (Ps. 95:1, 6).

“Come, let us return to the Lord. He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us; he has injured us but he will bind up our wounds” (Hos. 6:1).

“Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done; this is not the Christ, is it?” (John 4:29).

“He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying” (Matt. 28:6).

“Come and see what God has done, how awesome his works in man’s behalf!” (Ps. 66:5).

“‘Come now, let us reason together,’ says the Lord. ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool’” (Isa. 1:18).

“For He says, ‘At the acceptable time I listened to you, And on the day of salvation I helped you;’ behold, now is ‘the acceptable time,’ behold, now is ‘the day of salvation’” (2 Cor. 6:2).

“And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost” (Rev. 22:17).

Let's sing a couple verses of "Just As I Am": "Just as I am, without one plea, But that Thy blood was shed for me, And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee, O Lamb of God, I come! I come! Just as I am, and waiting not, To rid my soul of one dark blot, To Thee whose blood can cleanse each spot, O Lamb of God, I come! I come!"

Prayer: Lord, my prayer is found in the words of the prodigal: "I will arise and go to my father." Thank You that when we come, You are running to get Your arms around us.

November 5—Creation

The word for today is creation.

"As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches" (Rom. 1:20).

"Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind" (Isa. 65:17).

"So that people may see and know, may consider and understand, that the hand of the Lord has done this, that the Holy One of Israel has created it" (Isa. 41:20).

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

"And to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things" (Eph. 3:9).

"Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?" declares the Lord. "This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word" (Isa. 66:2).

"And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together" (Col. 1:15-17).

"Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, 'I find no pleasure in them'" (Eccles. 12:1).

“Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created” (Rev. 4:11).

Let’s sing a verse of “This Is My Father’s World”: “This is my Father’s world, And to my list’ning ears, All nature sings, and round me rings The music of the spheres. This is my Father’s world, I rest me in the thought Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas His hand the wonders wrought.”

Prayer: Lord, Paul’s words to the Corinthians fill me with anticipation: “But just as it is written, ‘Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him’” (1 Cor. 2:9).

November 6—God’s Will

The words for today are God’s will.

“‘Keep watching and praying, that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.’ He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, ‘My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Thy will be done’” (Matt. 26:41-42).

“Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father” (Gal. 1:4).

“So as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God” (1 Pet. 4:2).

“And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever” (1 John 2:17).

“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10).

“He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way” (Ps. 25:9).

“For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding” (Col. 1:9).

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight” (Prov. 3:5-6).

“For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother” (Matt. 12:50).

“Not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart” (Eph. 6:6).

“For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men” (1 Pet. 2:15).

Join me in a couple of choruses, “He Is Lord” and “Something Beautiful”: “He is Lord; He is Lord; He is risen from the dead, and He is Lord. Ev’ry knee shall bow, ev’ry tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.” “Something beautiful, Something good; All my confusion He understood; All I had to offer Him was brokenness and strife, But He made something beautiful of my life.”

Prayer: Lord, teach me to do Your will, for You are my God; may Your good Spirit lead me on level ground.

November 7—A Pearl for Today

“But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills. ... But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired” (1 Cor. 12:11, 18).

LOVE LIFTED ME

Allan C. Emery, in his delightful book *A Turtle on a Fencepost*, tells of complimenting a minister on all the man had accomplished with his many gifts and talents. The minister’s reply revealed his philosophy of life and service: “Allan when I was a schoolboy we would occasionally see a turtle on a fencepost and when we did, we knew someone had put him there. He didn’t get there by himself. That is how I see my own life. I’m a turtle on a fencepost” (14).

The pastor understood that God was the source of his abilities and that God had placed him in certain circumstances to shine.

We all have gifts and abilities, given by God, to be used for His glory and service. When we have a little success, let’s remember we didn’t get there by ourselves. He, in His love, lifted us to shine for Him.

God often works through people. Perhaps you can think of certain folks in your life He has used to give you a lift on your fencepost.

Coach Pickle, a high school swimming coach in Tyler, Texas, came along just at the right time in our son Bobby’s life. He cajoled, pushed, threatened, cared for, and listened to his swim team members until they

believed in themselves and their abilities. As a parent, I will always be grateful to Coach Pickle.

If you are a parent, think of those who have helped your children on the fencepost. Drop a note, or call and tell them that you thank God for their inspiration and encouragement in the life of your child.

Ask God to help you be one who helps others up on the fencepost.

November 8—Delight

The word for today is *delight*.

“If the Lord is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us” (Num. 14:8).

“Then I was the craftsman at his side. I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in his presence” (Prov. 8:30).

“The Lord detests men of perverse heart but he delights in those whose ways are blameless” (Prov. 11:20).

“The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in men who are truthful” (Prov. 12:22).

“The Lord detests the sacrifice of the wicked, but the prayer of the upright pleases him. The Lord detests the way of the wicked but he loves those who pursue righteousness” (Prov. 15:8-9).

“But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night” (Ps. 1:2).

“As for the saints who are in the land, they are the glorious ones in whom is all my delight” (Ps. 16:3).

“If the Lord delights in a man’s way, he makes his steps firm; though he stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with his hand” (Ps. 37:23-24).

“Praise the Lord. Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who finds great delight in his commands” (Ps. 112:1).

“I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word” (Ps. 119:16).

“I long for your salvation, O Lord, and your law is my delight” (Ps. 119:174).

“This is what the Lord says: ‘Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that

I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,' declares the Lord" (Jer. 9:23-24).

"Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart" (Ps. 37:4).

"The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing" (Zeph. 3:17).

Prayer: Lord, You are all my joy and delight. My prayer is that I might be the same to You.

November 9—Boasting

The word for today is *boasting*.

"The king of Israel answered, 'Tell him: "One who puts on his armor should not boast like one who takes it off"' (1 Kings 20:11).

"You say to yourself that you have defeated Edom, and now you are arrogant and proud. But stay at home! Why ask for trouble and cause your own downfall and that of Judah also?" (2 Chron. 25:19).

"You boasted against me and spoke against me without restraint, and I heard it" (Ezek. 35:13).

"So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. Behold, how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire!" (James 3:5).

"But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil" (James 4:16).

"Do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you" (Rom. 11:18).

"For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy" (2 Tim. 3:2).

"Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith" (Rom. 3:27).

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9).

Let's sing our testimony, "Love Lifted Me": "I was sinking deep in sin, Far from the peaceful shore, Very deeply stained within, Sinking to rise

no more; But the Master of the sea Heard my despairing cry, From the waters lifted me, Now safe am I. Souls in danger, look above, Jesus completely saved; He will lift you by His love Out of the angry waves. He's the Master of the sea, Billows His will obey; He your Saviour wants to be, Be saved today. Love lifted me! Love lifted me! When nothing else could help, Love lifted me."

Prayer: Lord, Paul's words to the Galatians fill my thoughts today: "But may it never be that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."

November 10—Courage

The word for today is courage.

"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you" (Deut. 31:6).

"Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go" (Josh. 1:6-7).

"Be strong and let us fight bravely for our people and the cities of our God. The Lord will do what is good in his sight" (2 Sam. 10:12).

"Rise up; this matter is in your hands. We will support you, so take courage and do it" (Ezra 10:4).

"Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord" (Ps. 27:14).

"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged because of the king of Assyria and the vast army with him, for there is a greater power with us than with him. With him is only the arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles.' And the people gained confidence from what Hezekiah the king of Judah said" (2 Chron. 32:7-8).

"David also said to Solomon his son, 'Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you until all the work for the service of the temple of the Lord is finished'" (1 Chron. 28:20).

“Be strong and let us fight bravely for our people and the cities of our God. The Lord will do what is good in his sight” (1 Chron. 19:13).

“Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord” (Ps. 31:24).

“Therefore, keep up your courage, men, for I believe God, that it will turn out exactly as I have been told” (Acts 27:25).

A couple of verses from “Lead On, O King Eternal” will fit here: “Lead on, O King Eternal, The day of march has come; Henceforth in fields of conquest Your tents shall be our home; Through days of preparation Your grace had made us strong, And now, O King Eternal, We lift our battle song. Lead on, O King Eternal, We follow, not with fears; For gladness breaks like morning Where’er Your face appears; Your cross is lifted o’er us; We journey in its light: The crown awaits the conquest; Lead on, O God of might. Amen.”

Prayer: Lord, Paul’s words to the Philippians are on my mind: “according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I shall not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.”

November 11—Decision

The word for today is decision.

“But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord” (Josh. 24:15).

“Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision” (Joel 3:14).

“Who, then, is the man that fears the Lord? He will instruct him in the way chosen for him” (Ps. 25:12).

“He chose our inheritance for us, the pride of Jacob, whom he loved. Selah” (Ps. 47:4).

“Blessed are those you choose and bring near to live in your courts! We are filled with the good things of your house, of your holy temple” (Ps. 65:4).

“Since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the Lord” (Prov. 1:29).

“He will eat curds and honey when he knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right” (Isa. 7:15).

“My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water” (Jer. 2:13).

“There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death” (Prov. 14:12).

“But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better” (Phil. 1:22-23).

“Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it” (Matt. 7:13-14).

Let’s do a verse of “Whiter Than Snow”: “Lord Jesus, I long to be perfectly whole; I want Thee forever to live in my soul. Break down ev’ry idol; cast out ev’ry foe. Now wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. Whiter than snow, yes, whiter than snow; Now wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.”

Prayer: Lord, I am making a fresh commitment to You today. I want You to do all the choosing for me the rest of the way.

November 12—Gratitude

The word for today is *gratitude*.

“They were also to stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord. They were to do the same in the evening” (1 Chron. 23:30).

“Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name” (Ps. 100:4).

“Proclaiming aloud your praise and telling of all your wonderful deeds” (Ps. 26:7).

“It is good to praise the Lord and make music to your name, O Most High, to proclaim your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night” (Ps. 92:1-2).

“Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever” (1 Chron. 16:34).

“Through Him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name” (Heb. 13:15).

“But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed” (Rom. 6:17).

“But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 15:57).

“I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service” (1 Tim. 1:12).

“In everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thess. 5:18).

“But thanks be to God, who always leads us in His triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place” (2 Cor. 2:14).

“Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!” (2 Cor. 9:15).

Let’s sing “To God Be the Glory”: “To God be the glory, great things He hath done, So loved He the world that He gave us His Son, Who yielded His life an atonement for sin, And opened the Life-gate that all may go in. Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, Let the earth hear His voice! Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, Let the people rejoice! O come to the Father thro’ Jesus the Son, and give Him the glory, great things He has done.”

Prayer: Lord, I am singing the doxology this morning with an attitude of gratitude: “Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise Him all creatures here below. Praise Him above ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.”

November 13—Knowledge

The word for today is knowledge.

“For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God” (Col. 1:9-10).

“In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col. 2:3).

“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen” (2 Pet. 3:18).

“And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able also to admonish one another” (Rom. 15:14).

“That in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge” (1 Cor. 1:5).

“For God, who said, ‘Light shall shine out of darkness,’ is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6).

“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him” (Eph. 1:17).

“Like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord” (1 Pet. 2:2-3).

“Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!” (Rom. 11:33).

“Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4).

Let's do a verse of “My Saviour First of All”: “When my life work is ended, and I cross the swelling tide, When the bright and glorious morning I shall see; I shall know my Redeemer when I reach the other side, And His smile will be the first to welcome me. I shall know Him, I shall know Him, As redeemed by His side I shall stand; I shall know Him, I shall know Him, by the print of the nails in His hand.”

Prayer: Lord, my passion is similar to the apostle Paul's recorded in Philippians 3:10: “that I may know Him.” More about Jesus would I know, more of His grace to others show ... Thank you that Jesus said of the Holy Spirit: “He will teach you all things and bring to remembrance all that I said to you.”

November 14—A Pearl for Today

“You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth?” (Gal. 5:7).

WHAT’S THE PACE OF YOUR RACE?

I was on my way to Dallas when I noticed a broken-down bus parked on the shoulder of Interstate 20. The sign painted in large letters on the back of the bus caught my attention. It proclaimed, “On the Move for the Master.” The side of the vehicle had “JOY BUS” written on it.

I thought, what a paradox. Along the way the JOY BUS had broken down and the passengers were not on the move anywhere. How sad! Even sadder, however, are those who once spiritually ran and leaped with joy but now either limp along or find their ministries completely shut down by their own sin or disobedience. Paul describes this unfortunate state in Galatians 5:7. Some hindrance kept the Galatian church from obedience to God’s truth.

Hebrews 12:1-2 reveals two things which hinder the Christian’s spiritual race: “Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every ENCUMBRANCE, and the SIN which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”

The first possible hindrance to our race is an encumbrance. An encumbrance could be any object that weighs us down. It is not necessarily a sin but could be something good that has become a hindrance because we are not giving it the proper priority in our lives. An encumbrance could be anything that keeps Christ and His kingdom from having preeminence in our lives. As a runner runs a race with minimal added weight, so we need to evaluate our lives.

If something encumbers us in the race, we need to set it aside. After all, would an Olympic marathon runner undertake the race lugging a heavy backpack? Think of the “great cloud of witnesses” mentioned by the writer of Hebrews. Do they see us weighted down as we try to run our race or do they see us unencumbered and running well?

The second hindrance mentioned in Hebrews 12:1 is sin. Sin entangles us and keeps us from moving forward, almost as if we were ensnared in a net. Sin entraps us and keeps us from running well. It is necessary to deal with any sin in our lives. Sin slows us down or brings us to a screeching halt.

We must seek forgiveness, then start hitting on all cylinders again. Hindrance or endurance? Which best describes your race?

“We are in a relay race, whether we want to be or not, and truth is either being handed on or it is being dropped.”—Edith Schaeffer

November 15—Sincerity

The word for today is *sincerity*.

“For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois, and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well” (2 Tim. 1:5).

“So that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ” (Phil. 1:10).

“Like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation” (1 Pet. 2:2).

“In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men” (Acts 24:16).

“I am not speaking this as a command, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity of your love also” (2 Cor. 8:8).

“But holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience” (1 Tim. 3:9).

“(For the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord” (Eph. 5:9-10).

“Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with a love incorruptible” (Eph. 6:24).

“In all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified” (Titus 2:7).

“Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart” (1 Pet. 1:22).

“But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith” (1 Tim. 1:5).

“May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer” (Ps. 19:14).

“Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false” (Ps. 24:3-4).

Prayer: Lord, I am asking the Holy Spirit to search me and test my heart for anything that borders on insincerity.

November 16—Apathy

The word for today is *apathy*.

“Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word” (Ps. 119:37).

“He will die for lack of discipline, led astray by his own great folly” (Prov. 5:23).

“All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty” (Prov. 14:23).

“One who is slack in his work is brother to one who destroys” (Prov. 18:9).

“The sluggard’s craving will be the death of him, because his hands refuse to work” (Prov. 21:25).

“But some days later, Felix arrived with Drusilla, his wife who was a Jewess, and sent for Paul, and heard him speak about faith in Christ Jesus. And as he was discussing righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix became frightened and said, ‘Go away for the present, and when I find time, I will summon you’” (Acts 24:24-25).

“And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this: ‘I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth’” (Rev. 3:14-16).

“And this do, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light” (Rom. 13:11-12).

Let’s sing a couple of verses of “He Keeps Me Singing”: “All my life was wrecked by sin and strife, Discord filled my heart with pain, Jesus swept across the broken strings, Stirred the slumbering cords again. Though sometimes He leads through waters deep, Trials fall across the way, Though sometimes the path seems rough and steep, See His footprints all the way: Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Sweetest name I know, Fills my every longing, Keeps me singing as I go.”

Prayer: Lord, teach me how to number my days aright that I may gain a heart of wisdom. I am persevering and pressing on.

November 17—Bible

The word for today is *Bible*.

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15).

“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

“But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves” (James 1:22).

“For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope” (Rom. 15:4).

“When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart’s delight, for I bear your name, O Lord God Almighty” (Jer. 15:16).

“Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11).

“How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. ... I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you” (Ps. 119:9, 11).

“And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God’s message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe” (1 Thess. 2:13).

“For the word of the Lord is right and true; he is faithful in all he does” (Ps. 33:4).

“Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers” (Ps. 1:1-3).

Let's sing a couple verses of "Break Thou the Bread of Life": "Break Thou the bread of life, Dear Lord, to me, As Thou didst break the loaves Beside the sea; Beyond the sacred page I seek Thee, Lord; My spirit pants to Thee, O Living Word! Break Thou the truth, dear Lord, To me, to me, As Thou didst bless the bread By Galilee; Then shall all bondage cease, All fetters fall, And I shall find my peace, My All in All."

Prayer: Lord, turn my eyes away from worthless things; renew my life according to Your word.

November 18—Divorce

The word for today is divorce.

"I hate divorce," says the Lord God of Israel, "and I hate a man's covering himself with violence as well as with his garment," says the Lord Almighty. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith" (Mal. 2:16).

"He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord" (Prov. 18:22).

"But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for the cause of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery" (Matt. 5:32).

"Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well. Should your springs overflow in the streets, your streams of water in the public squares? Let them be yours alone, never to be shared with strangers. May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. A loving doe, a graceful deer—may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be captivated by her love. Why be captivated, my son, by an adulteress? Why embrace the bosom of another man's wife?" (Prov. 5:15-20).

"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24).

"Enjoy life with your wife, whom you love, all the days of this meaningless life that God has given you under the sun—all your meaningless days. For this is your lot in life and in your toilsome labor under the sun" (Eccles. 9:9).

"But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband (but if she does leave, let her remain

unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not send his wife away” (1 Cor. 7:10-11).

“Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame. Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot wash it away. If one were to give all the wealth of his house for love, it would be utterly scorned” (Song of Sol. 8:6-7).

“A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies. Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value. She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life” (Prov. 31:10-12).

Let’s sing the last verse of “How Great Thou Art!”: “When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart! Then I shall bow in humble adoration And there proclaim, my God, how great Thou art! Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee; How great Thou art, how great Thou art! Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee; How great Thou art, how great Thou art!”

Prayer: Lord, thank You that Pearl and I have made it over 50 years together, and life just keeps getting better and better.

November 19—Evangelism

The word for today is evangelism.

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

“For you will be a witness for Him to all men of what you have seen and heard” (Acts 22:15).

“A truthful witness saves lives, but a false witness is deceitful” (Prov. 14:25).

“And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation’” (Mark 16:15).

“Jesus therefore said to them again, ‘Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you’” (John 20:21).

“Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work. Do you not say, “There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest”? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest. Already he who reaps is receiving

wages, and is gathering fruit for life eternal; that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together” (John 4:34-36).

“You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you” (John 15:16).

“And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age’” (Matt. 28:18-20).

“But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence” (1 Pet. 3:15).

Let's sing a couple verses of “So Send I You”: So send I you to labor unrewarded, To serve unpaid, unloved, unsought, unknown, To bear rebuke, to suffer scorn and scoffing; So send I you to toil for me alone. So send I you to bind the bruised and broken, o'er wand'ring souls to work, to weep, to wake, To bear the burdens of a world away; So send I you to suffer for My sake. So send I you to hearts made hard by hatred, To eyes made blind because will not see, To spend, tho' it be blood, to spend and spare not; So send I you to taste of Calvary.”

Prayer: Lord, I want to be a light that shines brightly, attracting sinners to the savior.

November 20—Evil

The word for today is evil.

“But you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die” (Gen. 2:17).

“The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time” (Gen. 6:5).

“So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the Lord; he did not follow the Lord completely, as David his father had done” (1 Kings 11:6).

“Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil” (Prov. 3:7).

“Do not set foot on the path of the wicked or walk in the way of evil men” (Prov. 4:14).

“And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.]” (Matt. 6:13).

“Abstain from every form of evil” (1 Thess. 5:22).

“But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one” (2 Thess. 3:3).

“Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God” (Heb. 3:12).

“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? ‘I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve’” (Jer. 17:9, 10).

“Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies. Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it” (Ps. 34:13-14).

“No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it” (1 Cor. 10:13).

Let's sing a couple verses of “Yield Not to Temptation”: “Yield not to temptation, For yielding is sin; Each vict'ry will help you Some other to win; Fight manfully onward, Dark passions subdue; Look ever to Jesus, He'll carry you through. Shun evil companions, bad language disdain; God's name hold in rev'rence, Nor take it in vain; Be thoughtful and earnest, kind-hearted and true; Look ever to Jesus, He'll carry you through. Ask the Saviour to help you, Comfort, strengthen, and keep you; He is willing to aid you, He will carry you through.”

Prayer: Lord, wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

November 21—A Pearl for Today

“Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults. Keep your servant also from willful sins; May they not rule over me” (Ps. 19:12).

THE DAY THE ROOF CAVED IN

For about 30 years our family called 1800 Hankerson Street in Tyler, Texas, our home. We had so many happy memories in that house. One memory, though, was not what you would call happy.

Most people think we have warm weather in Texas all the time. This is not true. Texas winters can get cold. One winter we had a “blue norther” that

lasted several days. Temperatures dropped well below freezing till things finally warmed up. I came home one afternoon following the big freeze only to see water running out from under the doors. Not a pleasant sight! I walked inside to find water streaming down the walls. The ceiling, soaked, was starting to fall! I knew how Chicken Little must have felt.

One of our water pipes in the attic had frozen and broken. As it had thawed, the pipe started slowly leaking. We might not have noticed the leak at all had it not originated in the attic. Because of the extensive damage, we spent two weeks in a hotel while our home was repaired. The hidden leak had damaged the attic, ceiling, and inside walls.

Hidden sin also causes much damage. We must stop, confess, and quickly repent. If not, hidden sins grow. Things go from bad to worse as the sin is magnified, and what began as a slow leak becomes a major blow out. A little lie or exaggeration about the character of another leads to a major character assassination. James 3:5: “Behold, how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire!”

As the song the kids used to sing in the 1970s and ‘80s says, “It only takes a spark to get a fire going.”

We open the door just a crack to Satan when we sin. We know a door ajar just a crack is much easier to open than a door firmly locked. Before we know it, Satan has a stronghold in our lives because we did not quickly shut the door.

Song of Solomon 2:15 states, “Catch the foxes for us, The little foxes that are ruining the vineyards, While our vineyards are in blossom” (NASB). Solomon and his bride, Shulamith, realized the importance of not allowing little things to spoil their relationship. We just *think* the little hidden things do not hurt our relationships with the Lord and with others. Just as one little fox can do much damage, so can any hidden sin.

A little leaven ruins the whole lump.

November 22—Idolatry

The word for today is *idolatry*.

“For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God” (Eph. 5:5).

“You know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to the dumb idols, however you were led” (1 Cor. 12:2).

“And do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, ‘the people sat down to eat and drink, and stood up to play’” (1 Cor. 10:7).

“For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, arousals, drinking parties and abominable idolatries” (1 Pet. 4:3).

“For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens” (Ps. 96:5).

“For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you as king” (1 Sam. 15:23).

“Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, ‘I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate,’ says the Lord. ‘And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you. And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,’ says the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor. 6:16-18).

“Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was being provoked within him as he was beholding the city full of idols” (Acts 17:16).

“Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry” (Col. 3:5).

“For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang” (1 Tim. 6:10).

“Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry” (1 Cor. 10:14).

“Little children, guard yourselves from idols” (1 John 5:21).

Join me in a verse of “Is Your All on the Altar?”: “Who can tell all the love He will send from above, And how happy our hearts will be made, Of the fellowship sweet we shall share at His feet When our all on the altar is laid? Is your all on the altar of sacrifice laid? Your heart, does the

Spirit control? You can only be blest and have peace and sweet rest, As you yield Him your body and soul.”

Prayer: Father, You know the passion of my heart is for You and You alone. Keep me from letting other things draw my heart away from this single desire to please You.

November 23—Integrity

The word for today is integrity.

“Did he not say to me, ‘She is my sister,’ and didn’t she also say, ‘He is my brother’? I have done this with a clear conscience and clean hands.” Then God said to him in the dream, ‘Yes, I know you did this with a clear conscience, and so I have kept you from sinning against me. That is why I did not let you touch her’” (Gen. 20:5-6).

“May integrity and uprightness protect me, because my hope is in you” (Ps. 25:21).

“Vindicate me, O Lord, for I have led a blameless life; I have trusted in the Lord without wavering” (Ps. 26:1).

“In my integrity you uphold me and set me in your presence forever” (Ps. 41:12).

“The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity” (Prov. 11:3).

“May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer” (Ps. 19:14).

“Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long” (Ps. 25:4-5).

“I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart” (Ps. 40:8).

“But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith” (1 Tim. 1:5).

“For surely, O Lord, you bless the righteous; you surround them with your favor as with a shield” (Ps. 5:12).

Join me in singing about the reward for integrity, “When We See Christ”: “Oft-times the day seems long, our trials hard to bear, We’re tempted to complain, to murmur and despair; But Christ will soon appear to catch His Bride away, All tears forever over in God’s eternal day. It

will be worth it all when we see Jesus, Life's trials will seem so small when we see Christ; One glimpse of His dear face all sorrow will erase, So bravely run the race till we see Christ."

Prayer: Lord, as the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.

November 24—Motivation

The word for today is motivation.

"And now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming" (1 John 2:28).

"Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:15-16).

"So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:12).

"Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom" (Ps. 90:12).

"Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men" (Col. 3:23).

"But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, in order that I may finish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24).

"Show me, O Lord, my life's end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting is my life" (Ps. 39:4).

"Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13-14).

"Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done" (Rev. 22:12).

"I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, in order that no one take your crown" (Rev. 3:11).

A couple verses of "Higher Ground" will get us primed for the day: "I'm pressing on the upward way, New heights I'm gaining ev'ry day; Still praying as I'm onward bound, 'Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.'

My heart has no desire to stay Where doubts arise and fears dismay; Tho' some may dwell where these abound, My prayer, my aim is higher ground. Lord, lift me up and let me stand, By faith on Heaven's table land, A higher plane that I have found; Lord plant my feet on higher ground."

Prayer: Lord, I am pressing hard toward the goal; what joyful anticipation arises as I think of soon being home.

November 25—Regeneration

The word for today is regeneration.

"But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you" (Rom. 8:11).

"He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5).

"For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God" (1 Pet. 1:23).

"And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ... even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)" (Eph. 2:1, 5).

"And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions" (Col. 2:13).

"And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,' Says the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:18).

"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26).

"For this is what the high and lofty One says—he who lives forever, whose name is holy: 'I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite'" (Isa. 57:15).

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again'" (John 3:6-7).

“Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come” (2 Cor. 5:17).

Join me in a couple of verses of “Only Trust Him”: “For Jesus shed His precious blood Rich blessings to bestow; Plunge now into the crimson flood That washes white as snow. Yes, Jesus is the truth, the way, That leads you into rest; Believe in Him without delay, And you are fully blest. Only trust Him, only trust Him, only trust Him now; He will save you, He will save you, He will save you now.”

Prayer: Lord, John says: “He who has the Son has life and he who does not have the Son does not have life.” I am so glad that I have the Son and life.

November 26—Sorrow

The word for today is sorrow.

“He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:3-6).

“How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me?” (Ps. 13:2).

“But when I was silent and still, not even saying anything good, my anguish increased” (Ps. 39:2).

“A happy heart makes the face cheerful, but heartache crushes the spirit” (Prov. 15:13).

“O my Comforter in sorrow, my heart is faint within me” (Jer. 8:18).

“That I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart” (Rom. 9:2).

“As sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things” (2 Cor. 6:10).

“But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. ... Truly, truly, I say to you, that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned to joy.

Whenever a woman is in travail she has sorrow, because her hour has come; but when she gives birth to the child, she remembers the anguish no more, for joy that a child has been born into the world. Therefore you too now have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one takes your joy away from you” (John 16:6, 20-22).

“And He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away” (Rev. 21:4).

Let's sing “Hallelujah! What a Saviour!”: “Man of Sorrows!’ what a name For the Son of God who came Ruined sinners to reclaim! Hallelujah! what a Saviour! Bearing shame and scoffing rude, In my place condemned He stood; Sealed my pardon with His blood; Hallelujah! what a Saviour! Guilty, vile, and helpless, we: Spotless Lamb of God was He: ‘Full atonement!’ Can it be? Hallelujah! what a Saviour! ‘Lifted up’ was He to die, ‘It is finished,’ was His cry; Now in heav’n exalted high; Hallelujah! what a Saviour! When He comes, our glorious King, All His ransomed home to bring, Then anew this song we’ll sing; Hallelujah what a Saviour!”

Prayer: Lord, thank You that You are the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our afflictions, so we in turn can comfort others.

November 27—Habits

The word for today is *habits*.

“Direct my footsteps according to your word; let no sin rule over me” (Ps. 119:133).

“I can do all things through Him who strengthens me” (Phil. 4:13).

“Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31).

“That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man” (Eph. 3:16).

“And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth” (Eph. 4:23-24).

“Trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord” (Eph. 5:10).

“Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might” (Eph. 6:10).

“Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth” (Col. 3:2).

“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. ... But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (Gal. 5:16, 22-24).

“And He has said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me” (2 Cor. 12:9).

“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body” (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

Let's sing “Like a River Glorious”: “Like a river glorious, Is God's perfect peace, Over all victorious, In its bright increase; Perfect, yet it floweth Fuller ev'ry day, Perfect, yet it growth Deeper all the way. Hidden in the hollow Of His blessed hand, Never foe can follow Never traitor stand; Not a surge of worry Not a shade of care, Not a blast of hurry Touch the Spirit there. Stayed upon Jehovah Hearts are fully blest; Finding, as He promised, Perfect peace and rest.”

Prayer: Lord, the Spirit bears the fruit of self-control and I ask You to produce this in my life as I fully surrender to You.

November 28—A Pearl for Today

“Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered; And let those who hate Him flee before Him” (Ps. 68:1 NASB).

HOW TO TREAT AN ENEMY

One day I wrote the following prayer to the Lord. “Lord, be moved against our enemies and be moved against Your enemies, and I hope they are the same.”

God has offered much wisdom and given many commands on how we are to respond to our enemies. Romans 12:19: “Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord.”

Solomon's example in 1 Kings 3 is worth considering. Solomon could have asked anything of the Lord at the outset of his kingship. He asked for wisdom, essentially telling the Lord, "I am like a little child who does not know his way around. Give me an understanding mind so that I can govern your people well and know the difference between right and wrong" (see 1 Kings 3:8-9).

The Lord was pleased with Solomon's request. He was pleased that Solomon asked for wisdom and did not ask for long life, great riches, or the deaths of his enemies. You wonder if Solomon perhaps considered asking for these three ... but it is significant that he did not ask for them.

God gave Solomon, unconditionally, a wise and understanding mind—plus riches *and* honor! Conditionally, God also gave Solomon the promise of a long life *if* Solomon would follow Him and obey His commands.

God equates asking for the death of our enemies to asking for riches and long life. None of these requests please Him. Because Solomon did not ask for them, God also promised riches and honor.

Imagine what might have happened if Solomon had asked for the deaths of his enemies. If God had obliterated Solomon's enemies, no one would have resisted Solomon's efforts as king. Solomon would have received the glory for building a successful kingdom all by himself, without God's help. Solomon did not ask for the lives of his enemies. He left the revenge to the Lord. He was wise, and God was pleased!

Ask rightly and ye shall receive.

November 29—Commission

The word for today is *commission*.

"The Lord had said to Abram, 'Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you'" (Gen. 12:1).

"So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt" (Exod. 3:10).

"Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,' declares the Lord. Then the Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, 'Now, I have put my words in your mouth'" (Jer. 1:8-9).

"And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the

Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:18-20).

“Jesus therefore said to them again, ‘Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you” (John 20:21).

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

“You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:1-2).

“I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction” (2 Tim. 4:1-2).

“Therefore, if a man cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work” (2 Tim. 2:21).

A couple of verses of “Wherever He Leads I’ll Go” seem perfect: “‘Take up thy cross and follow Me,’ I heard my Master say; ‘I gave My life to ransom thee, Surrender your all today.’ He drew me closer to His side, I sought His will to know, And in that will I now abide, Wherever He leads I’ll go. Wherever He leads I’ll go, Wherever He leads I’ll go, I’ll follow my Christ who loves me so, Wherever He leads I’ll go.”

Prayer: Lord, I lay the rest of my life before You and would find great joy in Your using me.

November 30—Maturity

The word for today is maturity.

“The wicked desire the plunder of evil men, but the root of the righteous flourishes” (Prov. 12:12).

“And the Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.” (Luke 2:40).

“And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able,

for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?" (1 Cor. 3:1-3).

"Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil" (Heb. 5:11-14).

"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me. ... By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples" (John 15:4, 8).

"And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).

"So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love" (Eph. 3:17).

"But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ" (Eph. 4:15).

"I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth" (1 Cor. 3:6).

"Like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord" (1 Pet. 2:2-3).

"We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater" (2 Thess. 1:3).

Let's sing "More Like the Master": "More like the Master I would ever be, More of His meekness, more humility; More zeal to labor, more courage to be true, More consecration for work He bids me do. More like the Master I would live and grow; More of His love to others I would show; More self-denial, like His in Galilee, More like the Master I long to ever be. Take Thou my heart, I would be Thine alone; Take Thou my

heart and make it all Thine own; Purge me from sin, O Lord, I now implore, Wash me and keep me Thine forevermore."

Prayer: Lord, I am feeding daily on Your word and I know I am growing. What joy!

December 1—Communion

The word for today is communion.

"Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away" (Gen. 5:24).

"O Sovereign Lord, you have begun to show to your servant your greatness and your strong hand. For what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do the deeds and mighty works you do?" (Deut. 3:24).

"Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways. You will eat the fruit of your labor; blessings and prosperity will be yours" (Ps. 128:1-2).

"O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water" (Ps. 63:1).

"As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?" (Ps. 42:1-2).

"After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself" (1 Sam. 18:1).

"O Lord, you are my God; I will exalt you and praise your name, for in perfect faithfulness you have done marvelous things, things planned long ago" (Isa. 25:1).

"He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young" (Isa. 40:11).

"What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, that you also may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3).

"But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him" (1 Cor. 6:17).

"For where two or three have gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst" (Matt. 18:20).

“The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing” (Zeph. 3:17).

Let’s sing a couple of verses of “Leaning on the Everlasting Arms”:
“What a fellowship, what a joy divine, Leaning on the everlasting arms; What a blessedness, what a peace is mine, Leaning on the everlasting arms. O how sweet a walk in this pilgrimway, Leaning on the everlasting arms; O, how bright the path grows from day to day, Leaning on the everlasting arms. Leaning, leaning, Safe and secure from all alarms; Leaning, leaning, Leaning on the everlasting arms.”

Prayer: Lord, teach me Your way, and I will walk in Your truth. Give me an undivided heart, that I may fear Your name. I will praise You, O Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify Your name forever.

December 2—Morning

The word for today is morning.

“O Lord, be gracious to us; we long for you. Be our strength every morning, our salvation in time of distress” (Isa. 33:2).

“He is like the light of morning at sunrise on a cloudless morning, like the brightness after rain that brings the grass from the earth” (2 Sam. 23:4).

“In the morning, O Lord, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation” (Ps. 5:3).

“To proclaim your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night” (Ps. 92:2).

“But I cry to you for help, O Lord; in the morning my prayer comes before you” (Ps. 88:13).

“For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning” (Ps. 30:5).

“I rise before dawn and cry for help; I have put my hope in your word” (Ps. 119:147).

“My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning” (Ps. 130:6).

“Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul” (Ps. 143:8).

“But I will sing of your strength, in the morning I will sing of your love; for you are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble” (Ps. 59:16).

“Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness” (Lam. 3:22-23).

“And so we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts” (2 Pet. 1:19).

Let’s sing “When Morning Gilds the Skies”: “When morning gilds the skies, My heart awaking cries: May Jesus Christ be praised! Alike at work and prayer, To Jesus I repair. May Jesus Christ be praised. Does sadness fill my mind? A solace here I find: May Jesus Christ be praised! Or fades my earthly bliss? My comfort still is this: May Jesus Christ be praised.”

Prayer: Lord, in the morning I will sing of Your strength. In the morning I will sing of Your love, for You are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble.

December 3—Perishing

The word for today is *perishing*.

“And the Lord said to him, ‘Go down and warn the people so they do not force their way through to see the Lord and many of them perish’” (Exod. 19:21).

“For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish” (Ps. 1:6).

“For all can see that wise men die; the foolish and the senseless alike perish and leave their wealth to others” (Ps. 49:10).

“Those who are far from you will perish; you destroy all who are unfaithful to you” (Ps. 73:27).

“They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded” (Ps. 102:26).

“All who rage against you will surely be ashamed and disgraced; those who oppose you will be as nothing and perish” (Isa. 41:11).

“For the nation or kingdom that will not serve you will perish; it will be utterly ruined” (Isa. 60:12).

"I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3).

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

"And I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand" (John 10:28).

"The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).

Let's sing "Bring Them In": "Hark! 'Tis the Shepherd's voice I hear, Out in the desert dark and drear, Calling the sheep who've gone astray Far from the Shepherd's fold away. Who'll go and help this Shepherd kind, Help Him the wandering ones to find? Who'll bring the lost ones to the fold, Where they'll be sheltered from the cold? Bring them in, bring them in, Bring them in from the fields of sin; Bring them in, bring them in, Bring the wandering ones to Jesus."

Prayer: Lord, Your words through Ezekiel grip my heart this morning: "Say to them, 'As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, O house of Israel?'"

December 4—Armageddon

The word for today is *armageddon*.

"And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever" (Rev. 15:7).

"On that day I will set out to destroy all the nations that attack Jerusalem" (Zech. 12:9).

"Why are your garments red, like those of one treading the wine-press? I have trodden the winepress alone; from the nations no one was with me. I trampled them in my anger and trod them down in my wrath; their blood spattered my garments, and I stained all my clothing. For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and the year of my redemption has come. I trampled the nations in my anger; in my wrath I made them drunk and poured their blood on the ground" (Isa. 63:2-4, 6).

“But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken, and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory” (Matt. 24:29-30).

“And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war. And His eyes are a flame of fire, and upon His head are many diadems; and He has a name written upon Him which no one knows except Himself. And He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood; and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, ‘KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.’ And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, ‘Come, assemble for the great supper of God; in order that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great.’ And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, assembled to make war against Him who sat upon the horse, and against His army. And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat upon the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh” (Rev. 19:11-21).

“It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb. 10:31).

A couple verses of the “Battle Hymn of the Republic” illustrate our point: “Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord; He is

trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored; He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword; His truth is marching on. He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never sound retreat; He is sifting out the hearts of men before His judgment seat; O be swift, my soul, to answer Him! Be jubilant, my feet! Our God is marching on. Glory! Glory, hallelujah! Glory! Glory, hallelujah! Glory! Glory, hallelujah! Our God is marching on."

Prayer: Lord, thank You for the comfort that comes from Your words through Zechariah: "The Lord their God will save them on that day as the flock of his people. They will sparkle in his land like jewels in a crown. How attractive and beautiful they will be!"

December 5—A Pearl for Today

"For when she poured this perfume upon My body, she did it to prepare Me for burial" (Matt. 26:12).

LIVE AS EACH DAY COULD BE YOUR LAST AND ONE DAY YOU WILL BE RIGHT!

Fred Faulkner was one of my favorite people. One could always depend on Fred for a smile, a firm handshake, and encouraging words. He was chairman of the evangelism committee at Hide-A-Way Community Church, when Don was pastor.

I say *was* because Fred is now with his Lord. Fred's wife Mary Jane, told Don that one of the last things she read to him was a card I had sent him. That card sat on my desk for a week before I finally mailed it, and I thank God that I did not procrastinate any longer. It brings me much joy to know Fred was reminded once more of my love for him.

Mary must have felt this way about her anointing the Lord with her extravagant gift of perfume. As she saw Him die on the cross, she surely had no regrets because she had showed her love to Him before He died.

Scripture clearly teaches the reality of death. "And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once" (Heb. 10:27). 2 Corinthians 4:16: "Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day."

Live, believing in the reality of death.

Hebrews 1:11-12: "They will perish, but Thou remainest; and they will become old as a garment, and as a mantle thou wilt roll them up; as a

garment they will also be changed. But Thou art the same, and Thy years will not come to an end” (NASB).

George McDonald writes, “We seek not death, but still we climb the stairs where death is one wide landing to the rooms above.”

Is there a card you need to send today?

December 6—Marriage Supper

The words for today are *marriage supper*.

“Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.’ And it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. And he said to me, ‘Write, “Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.”’ And he said to me, ‘These are true words of God’” (Rev. 19:7-9).

“Be dressed in readiness, and keep your lamps light. And be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately open the door to him when he comes and knocks” (Luke 12:35-36).

“Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed” (1 Cor. 15:51-52).

“For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin” (2 Cor. 11:2).

“And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bride-groom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut” (Matt. 25:10).

“And may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith” (Phil. 3:9).

Let’s sing “I Wish We’d All Been Ready”: “Life was filled with guns and wars and ev’ry one got trampled on the flood. I wish we’d all been ready. Children died, the days grew cold, a piece of bread would buy a bag of gold. I wish we’d all been ready. Man and wife asleep in bed, she hears a noise and turns her head, he’s gone. I wish we’d all been ready. Two men coming up a hill, one disappears and one left standing still. I wish we’d

all been ready. There's no time to change your mind, the Son is come and you've been left behind. There's no time to change your mind, How could you have been so blind? The Father spoke, the demons dined, the Son is come and you've been left behind. You've been left behind."

Prayer: Lord, what a day of rejoicing! I'm so excited! I can't wait for You to get here. Revelation 7:17 is on my mind: "for the Lamb in the center of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them to springs of the water of life; and God shall wipe every tear from their eyes."

December 7—Treasures

The word for today is treasures.

"Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine" (Exod. 19:5).

"The house of the righteous contains great treasure, but the income of the wicked brings them trouble" (Prov. 15:6).

"For the Lord has chosen Jacob to be his own, Israel to be his treasured possession" (Ps. 135:4).

"The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field" (Matt. 13:44).

"The good man out of his good treasure brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth what is evil" (Matt. 12:35).

"He will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the Lord is the key to this treasure" (Isa. 33:6).

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:19-21).

"Jesus said to him, 'If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me'" (Matt. 19:21).

“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves” (2 Cor. 4:7).

“In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col. 2:3).

“Considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward” (Heb. 11:26).

Let's sing “Living for Jesus”: “Living for Jesus a life that is true, Striving to please Him in all that I do; Yielding allegiance, glad hearted and free, This is the pathway of blessing for me. Living for Jesus through earth's little while, My dearest treasure, the light of His smile; seeking the lost ones He died to redeem, Bringing the weary to find rest in Him. O Jesus, Lord and Savior, I give myself to Thee, For Thou, in Thy atonement, Didst give Thyself for me; I own no other Master, My heart shall be Thy throne; My life I give, henceforth to live, O Christ, for Thee alone.”

Prayer: Lord, I am setting my mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.

December 8—Adultery

The word for today is adultery.

“You shall not commit adultery” (Exod. 20:14).

“But a man who commits adultery lacks judgment; whoever does so destroys himself” (Prov. 6:32).

“The eye of the adulterer watches for dusk; he thinks, ‘No eye will see me,’ and he keeps his face concealed” (Job 24:15).

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery’; but I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matt. 5:27-28).

“Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge” (Heb. 13:4).

“You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God” (James 4:4).

“For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor” (1 Thess. 4:3-4).

“Therefore, if a man cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work. Now flee from youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart” (2 Tim. 2:21-22).

“I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl” (Job 31:1).

Let’s sing the chorus: “In His Time”: “In His time, in His time; He makes all things beautiful in His time. Lord, please show me ev’ry day As You’re teaching me Your way, That You do just what You say In Your time. In Your time, in Your time; You make all things beautiful in Your time. Lord, my life to You I bring; May each song I have to sing Be to You a lovely thing In Your time.”

Prayer: Lord, Paul’s warning comes through loud and clear this morning: “Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?”

December 9—Intimacy

The word for today is intimacy.

“Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings” (Ps. 17:8).

“After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself” (1 Sam. 18:1).

“But Ruth replied, ‘Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me’” (Ruth 1:16-17).

“If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people” (Exod. 33:13).

“Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken” (Ps. 62:5-6).

“Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you” (Ps. 73:25).

“As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?” (Ps. 42:1-2).

“By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit” (1 John 4:13).

“You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand” (Ps. 16:11).

“Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame. Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot wash it away. If one were to give all the wealth of his house for love, it would be utterly scorned” (Song of Sol. 8:6-7).

Let's sing “More Love to Thee”: “More love to Thee, O Christ, More love to Thee! Hear Thou the pray'r I make On bended knee; This is my earnest plea: More love, O Christ, to Thee, More love to Thee, More love to Thee! Once earthly joy I craved, Sought peace and rest; Now Thee alone I seek, Give what is best; This all my pray'r shall be: More love, O Christ, to Thee, More love to Thee, More love to Thee! Then shall my latest breath Whisper Thy praise; This be the parting cry My heart shall raise; This still its pray'r shall be: More love, O Christ, to Thee, More love to Thee, More love to Thee!”

Prayer: Lord, thank You that You love us with an unconditional, everlasting love, and that You are drawing us to intimacy with lovingkindness.

December 10—Blessings

The word for today is blessings.

“I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (Gen. 12:2-3).

“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace” (Num. 6:24-26).

“But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the

stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit” (Jer. 17:7-8). “Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, ‘Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain.’ And God granted his request” (1 Chron. 4:10).

“For surely, O Lord, you bless the righteous; you surround them with your favor as with a shield” (Ps. 5:12).

“He will receive blessing from the Lord and vindication from God his Savior” (Ps. 24:5).

“He will bless those who fear the Lord—small and great alike” (Ps. 115:13).

“‘Even now,’ declares the Lord, ‘return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.’ ... Who knows? He may turn and have pity and leave behind a blessing—grain offerings and drink offerings for the Lord your God” (Joel 2:12, 14).

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ” (Eph. 1:3).

Let’s sing “There Shall Be Showers of Blessing”: “‘There shall be showers of blessing:’ Send them upon us, O Lord; Grant to us now a refreshing, Come, and now honor Thy Word. ‘There shall be showers of blessing:’ Oh, that today they might fall, Now as to God we’re confessing, Now as on Jesus we call! Showers of blessing, Showers of blessing we need Mercy drops round us are falling, But for the showers we plead.”

Prayer: Lord, I am reminded of the words of Jesus that blessing comes to the poor in spirit, to those who mourn, to the gentle, to those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, to the merciful, to the pure in heart, and to the peacemakers.

December 11—Access

The word for today is access.

“And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, and the earth shook; and the rocks were split” (Matt. 27:50-51).

“And Jesus uttered a loud cry, and breathed His last. And the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom” (Mark 15:37-38).

“And it was now about the sixth hour, and darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour, the sun being obscured; and the veil of the temple was torn in two. And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, ‘Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit.’ And having said this, He breathed His last” (Luke 23:44-46).

“Through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God” (Rom. 5:2).

“For through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father” (Eph. 2:18).

“In whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him” (Eph. 3:12).

“And not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption” (Heb. 9:12).

“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me’” (John 14:6).

“Hence, also, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25).

“Since therefore, brethren, we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh” (Heb. 10:19-20).

Let’s sing “At Calvary”: “Years I spent in vanity and pride, Caring not my Lord was crucified, Knowing not it was for me He died On Calvary. O, the love that drew salvation’s plan! O, the grace that brought it down to man! O, the mighty gulf that God did span At Calvary! Mercy there was great, and grace was free; Pardon there was multiplied to me; There my burdened soul found liberty, At Calvary.”

Prayer: Lord, Isaiah 41:13 is on my mind this morning: “For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you.”

December 12—A Pearl for Today

“For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called

WONDERFUL COUNSELOR, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6 NASB).

WONDERFUL COUNSELOR, OUR MIGHTY GOD

We can trust the infinite wisdom of God to counsel us in every area of our lives.

When our daughter Donna attended Talbot seminary in California, one of her counseling class assignments was to write a paper on *God the Wonderful Counselor*. She came to appreciate our God and this aspect of His character, and so have I.

So many of the scriptures speak of God as our counselor. Psalm 16:7-9, 11: “I will bless the Lord who has counseled me; Indeed, my mind instructs me in the night. I have set the Lord continually before me; because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will dwell securely. ... Thou wilt make known to me the path of life” (NASB).

Indeed, most of God’s counseling comes to us through scripture. Psalm 33:11: “The counsel of the Lord stands forever, The plans of His heart from generation to generation” (NASB).

Other favorite verses about our mighty counselor include Psalm 73:24: “With Thy counsel Thou wilt guide me and afterward receive me to glory.” Isaiah 28:29: “This also comes from the Lord of hosts, Who has made His counsel wonderful and His wisdom great” (NASB). Proverbs 19:20-21: “Listen to counsel and accept discipline, That you may be wise the rest of your days. Many are the plans in a man’s heart, but the counsel of the Lord, it will stand” (NASB).

A wonderful quality of God the counselor is that when He gives counsel, He also provides the enabling power to follow it. He can heal any hurt. Every bit of shame or guilt uncovered, He is able to wash away or cover under His precious blood. He truly is a WONDERFUL counselor!

Spend some time praising God as your wonderful counselor and thank Him for His counsel.

December 13—Adoption

The word for today is adoption.

“For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have

received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, ‘Abba! Father!’ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him” (Rom. 8:14-17).

“And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body” (Rom. 8:23).

“Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything, but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father. So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world. But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’ Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God” (Gal. 4:1-7).

“Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved” (Eph. 1:4-6).

“And he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him, and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him, and kissed him. And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.’ And they began to be merry” (Luke 15:20-24).

“Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is” (1 John 3:2).

Let's sing "The Family of God": "I'm so glad I'm a part of the fam'ly of God—I've been washed in the fountain, cleansed by His blood! Join heirs with Jesus as we travel this sod; For I'm part of the fam'ly, the fam'ly of God."

Prayer: Lord, what a joy to know that I have been born again by Your Spirit into Your family, and that I have been adopted as a son with all the rights and privileges attached to that relationship.

December 14—Castaway

The word for today is castaway.

"You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard lest, being carried away by the error of unprincipled men, you fall from your own steadfastness" (2 Pet. 3:17).

"Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness. ... Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:5, 12).

"But there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. Accordingly, whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in the inner rooms shall be proclaimed upon the housetops" (Luke 12:2-3).

"Watch yourselves, that you might not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward" (2 John 1:8).

"But I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified" (1 Cor. 9:27).

"And He was saying to them all, 'If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me'" (Luke 9:23).

"It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God. ... For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised" (Heb. 10:31, 36).

"Therefore, if a man cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work" (2 Tim. 2:21).

"And now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming" (1 John 2:28).

“According to my earnest expectation and hope, that I shall not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death” (Phil. 1:20).

“Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier” (2 Tim. 2:3-4).

Let's sing “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus”: “I have decided to follow Jesus, I have decided to follow Jesus, I have decided to follow Jesus, No turning back, no turning back. The world behind me, the cross before me; The world behind me, the cross before me; The world behind me, the cross before me, No turning back, no turning back. Tho' none go with me, I still will follow, Tho' none go with me, I still will follow, Tho' none go with me, I still will follow, No turning back, no turning back.”

Prayer: Lord, I want to be able to say with the apostle Paul that I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.

December 15—Demons

The word for today is *demons*.

“And do not give the devil an opportunity” (Eph. 4:27).

“You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder” (James 2:19).

“For we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, more than once—and yet Satan thwarted us” (1 Thess. 2:18).

“In order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes” (2 Cor. 2:11).

“But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ” (2 Cor. 11:3).

“But also some of the Jewish exorcists, who went from place to place, attempted to name over those who had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, ‘I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches.’ And seven sons of one Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. And the evil spirit answered and said to them, ‘I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?’ And the man, in whom was the evil spirit, leaped on them and subdued all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded” (Acts 19:13-16).

“And they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will” (2 Tim. 2:26).

“Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (James 4:7).

“For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment” (2 Pet. 2:4).

“You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

“And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever” (Rev. 20:10).

“Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world” (1 Pet. 5:8, 9).

Time to sing “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”: “Did we in our own strength confide, Our striving would be losing, Were not the right Man on our side, The Man of God’s own choosing: The Prince of Darkness grim, We tremble not for him; His rage we can endure, For lo, his doom is sure; One little word shall fell him. And tho this world, with devils filled, Should threaten to undo us, We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us: The Prince of Darkness grim, We tremble not for him; His rage we can endure, For lo, his doom is sure; One little word shall fell him.”

Prayer: Lord, I want to be strong in You and depend upon Your strength. I am putting on the full armor that You have provided. I rejoice in the victory that is mine in Christ.

December 16—Intercession

The word for today is intercession.

“In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety” (Heb. 5:7).

“Hence, also, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25).

“Pray without ceasing; ... Brethren, pray for us” (1 Thess. 5:17, 25).

“I am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?” (Jer. 32:27).

“Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know” (Jer. 33:3).

“Then Samuel said, ‘Assemble all Israel at Mizpah and I will intercede with the Lord for you’” (1 Sam. 7:5).

“As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by failing to pray for you. And I will teach you the way that is good and right” (1 Sam. 12:23).

“To this end also we pray for you always that our God may count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power” (2 Thess. 1:11).

“Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be glorified, just as it did also with you” (2 Thess. 3:1).

“Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be made full” (John 16:24).

“Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us” (Rom. 8:34).

“Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us” (Eph. 3:20).

Let's sing “Sweet Hour of Prayer”: “Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer, That calls me from a world of care, And bids me at my Father's throne Make all my wants and wishes known; In seasons of distress and grief, My soul has often found relief, And oft escaped the tempter's snare, By thy return, sweet hour of prayer. Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer, Thy wings shall my petition bear, To Him whose truth and faithfulness Engage the waiting soul to bless; And since He bids me seek His face, Believe His word and trust His grace, I'll cast on Him my ev'ry care, And wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer.”

Prayer: *Lord, John's words in 1 John 5:14, 15 come to mind: "And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him"*

December 17—Homosexuality

The word for today is homosexuality.

"You must obey my laws and be careful to follow my decrees. I am the Lord your God. Keep my decrees and laws, for the man who obeys them will live by them. I am the Lord. ... 'Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable. ... Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, because this is how the nations that I am going to drive out before you became defiled. ... Everyone who does any of these detestable things—such persons must be cut off from their people'" (Lev. 18:4-5, 22, 24, 29).

"Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:9-10).

"For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error" (Rom. 1:25-27).

"Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom—both young and old—surrounded the house. They called to Lot, 'Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them.' ...because we are going to destroy this place. The outcry to the Lord against its people is so great that he has sent us to destroy it'" (Gen. 19:4-5, 13).

“Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example, in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire” (Jude 7).

“But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (Rev. 21:8).

“But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and avoid such men as these” (2 Tim. 3:1-5).

Let’s sing “Fill My Cup, Lord”: “Like the woman at the well I was seeking For things that could not satisfy; And then I heard my Savior speaking ‘Draw from My well that never shall run dry.’ There are millions in this world who are craving The pleasure earthly things afford; But none can match the wondrous treasure That I find in Jesus Christ my Lord. Fill my cup, Lord, I lift it up, Lord! Come and quench this thirsting of my soul; Bread of Heaven, feed me till I want no more, Fill my cup, fill it up and make me whole!”

Prayer: Lord, I am calling to mind 2 Corinthians 7:1: “Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

December 18—Kingdom

The word for today is kingdom.

“Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever” (2 Sam. 7:16).

“Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O Lord, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all” (1 Chron. 29:11-12).

“For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 14:17).

“For dominion belongs to the Lord and he rules over the nations” (Ps. 22:28).

“Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom” (Ps. 45:6).

“The Lord has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all” (Ps. 103:19).

“For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son” (Col. 1:13).

“Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David; Hosanna in the highest!” (Mark 11:10).

“So that you may walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory” (1 Thess. 2:12).

“And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, ‘KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS’” (Rev. 19:16).

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this. The Lord has sent a message against Jacob; it will fall on Israel” (Isa. 9:6-8).

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you” (Matt. 6:33).

Let’s sing “A Child of the King”: “My Father is rich in houses and lands, He holdeth the wealth of the world in His hands! Of rubies and diamonds, of silver and gold, His coffers are full, He has riches untold; I once was an outcast stranger on earth, A sinner by choice, and an alien by birth; But I’ve been adopted, my name’s written down, An heir to a mansion, a robe, and a crown. I’m a child of the King, A child of the King: With Jesus my Savior, I’m a child of the King.”

Prayer: Lord, Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

December 19—A Pearl for Today

“And He took them in His arms and began blessing them ...” (Mark 10:16).

BETHLEHEM’S BABY

Everyone loves a baby. Well, almost everyone. I read a plaque that said, “Babies are God’s way of saying the world should continue.” God loves His new little creations. We know that whatever God loves, Satan hates. In the scriptures we repeatedly observe Satan’s hatred of infants. In Exodus 1:22 Pharaoh commanded all his people to cast the Israelite boy babies in the Nile. Matthew 2:16 tells us that Herod sent and slew all the male children in Bethlehem who were two years old and under.

We know who was behind these murders. Jesus, speaking of Satan in John 8:44, says, “He was a murderer from the beginning ...”

In our culture, babies who are an inconvenience have their lives snuffed out before they even emerge from their mothers’ wombs. Satan is not omniscient, so he does not know which babies might grow to accept Christ and serve Him. He wants to destroy them before they have that opportunity.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, in obedience to a message from God, was courageous to give birth to God’s Son, our savior. How important was this birth? History is measured from the moment of His arrival.

How important is this birth to you and me? What we do, accept, and believe about Jesus Christ is the key to where we spend eternity. Rejecting Him as savior means spending eternity separated from God. Accepting Him as savior provides a relationship now and throughout eternity.

As a child I accepted Christ as my savior at a small rural school and church in northeastern Oklahoma. It was by far the best and most important decision I have made, or ever will make, in this life.

Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world. Red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in His sight. Jesus loves the little children of the world.

Jesus died for all the children, all the children of the world. Red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in His sight. Jesus died for all the children of the world.

History’s hinge hangs on the door of the Bethlehem stable.

December 20—Great White Throne

The words for today are *great white throne*.

“And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:11-15).

“And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things” (Rom. 2:2).

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life” (John 5:24).

“And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment” (Heb. 9:27).

“Be happy, young man, while you are young, and let your heart give you joy in the days of your youth. Follow the ways of your heart and whatever your eyes see, but know that for all these things God will bring you to judgment” (Eccles. 11:9).

“Because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead” (Acts 17:31).

“So the Lord said, ‘I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth—men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air—for I am grieved that I have made them.’” (Gen. 6:7).

“For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the

Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?" (Heb. 10:26-29).

Let's sing "At the Cross": "Alas! And did my Savior bleed? And did my Sov'reign die? Would He devote that sacred head For sinners such as I? Was it for crimes that I have done He groaned upon the tree? Amazing pity! Grace unknown! And love beyond degree! Well might the sun in darkness hide, And shut His glories in, When Christ, the mighty Maker, died For man the creature's sin. At the cross, at the cross where I first saw the light, And the burden of my heart rolled away, It was there by faith I received my sight, And now I am happy all the day!"

Prayer: Lord, I am thinking of Isaiah 53:4-6 today: "Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."

December 21—Jesus

The word for today is Jesus.

"And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21).

"And Jesus said to him, 'The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head'" (Matt. 8:20).

"But Jesus was saying, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.' And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves" (Luke 23:34).

"And he was saying, 'Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!' And He said to him, 'Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise'" (Luke 23:42-43).

"And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit.' And having said this, He breathed His last" (Luke 23:46).

"When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews,

Jesus came and stood in their midst, and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples therefore rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus therefore said to them again, ‘Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you’” (John 20:19-21).

Let’s sing “There’s Something About That Name”: “Jesus, Jesus, Jesus! There’s just something about that name! Master, Savior, Jesus! Like the fragrance after the rain. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus! Let all heaven and earth proclaim: King and kingdoms will all pass away, But there’s something about that name!”

Prayer: Lord, I find myself singing, “There have been names that I have loved to hear, But never has there been a name so dear. To this heart of mine, as the name divine, the precious, precious name of Jesus. Jesus is the sweetest name I know, and He’s just the same as His lovely name, and that’s the reason why I love Him so; Oh, Jesus is the sweetest name I know.”

December 22—Justification

The word for today is justification.

“Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (Col. 1:12-14).

“Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1).

“But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness” (Rom. 4:5).

“For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law” (Rom. 3:28).

“He who was delivered up because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification” (Rom. 4:25).

“Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him” (Rom. 5:9).

“And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:11).

“Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:38-39 KJV).

“That being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:7).

“Because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin. ... being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 3:20, 24).

Let's sing a verse of “One Day”: “One day when heaven was filled with His praises, One day when sin was as black as could be, Jesus came forth to be born of a virgin, Dwelt among men, my example is He! Living, He loved me; dying, He saved me; Buried, He carried my sins far away; Rising, He justified freely forever: one day He's coming, O glorious day!”

Prayer: Lord, what joy to know we can be declared righteous by what the Lord Jesus did upon the cross. I now have a righteousness, not mine alone but granted through faith in Christ Jesus.

December 23—Virgin Birth

The words for today are *virgin birth*.

“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel” (Isa. 7:14).

“For nothing will be impossible with God” (Luke 1:37).

“But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons” (Gal. 4:4-5).

“Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee, called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming in, he said to her, ‘Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you.’ But she was greatly troubled at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this might be. And the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your

womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end.’ And Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I am a virgin?’ And the angel answered and said to her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God’” (Luke 1:26-35).

“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. ... But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins’” (Matt. 1:18, 20-21).

“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life” (John 6:63).

“The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit” (John 3:8).

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

Let's sing a verse of "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing": "Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ, the everlasting Lord! Late in time behold Him come, Offspring of the virgin's womb. Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; Hail th' incarnate Deity, Pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel! Hark, the herald angels sing, 'Glory to the newborn King.'"
Prayer: Lord, my heart is drawn to Philippians 2:6-8: "who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

December 24—Prophecies

The word for today is *prophecies*.

“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel” (Gen. 3:15).

“Then God said, ‘Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him’” (Gen. 17:19).

“I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel. He will crush the foreheads of Moab, the skulls of all the sons of Sheth” (Num. 24:17).

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times” (Micah 5:2).

“‘The days are coming,’ declares the Lord, ‘when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteousness’” (Jer. 23:5-6).

“And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son” (Zech. 12:10).

“The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it” (Ps. 118:22-24).

“Dogs have surrounded me; a band of evil men has encircled me, they have pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones; people stare and gloat over me. They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing” (Ps. 22:16-18).

“Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. ... And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost” (Rev. 22:12, 17).

Let's sing "O Come, All Ye Faithful": *"O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant, Come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem; Come and behold Him, born the King of angels: O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord. Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning, Jesus, to Thee be all glory giv'n; Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing: O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord."*

Prayer: *Lord, my mind turns to 1 Timothy 3:16: "And by common confession great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, was vindicated in the Spirit, beheld by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory."*

December 25—Christmas

The word for today is Christmas.

"And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

"For in Him all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form" (Col. 2:9).

"Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" (2 Cor. 9:15).

"Who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross" (Phil. 2:6-8).

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich" (2 Cor. 8:9).

"Now it came about in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all were proceeding to register for the census, everyone to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, in order to register, along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. And it came about that while they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her first-born

son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. And in the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields, and keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. And the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths, and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.' And it came about when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds began saying to one another, 'Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us.' And they came in haste and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger. And when they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child. And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them" (Luke 2:1-20).

Let's sing "Joy to the World": "Joy to the world! The Lord is come: Let earth receive her King; Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room, And heav'n and nature sing, And heav'n and nature sing, And heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing. Joy to the world! The Saviour reigns: Let men their songs employ; While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat, repeat the sounding joy."

Prayer: Lord, Simeon's words of wonder and worship are in my thoughts this Christmas: "Now Lord, Thou dost let Thy bond-servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for my eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light of revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel."

December 26—A Pearl for Today

"It is a true saying that if someone wants to be an elder, he desires an honorable responsibility. ... He must be gentle, peace loving ..." (1 Tim. 3:1, 3 NLT).

GODLY LEADERS

Don has stepped in to work with the officers and leaders of several churches in crisis. We have met some very Christlike servant leaders, but unfortunately for the church and God's kingdom, we have also met some like Diotrephes, of whom John writes the following: "I sent a brief letter to the church about this, but Diotrephes, who loves to be the leader, does not acknowledge our authority" (3 John 9 NLT). Men like Diotrephes do not acknowledge or respect God-given and appointed authority. Diotrephes is also described in 3 John 9 as one "who loves to be first among them"(NASB). It is amazing what havoc one or two Diotrephes-types can cause on a church board. God desires, as He instructs in 1 Timothy 3, that a leader be gentle and peace loving. Men like Diotrephes enjoy conflict and asserting self-imposed authority.

If you are currently a leader in a church body, please read 1 Timothy 3. Ask the Lord to shed light on any area of your life that needs to be changed, and ask God to change you into the leader He wants you to be. If you are not a leader, please read and pray according to this passage for each officer of your church body.

If you are a leader in a church, I strongly encourage you to make the following covenant with God in your relationship with the pastor.

1. I will strongly recommend discipline for a board member or lay person who takes it upon himself or herself to yell at the pastor. No excuses are acceptable.
2. I will ask the pastor how much time he wants for the sermon and strictly plan the worship service to adhere to his time frame.
3. Even if we discuss a point of disagreement, I will remain respectful.
4. I will support the pastor, pray for him, and encourage him.
5. I will not criticize him to others.
6. I will not undercut his authority in any way.
7. If I need to approach the pastor, I will make an appointment during the week. I will write down what I need to say

beforehand, being sure to approach him in a respectful manner. I know that if I am not respectful, I will cause pain to a man of God and the church of God. Such is not of the Holy Spirit, but is incited by an unholy spirit.

“The purpose of my covenant with the Levites was to bring life and peace, and this is what I gave them” (Mal. 2:5 NLT).

The Christian army is the only one who attacks its own wounded.

December 27—First Love

The words for today are *first love*.

“But I have this against you, that you have left your first love” (Rev. 2:4).

“I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth” (Rev. 3:15-16).

“The Lord appeared to us in the past, saying: ‘I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness’” (Jer. 31:3).

“And because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved” (Matt. 24:12-13).

“The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing” (Zeph. 3:17).

“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon” (Matt. 6:24).

“You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God” (James 4:4).

“For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf” (2 Cor. 5:14-15).

“‘Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments, and abide in His love’” (John 15:9-10).

“So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints

what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God” (Eph. 3:17-19).

Let’s sing “My Jesus, I Love Thee”: My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine; For Thee all the follies of sin I resign; My gracious Redeemer, my Savior art Thou; If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, ‘tis now. I love Thee, because Thou hast first loved me, And purchased my pardon on Calvary’s tree; I love Thee for wearing the thorns on Thy brow; If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, ‘tis now.”

Prayer: Lord, the words of Peter challenge me this morning: “Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart.”

December 28—Sheep

The word for today is *sheep*.

“But he brought his people out like a flock; he led them like sheep through the desert. He guided them safely, so they were unafraid; but the sea engulfed their enemies” (Ps. 78:52-53).

“For he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care. Today, if you hear his voice” (Ps. 95:7).

“Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture” (Ps. 100:3).

“I have strayed like a lost sheep. Seek your servant, for I have not forgotten your commands” (Ps. 119:176).

“For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls” (1 Pet. 2:25).

“He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young” (Isa. 40:11).

““My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand”” (John 10:27-29).

“For the Lamb in the center of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them to springs of the water of life; and God shall wipe every tear from their eyes” (Rev. 7:17).

“Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen” (Heb. 13:20-21).

Let's sing “His Sheep Am I”: “In God's green pastures feeding, by His cool waters lie, Soft in the evening walk my Lord and I. All the sheep of His pasture fare so wondrously fine. His sheep am I. Waters cool, pastures green, In the evening walk my Lord and I; Dark the night, rough the way, Step by step my Lord and I.”

Prayer: Lord, in the words of the hymn, “Saviour, like a shepherd lead us, much we need Thy tender care; in Thy pleasant pastures feed us, for our use Thy folds prepare: Blessed Jesus, Blessed Jesus, Thou hast bought us, Thine we are; Blessed Jesus, Blessed Jesus, Thou hast bought us, Thine we are.”

December 29—Glorification

The word for today is glorification.

“Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy” (Jude 24).

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us” (Rom. 8:18).

“And six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and brought them up to a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him” (Matt. 17:1-3).

“Father, I desire that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, in order that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me; for Thou didst love Me before the foundation of the world” (John 17:24).

“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For

whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified” (Rom. 8:28-30).

“By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples” (John 15:8).

“When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory” (Col. 3:4).

“In order that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thess. 1:12).

“Whoever speaks, let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God; whoever serves, let him do so as by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen” (1 Pet. 4:11).

“Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is” (1 John 3:2).

Let’s sing “Heaven Came Down”: “O what a wonderful, wonderful day—Day I will never forget! After I’d wandered in darkness away, Jesus, my Savior, I met. O what a tender, compassionate Friend! He met the need of my heart—Shadows dispelling. With joy I am telling, He made all the darkness depart! Heaven came down and glory filled my soul, When at the cross the Savior made me whole. My sins were washed away, And my night was turned to day. Heaven came down and glory filled my soul!”

Prayer: Lord, praise be to Your glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with Your glory.

December 30—Example

The word for today is example.

“For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you” (John 13:15).

“Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall through following the same example of disobedience” (Heb. 4:11).

“Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe” (1 Tim. 4:12).

“You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers” (1 Thess. 2:10).

“As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord” (James 5:10).

“Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16).

“Now these things happened as examples for us, that we should not crave evil things, as they also craved” (1 Cor. 10:6).

“So that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God” (Col. 1:10).

“Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us” (Phil. 3:17).

“The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you” (Phil. 4:9).

Let’s sing “Make Me a Blessing”: “Out in the highways and byways of life, Many are weary and sad; Carry the sunshine where darkness is rife, Making the sorrowing glad. Make me a blessing, Make me a blessing, Out of my life may Jesus shine; Make me a blessing, O Saviour, I pray, Make me a blessing to someone today.”

Prayer: Lord, Paul’s words to the Philippians tells us how to get it done:

“So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. Do all things without grumbling or disputing; that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world.”

December 31—Evaluation

The word for today is *evaluation*.

“Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?” (2 Cor. 13:5).

“Test me, O Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind; for your love is ever before me, and I walk continually in your truth” (Ps. 26:2-3).

“And this He was saying to test him; for He Himself knew what He was intending to do” (John 6:6).

“Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance” (James 1:2-3).

“But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup” (1 Cor. 11:28).

“The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but the Lord tests the heart” (Prov. 17:3).

“But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold” (Job 23:10).

“But just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men but God, who examines our hearts” (1 Thess. 2:4).

“See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this. How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another” (Isa. 48:10-11).

“In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 1:6-7).

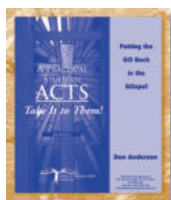
“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Ps. 139:23-24).

Let's sing “Cleanse Me”: “Search me, O God, and know my heart today. Try me, O Savior; know my thoughts, I pray. See if there be some wicked way in me; Cleanse me from ev'ry sin, and set me free. Lord, take my life and make it wholly Thee. Fill my poor heart with Thy great love divine.

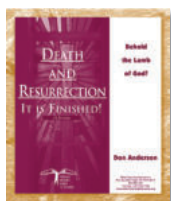
Take all my will, my passion, self, and pride. I now surrender; Lord, in me abide.”

Prayer: Lord, how can I know all the sins lurking in my heart? Cleanse me from hidden faults. Keep me from deliberate sins! Don't let them control me. Then I will be free of guilt and innocent of great sin. May the words of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart be pleasing to You, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

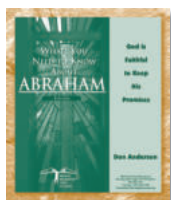
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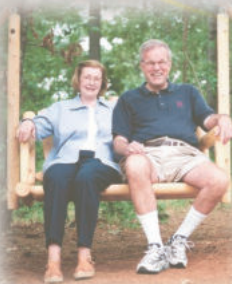
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