

A Short Thought from God's Word

Year 3 (for leap year)

Short, concise daily devotions from God's Word

By David Dennis

Copyright © 2026 by David Dennis

All rights reserved. Permission to download and distribute this work is granted for personal use only. For more information, contact: photoguydave@msn.com

Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com. The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.®

1/1 - Seeing Christ Better

Luke 19:1-5: Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

This small but famous act ended with Zacchaeus' salvation. We should all seek to see more of Christ.

1/2 - Hanging Out with a Sinner

Luke 19:5-7: When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a `sinner.'"

Jesus' choice of company astonished the religious (but not necessarily righteous) people of His day. But he came to reach the lost, and to demonstrate for us the love God has even for the wicked.

1/3 - Faith Made Complete

Luke 19:8-9: But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.

It wasn't Zacchaeus' deeds that saved him, but it was the faith and repentance that prompted those deeds. His faith was made complete by what he did.

1/4 - Huge Rewards for the Trustworthy

Luke 19:15-17: "He sent for the servants to whom he had given the money, in order to find out what they had gained with it.

"The first one came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned ten more.'

"Well done, my good servant!' his master replied. 'Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.'

Are we faithful with the small things that God gives us? How do we use the time, money and talents that we have been given?

1/5 - Taking From One Who Has Nothing

Luke 19:26 "He replied, 'I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away.' "

This is a strong warning that we are required to having something to show for our time on Earth when we stand before God.

1/6 - Recognizing the Time of God's Coming

Luke 19:41-44: As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace--but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you."

Jesus' sorrow over Jerusalem may also echo His sorrow over our generation and nations. If only our people knew what would bring them peace with God. But there is judgment awaiting those who do not find such peace.

1/7 - The Treatment of God's Temple

Luke 19:45-46: Then he entered the temple area and began driving out those who were selling. "It is written," he said to them, " 'My house will be a house of prayer' ; but you have made it 'a den of robbers.' "

If our bodies are also temples of God, we should watch what we do with them. If God lives in our temple, it should be kept holy.

1/8 - The Authority of Christ

Luke 20:1-5: One day as he was teaching the people in the temple courts and preaching the gospel, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, together with the elders, came up to him. "Tell us by what authority you are doing these things," they said. "Who gave you this authority?"

He replied, "I will also ask you a question. Tell me, John's baptism--was it from heaven, or from men?"

They discussed it among themselves and said, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will ask, 'Why didn't you believe him?' But if we say, 'From men,' all the people will stone us, because they are persuaded that John was a prophet."

The question remains even today. Does Jesus' teaching come from God? Then we should obey Him.

1/9 - Treatment of God's Son

Luke 20:9-16: He went on to tell the people this parable: "A man planted a vineyard, rented it to some farmers and went away for a long time. At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants so they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. He sent another servant, but that one also they beat and treated shamefully and sent away empty-handed. He sent still a third, and they wounded him and threw him out.

"Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my son, whom I love; perhaps they will respect him.'

"But when the tenants saw him, they talked the matter over. 'This is the heir,' they said. 'Let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

"What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others."

God is patient with those who reject Him, but there will be ultimate consequences.

1/10 - The Crushing Stone

Luke 20:17 Jesus looked directly at them and asked, "Then what is the meaning of that which is written: " `The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone"? Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed."

Jesus is that stone. All of creation was made through Him, and all mankind will be subject to Him. And on that day, when all the books are opened, it will be a glorious thing to have honored Him in this world, and a terrifying thing to have opposed Him.

1/11 - A Lesson from a Coin

Luke 20:20-25: "Teacher, we know that you speak and teach what is right, and that you do not show partiality but teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. Is it right for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"

He saw through their duplicity and said to them, "Show me a denarius. Whose portrait and inscription are on it?"

"Caesar's," they replied.

He said to them, "Then give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."

Honor and respect should be given to those who deserve it, but Christ, who has suffered unspeakable agony on our behalf, deserves our hearts.

1/12 - Flowing Robes

Luke 20:45-47: While all the people were listening, Jesus said to his disciples, "Beware of the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and love to be greeted in the marketplaces and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Such men will be punished most severely."

Trying to appear righteous, these people were bigger hypocrites than those who sinned openly, and therefore they deserve a worse punishment. Let us make sure that we are not like them.

1/13 - A Gift that Impressed Jesus

Luke 21:1-4: As he looked up, Jesus saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. "I tell you the truth," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."

If this is God's scale, then we need to re-evaluate what we are doing for Christ.

1/14 - Eternal Significance

Luke 21:5-6: Some of his disciples were remarking about how the temple was adorned with beautiful stones and with gifts dedicated to God. But Jesus said, "As for what you see here, the time will come when not one stone will be left on another; every one of them will be thrown down."

Nothing that is built in this world will last. Only those things that are done for the Lord will have eternal significance.

1/15 - Avoiding Deception

Luke 21:8-9: He replied: "Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and, 'The time is near.' Do not follow them. When you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away."

We should not be dismayed when we see such things. The God who holds the future in His hands has told us that they will be. Instead, we should recognize the fulfillment of prophecy as just one more reason why we should trust Him.

1/16 - The Safety of Your Hair

Luke 21:12-19 "But before all this, they will lay hands on you and persecute you. They will deliver you to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. . . You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. All men will hate you because of me. But not a hair of your head will perish. By standing firm you will gain life.

Believers have always been persecuted for their faith, and we should expect to see much more of it as the day of Christ's return gets closer. And though we may be tortured to death, we will be eternally safe.

1/17 - Power and Glory and Victory

Luke 21:27-28: At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

After times of great struggle comes a time of greatest victory. This is often the plan of God in our lives.

1/18 - Caught in a Trap

Luke 21:34-36: "Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth. Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man."

Will the day of Christ's appearance be a day of joyful victory for you? Or will it be a day of sudden judgment. It is better to consider that question now than to be caught in the trap.

1/19 - A Fulfilling Meal

Luke 22:14-16: When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God."

Jesus loved his disciples and loved the time He spent with them. But those days are not over, for they will be renewed, and we will be there also. And Jesus will take joy, not only in his apostles, but in us as well.

1/20 - A Memory Cup

Luke 22:17-20: After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.

This ordinance was given so that we would never forget what Christ has done for us, and we would always look forward to that for which He gave Himself.

1/21 - Being the Greatest

Luke 22:24-27: Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

Jesus came to be a servant, and He desires the same attitude in us.

1/22 - Before the Rooster Crows

Luke 22:31-34: "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

But he replied, "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death."

Jesus answered, "I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me."

Jesus knew of Peter's impending failure, but also saw the great victories that would follow.

1/23 - Christ in Anguish

Luke 22:41-44 He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

In this passage, the humanity and deity of Christ are both easily seen. Though he was fearful of what was to come, he was determined to obey the Father's will.

1/24 - Sleeping on the Job

Luke 22:45-46: When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep,

exhausted from sorrow. "Why are you sleeping?" he asked them. "Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation."

It was their sorrow that exhausted them. Christ was not offended, but worried. He knew that they all faced a terrible crises that night, and wanted them to pray that they could avoid temptation's lures.

1/25 - Betrayed with a Kiss

Luke 22:47-48: While he was still speaking a crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him, but Jesus asked him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"

It was one of those that He loved that betrayed Him: One who had the right to kiss Him. Do we, who have also been loved by Him, ever also betray Him?

1/26 - Losing and Gaining an Ear

Luke 22:49-51: When Jesus' followers saw what was going to happen, they said, "Lord, should we strike with our swords?" And one of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear. But Jesus answered, "No more of this!" And he touched the man's ear and healed him.

He came to die, and so He not only submitted, but worked His last miracle before His crucifixion to heal one who had come to arrest Him.

1/27 - Before the Rooster Crows

Luke 22:59-62: About an hour later another asserted, "Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean."

Peter replied, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!" Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.

There are many today that would swear with Peter that we would never deny Him, but when the moment comes, can we stand?

1/28 - Mocking Jesus

Luke 22:63-65: The men who were guarding Jesus began mocking and beating him. They blindfolded him and demanded, "Prophecy! Who hit you?" And they said many other insulting things to him.

All those that mocked Christ then, and all who mock Him today, will some day confess that he is Lord of all.

1/29 - Based on a Lie

Luke 23:1 Then the whole assembly rose and led him off to Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying, "We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Christ, a king."

In that day, as in this, people choose to reject Him based on a lie.

1/30 - Demanding a Miracle

Luke 23:8-11: When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see him. From what he had heard about him, he hoped to see him perform some miracle. He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer. The chief priests and the teachers of the law were standing there, vehemently accusing him. Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him. Dressing him in an elegant robe, they sent him back to Pilate

God has never responded to those who simply make trial of Him. He has chosen to be found by those who find Him by faith. And He is not a heavenly Santa Claus who will simply do all that we wish. He is the sovereign ruler of the universe.

1/31 - Dying for the Guilty

Luke 23:14-19: [Pilate] said to them, "You brought me this man as one who was inciting the people to rebellion. I have examined him in your presence and have found no basis for your charges against him. Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us; as you can see, he has done nothing to deserve death. Therefore, I will punish him and then release him. "

With one voice they cried out, "Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us!" (Barabbas had been thrown into prison for an insurrection in the city, and for murder.)

It is obvious that Barabbas deserved to die, and Christ did not. But the innocent died for the guilty. And here God's plan for salvation is laid bare for all to see. He died in the place of all who deserve to die.

2/1 - An Astonishing Love

Luke 23:20-26: Wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to them again. But they kept shouting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

For the third time he spoke to them: "Why? What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty. Therefore I will have him punished and then release him."

But with loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified, and their shouts prevailed. So Pilate decided to grant their demand. He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, the one they asked for, and surrendered Jesus to their will.

This is an astonishing love story. Jesus loved these people with all His heart, but they demanded His death. His love never wavered.

2/2 - Who to Weep For

Luke 22:28-31: Jesus turned and said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children. For the time will come when you will say, 'Blessed are the barren women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!' Then " `they will say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!"

' For if men do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?"

Don't mourn for the one whose suffering will be turned to joy, but for those whose joy will turn to

eternal suffering because of sin.

2/3 - Tortured to Death

Luke 23:33-34: When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals--one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

If He can forgive those who tortured Him to death, can we forgive those who commit lesser offenses against us?

2/4 - Choosing Who to Save

Luke 23:35-37: The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One."

The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar and said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself."

He chose not to save Himself, so that he could save you and me.

2/5 - This is Jesus, King of the Jews

Luke 23:38 There was a written notice above him, which read: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

How fitting that these words were erected. This is the King who died to save us. And so the image stands, burned into our minds: The rejected Christ who is proclaimed King.

2/6 - The Last Acts of Two Men

Luke 23:39-43: One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!"

But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong."

Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom. "

Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."

And so the thief who asked to be saved was lost, and the one who acknowledged that he did not deserve it, it was he who was saved.

2/7 - He Breathed His Last.

Luke 23:44-46: It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last.

The curtain which enclosed the Holy of Holies, which divided the presence of a Holy God from sinful man was torn apart. Jesus fulfilled the name Immanuel, for now truly God could be with us, and in us.

2/8 - Going Against the Crowd

Luke 23:50-53: Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man, who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea and he was waiting for the kingdom of God. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body. Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid.

Joseph chose to identify himself, not with the council, but with the crucified Christ. He was not afraid to defy the council to make this decision. What an example he is to those who are pressured by others to do wrong.

2/9 - Seeking the Living Among the Dead

Luke 24:1-6: On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!"

Let us never think that Christ is among the dead for He is risen indeed.

2/10 - Good Sense or nonsense

Luke 24:9-11: When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.

Often God's truth does not seem reasonable to us. Nevertheless, these men should have believed because Jesus had told them that he would rise from the dead. In the same way, we need to trust what God says, even if it seems to conflict with reason.

2/11 - Tragedy into Triumph

Luke 24:26-27: "Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

Jesus explained to his followers that what they viewed as a terrible tragedy was really a necessary part of God's plan. It turned out to mean salvation for all who believe. God has a way of turning any tragedy to triumph.

2/12 - Living Flesh and Blood

Luke 24:36-39: While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."

They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, "Why are you

troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."

It was not some spiritual resurrection, but a literal flesh and blood one. His followers both held Him and touched Him.

2/13 - Joyful Departure

Luke 24:50-52: When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. Then they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

What joy it is to know that Christ is risen from the dead, and that our God reigns. They could take joy, even in his departure, because of the hope that they gained from what they had witnessed.

2/14 - Understanding and Power

Romans 1:1-4: Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God--the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.

If Christ is man, he can understand our needs. If He is the Son of God, he is powerful enough to meet our needs. It is marvelous that He is both.

2/15 - Called to Obey

Romans 1:5-6: Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith. And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

If we have faith, we are called to the obedience in God that comes from faith. We are not just called to faith, but to obedience.

2/16 - Mutual Encouragement

Romans 1:11-12: I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong--that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith.

Any meeting of true believers ought to be marked by mutual encouragement and help.

2/17 - No Shame

Romans 1:16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

Satan likes to try to make us feel shame, as if the gospel were a crutch for the weak, or an embarrassment to the strong. But those who truly understand the gospel know that it is worthy of the loudest proclamation.

2/18 - Faith from First to Last

Romans 1:17 For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

The reason that we are not ashamed of the gospel is found here. It provides us with our only means of obtaining eternal life. The only shame should come from the wickedness of our life that requires such a remedy.

2/19 - Depraved and Unaware

Romans 1:28-29: Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity.

We see this more and more around us today. The more people flaunt God's commands, the more depraved they become, and they cannot even see their own depravity. Let us pray that this would not be true in our own hearts.

2/20 - No Excuse for the Judge

Romans 2:1 You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.

We are all alike under sin, so we should be very careful about what we criticize in others. Are you any better than the one you criticize?

2/21 - Contempt for Kindness

Romans 2:2-4: Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?

God has been merciful to us in our wickedness because he desires our repentance. We should not let the kindness of God become an excuse to do more wickedness or accuse others who are just like us.

2/22 - The Reward of Self Seekers

Romans 2:6-7: God "will give to each person according to what he has done." To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.

In spite of the fact that God is patient with our sin and hoping for our repentance, there will come a day when everyone will be called into account for their choices. It would be best to choose to seek the things of God before that day arrives.

2/23 - Not Even One

Romans 3:9-12: What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

Let us never become proud. Let us always remember the depravity from which we were saved.

2/24 - Accountable to God

Romans 3:19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God.

God gave His law so that we might have a standard to see our sinfulness, and recognize our need for forgiveness.

2/25 - Righteousness Apart from Law

Romans 3:20-23: Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

We cannot become righteous by being good, but only by having faith in the One who gives forgiveness.

2/26 - Justice with Compassion

Romans 3:25 God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished--he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

The sins before and after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ received their just punishment at the cross. Therefore God can be both just (for having punished sin) and loving (for forgiving it).

2/27 - Sins are Covered

Romans 4:6-8: David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

"Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him."

The one who is blessed is the one who is forgiven, not the one who earned some favor from God

2/28 - Faith in Spite of Evidence

Romans 4:18-22: Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many

nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead--since he was about a hundred years old--and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness."

In spite of all evidence to the contrary, Abraham that God would keep His promise. This is the perfect example of faith.

2/29 - Two Advantages of Faith

Romans 5:1-2: Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

Two advantages of faith are recorded here: One is that we have peace with God. There are no hostilities between us and our maker. The second is that we have the hope of the things God has promised us in our eternal reward.

3/1 - Rejoice in Sufferings

Romans 5:2-5: And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

If we have hope, then we know that suffering is temporary. Weeping may endure for the night, but joy comes in the morning.

3/2 - Beyond Logic

Romans 5:6-8: You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

To die for the wicked defies logic, but the love of God is beyond logic.

3/3 - One Amazing Act of Righteousness

Romans 5:18-19: Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

Adam's sin made us all sinners, but Christ's act of obedience at the cross can make us all righteous.

3/4 - To See Ourselves Clearly

Romans 5:20-21: The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

It is not that God wanted us to sin more, but that he wanted us to see ourselves as the sinners we are. In this way we can see what a glorious grace it is to be forgiven.

3/5 - It All Depends

Romans 6:3-4: Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Life after death is wholly dependent on our relationship with Christ Jesus. "If we died with him, we will also live with him." (2 Timothy 2:11) Here is another proof that no one can be saved except through Him

3/6 - Set Free From Sin

Romans 6:5-7: If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin--because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

Jesus came to save us from sin. We have been set free from it. So there is no reason to willfully submit to it.

3/7 - Count Yourself Dead

Romans 6:11 Count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Just like God "counted" Abraham's faith as righteousness, we should count ourselves as no longer responsive to the desire to sin.

3/8 - No Longer Our Own

Romans 6:12-14: Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

When Jesus died for us, He purchased our bodies to be used for His purposes. We no longer belong to ourselves, but to God.

3/9 - Reaping Eternal Life

Romans 6:22-23: But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift

of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Our salvation should lead us to holiness (sinlessness) rather than the death that our sin nature would lead us to.

3/10 - Service in a New Way

Romans 7:4-6: So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God. For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death. But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.

God redeemed us for a purpose: that we would bear fruit and serve God in a new way. Therefore we should not sit on our salvation and say that is enough.

3/11 - The Believer Who Struggles

Romans 7:14-20: We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do--this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

Paul is not describing the state of the unbeliever (because an unbeliever does not have the desire to do good). He is describing the believer who finds that he cannot serve God "in the way of the written code" (v. 13). Anyone who has ever tried to serve God wholeheartedly understands this struggle.

3/12 - War Raging in Me

Romans 7:21-23: So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.

Paul, as a believer, wants to delight in God's law, but finds that he is unable to keep it. This struggle causes him to go on to say "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?" (v. 24) It is the rescue from this body of death that is the theme of the next chapter (chapter 8) in Romans.

3/13 - Not Condemned for Failure

Romans 7:24 - 8:2: "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God--through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ

Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.

Though we fail in keeping God's Word, we are not condemned for such failures if Christ has set us free from the law of sin and death.

3/14 - The Powerless Law

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

The law was powerless to make us righteous because of our inability to keep it. God made us righteous by sending Christ to die for us so that the law could be righteously fulfilled and we could still be forgiven.

3/15 - Setting Your Mind

Romans 8:5-7: Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

The key difference here is not on our ability to be sinless, but in setting our minds on what the Spirit desires. Paul has already stated that "in my mind I am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin." So where is your mind set?

3/16 - Dead Because of Sin, Alive Because of Righteousness

Romans 8:10-11: But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

Paul had asked "who will save us from this body of death." Here he tells us that our body is dead because of sin, but that Christ will give life to it. This is something that has not happened, but is soon to come, as will be seen later in the chapter.

3/17 - Obligated by God's Work in Us

Romans 8:12-14: Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation--but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

We cannot any longer have our minds set on the things required by the sinful nature, for that leads to death. We are obligated by the work God has done in us to set our minds on pleasing Him.

3/18 - God as our Daddy

Romans 8:15-17: For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Should a child fear his parent? Only if he has willfully disobeyed, and certainly there should never be fear of permanent or lasting injury. We have received the Spirit that makes God our Father.

3/19 - Not Worthy of Comparison

Romans 8:18-19: I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.

We suffer much in this world but only little compared to what we will have. Would you gripe or complain if you got a paper cut from a thousand dollar bill? The suffering doesn't compare to the value.

3/20 - Hoping For What We Don't Have

Romans 8:22-25: We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

The work of God which has begun in us will only be completed on that day when all things are made new. It is only then that our struggle with sin will be complete. And it is for this that we hope.

3/21 - The Ultimate Good

Romans 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

All of our struggles, all of our pain, all of our trials work for our ultimate best good.

3/22 - God's Plan For Us

Romans 8:29-30: For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

Our own sinfulness should make us humble, but when we see God's plan for us, we should recognize our worth in His eyes.

3/23 - If God Is For Us

Romans 8:31-34: What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him,

graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died--more than that, who was raised to life--is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

Though we struggle with our sin nature, there is no condemnation (see verse 1) because of the work Christ has done on our behalf. Not only that, but we have an advocate who can refute all charges against us. This is the answer to Paul's question in Romans 7:24-25: "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God--through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

3/24 - Nothing in All of Creation

Romans 8:35-39: Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered."

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

What a marvel: in all our sinfulness, Christ has done such a work in us that nothing can separate us from His love.

3/25 - Wishing to be Accursed

Romans 9:1-4: I speak the truth in Christ--I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit--I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, the people of Israel.

Do we have such a love for the lost?

3/26 - The Right of the Potter

Romans 9:20 Who are you, O man, to talk back to God? "Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?'" Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?

We must remember that God, as our creator, has the right to rule over us, and can expect obedience from us in any area.

3/27 - The Wrong Way to Pursue Righteousness

Romans 10:1-4: Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

Trying to obtain salvation by law ends up in missing the point altogether. Let us never stand on our

own accomplishments, but only on God's grace.

3/28 - The Essence of Who You Are

Romans 10:9-11: If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame."

Justification comes not by a head knowledge of God, but by believing in Him in your heart. "Heart" here means your inner being--the essence of who you are.

3/29 - No Difference

Romans 10:11-13: As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame." For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile--the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

There is no difference in how much sin you have committed or where you have walked in your past. Jesus came to save sinners.

3/30 - Rejection and the Ultimate Reconciliation

Romans 11:13-15: I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of my ministry in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

This is an example of tragedy turned to triumph. Israel's rejection of Christ brought reconciliation with God to all Gentiles who believe. God works all things for the good of those who love Him.

3/31 - The Danger of Arrogance

Romans 11:17-21: If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, do not boast over those branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in." Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but be afraid. For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either.

If the Israelites were rejected for their hard hearts, beware that we do not follow them in their sin.

4/1 - Kindness and Sternness of God

Romans 11:22-23: Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.

We must never lose our fear of disobeying God. He is kind, but He is also stern.

4/2 - Unsearchable Judgments

Romans 11:33 Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor? Who has ever given to God that God should repay him?" For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

Our God is an awesome God. He is well beyond our understanding.

4/3 - The Least You Could Do

Romans 12:1: Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.

Offering ourselves as living sacrifices to God is the least we can do after all He has done for us.

4/4 - Not Like Everyone Else

Romans 12:2: Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.

We should not be like the godless people around us, but rather we should be changing daily to be more and more like Christ.

4/5 - How to Think of Yourself

Romans 12:3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

We should be humble, knowing that all our gifts come from God. Yet we should not be so critical of ourselves that we do not use the gifts God has given us.

4/6 - Needing and Owing

Romans 12:4-6: Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us.

We belong to all the members of the body of Christ, and all have the same rights to the different members. We all need each other, and in Christ we owe each other service.

4/7 - Devoted in Love

Romans 12:9-10: Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.

Not just with the lovable, but with all, and especially those in the family of God. We need to love not "with words or tongue but with actions and in truth." (1 John 3:18)

4/8 - Keeping Your Zeal

Romans 12:11-13: Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Paul explains how to be zealous and how to keep that zeal. These verses could be read as a checklist. Are we doing them?

4/9 - Easy to Understand, Difficult to Obey

Romans 12:14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

This is easily understood, but difficult to obey. When we see people opposing us in any way, we need to make it a point to pray for them and be a blessing to them.

4/10 - A Command to Empathy

Romans 12:15-16: Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another.

No matter how we feel, we need to empathize with the family of God. If our heavenly father is rejoicing or mourning with others, shouldn't we do so with Him?

4/11 - The Destroyer of Outstanding Accomplishments

Romans 12:16 Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

Pride destroys outstanding accomplishment in the Lord. Also, we need to look for the lowly, for they are most easily persuaded to follow our Lord.

4/12 - Living at Peace with Everyone

Romans 12:17-18: Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

It is beyond our abilities to live at peace with everyone, but there should never be a case in which the fault for this lies in us. We are commanded to always do our best. This is especially true for our relations with other believers.

4/13 - Burning Coals on the Head

Romans 12:19-20: Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."

When others trouble us and we try to be a blessing to them, we leave them in God's hands. They can be truly blessed by responding to our love, or truly cursed for returning wickedness for blessing. It is not our decision. Our only decision is to obey God and love them.

4/14 - Overcoming Evil with Good

Romans 12:21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Whenever we are assailed, we should turn our attack into an opportunity for good. Pray for those who hurt you. Learn from pain. Trust God in every circumstance, knowing that God will work all things for our good.

4/15 - Submission to Authority

Romans 13:1-2: Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.

Any kind of authority, whether legal, parental, scholastic or professional should be obeyed and respected as long as we are not told to disobey God.

4/16 - Give What You Owe

Romans 13:7 Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

Pay our taxes, pay our bills, and above all: Honor those who deserve it.

4/17 - Only One Outstanding Debt

Romans 13:8-10: Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

The secret to Godly living is love. It is often repeated, easily understood and seldom listened to. In all our dealings, we need to make sure that love is supreme.

4/18 - Wake Up Sleepy Head

Romans 13:11-12: The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.

There's no time for trying to walk a middle road. The battle is for keeps and we must take sides.

4/19 - Behaving Decently

Romans 13:13-14: Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

Get rid of anything in your life that you would not be willing to have everyone know. Those are the deeds of darkness.

4/20 - Standing and Falling

Romans 14:1, 4 Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters. . . . Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

It is a dangerous thing to judge other people by comparing them to ourselves. The only thing that matters is what God thinks, and God is full of compassion and patience.

4/21 - Accountable to God

Romans 14:12 So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.

We must never forget that this day will come. We do not need to judge our neighbors, for God will do that. But we ought to look at ourselves and ask if we are doing our best for our Lord.

4/22 - Placing Obstacles in the Way

Romans 14:13 Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way.

This is the main point of Romans 14. When we are struggling with disputable matters, we should work hard to realize that if what we do injures others, it is wrong.

4/23 - Condemned by Doubts

Romans 14:22-23: So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves. But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.

Be sure that whatever you do is done in good conscience. When we violate our consciences, we sin.

4/24 - Pleasing Our Neighbors

Romans 15:1-3: We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me."

Every believer would do best to see himself as a servant to others.

4/25 - With One Heart and Mouth

Romans 15:5-6: May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is sad that Christians do not pursue this kind of unity. Instead we tend to criticize and hurt each other, so that a major part of the persecution that Christians must go through comes from other Christians. This grieves the heart of God.

4/26 - Accepting One Another

Romans 15:7 Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

In order to achieve unity, accept one another. Accept the differences, but especially, accept the imperfections and weaknesses, just as God accepts us even with our own. This is the command of God.

4/27 - Overflowing with Hope

Romans 15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The promises of eternal life and the quality of the life that is to come should bring us joy and peace because we trust that God will keep His promises.

4/28 - Importance of Reminders

Romans 15:14-15: I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another. I have written you quite boldly on some points, as if to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me.

It is always helpful to remind each other, even those who should already know, of the things God requires of us.

4/29 - Paying a Debt

Romans 15:25-27: Now, however, I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the saints there. For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings.

All believers owe love to all others, because we are all family members of a heavenly Father who has forgiven us so much.

4/30 - Joining in a Struggle

Romans 15:30 I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me.

Paul believed that such prayers make a significant difference. Do we believe also? Then we ought to spend much more time in prayer.

5/1 - Smooth Talk and Flattery

Romans 16:17-18: I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people.

It is important to know the Word of God well, for there are always those out there that would seduce us with misinformation. The Word of God is a standard (like a ruler) by which we can judge truth.

5/2- Innocent About Evil

Romans 16:19 Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I am full of joy over you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil.

It is not necessary for us to be wise to the ways of the world. We just need to trust God that His ways are higher. People will be drawn to us by our love, not by our savvy.

5/3 - The One who Reveals Mysteries

Romans 16:25-27: Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him--to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

To glorify God is our main duty through the ages. So let us glorify Him in all we say and do in this world as well as in the world to come.

5/4 - The Counsel of the Wicked

Psalms 1:1-3: 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.

It is important to take care that our closest friends and those we rely on for advice are those that respect the law of the Lord. This passage has a strong promise to those who refrain from following the crowd or bowing to peer pressure.

5/5 - Many Foes

Psalms 3:1-4: O LORD, how many are my foes! How many rise up against me! Many are saying of me, "God will not deliver him." But you are a shield around me, O LORD; you bestow glory on me and lift up my head. To the LORD I cry aloud, and he answers me from his holy hill.

When we are opposed, we must remember that God is our protector, and He will watch over us in His own way. David had to flee from Saul and later from Absalom, and these times must have been very crushing, but God always vindicated him in the end.

5/6 - Joy of the Lord verses Prosperity of the Wicked

Psalm 4:5-8: Offer right sacrifices and trust in the LORD. Many are asking, "Who can show us any good?" Let the light of your face shine upon us, O LORD. You have filled my heart with greater joy than when their grain and new wine abound. I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.

There is great peace in knowing that we have done all we can to please our Lord, and we are safe in His hands. Joy from the Lord is more valuable than prosperity of the wicked.

5/7 - Surrounded With Favor

Psalm 5:11-12: 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.

This is an astonishing promise. If we take refuge in the Lord, He will surround us with His favor.

5/8 - Disciplined in Love

Psalm 6:1-4: O LORD, do not rebuke me in your anger or discipline me in your wrath. Be merciful to me, LORD, for I am faint; O LORD, heal me, for my bones are in agony. My soul is in anguish. How long, O LORD, how long? Turn, O LORD, and deliver me; save me because of your unfailing love.

God does not treat as our sin deserves or discipline us according to our transgressions. He deals with us through His love. This love was so great that it sent Christ to the cross so that we could be forgiven.

5/9 - Digging a Hole

Psalm 7:15-17: He who digs a hole and scoops it out falls into the pit he has made. The trouble he causes recoils on himself; his violence comes down on his own head. I will give thanks to the LORD because of his righteousness and will sing praise to the name of the LORD Most High.

This is another way of saying that you will reap what you sow. God sees our actions and He will bring about a thorough judgment on the wicked.

5/10 - God's Plan Choice for Mankind

Psalm 8:1, 3-5: O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! ... When I Consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.

We are as nothing compared to our Lord, yet He has chosen to honor us among the heavenly beings with glory and honor. He has chosen that Christ Himself should die to become our redeemer. And He

has chosen to adopt us as His children. "O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!"

5/11 - Never Forsaken

Psalm 9:9-11: The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you. Sing praises to the LORD, enthroned in Zion; proclaim among the nations what he has done.

There is an awesome promise hidden in this verse. God never forsakes those who seek him. That is given as a reason for people to trust His name. Let us remember during times of pain or doubt that God will never forsake us when we seek Him.

5/12 - The Turning of the Wheel

Psalm 9:16-18: The LORD is known by his justice; the wicked are ensnared by the work of their hands. The wicked return to the grave, all the nations that forget God. But the needy will not always be forgotten, nor the hope of the afflicted ever perish.

The wheel will turn. The day is coming when the Lord will rise up and punish the wicked, but the righteous will shine like the sun.

5/13 - God Defends the Oppressed

Psalm 10:16-18: The LORD is King for ever and ever; the nations will perish from his land. You hear, O LORD, the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed, in order that man, who is of the earth, may terrify no more.

It is remarkable that God chooses to be the champion of the fatherless and the oppressed. Also, we gain assurance that no plan of man can thwart the will of God.

5/14 - The Decaying Foundations

Psalm 11:3-4: When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do? The LORD is in his holy temple; the LORD is on his heavenly throne. He observes the sons of men; his eyes examine them.

As we see the increase of wickedness all around us, it is comforting to have this promise that God still rules, and that He will one day make everything right.

5/15 - Faith During Oppression

Psalm 13:1-6: How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me? Look on me and answer, O LORD my God. Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death; my enemy will say, "I have overcome him," and my foes will rejoice when I fall. But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing to the LORD, for he has been good to me.

This passage contains a statement of faith, even though circumstances all seem dismal. Though everything seems to be going wrong, I will trust you, for you have always cared for me in the past.

5/16 - No One Found

Psalm 14:2-3: The LORD looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.

This passage is quoted in Romans 3:11-12 to prove that everybody is a sinner. We are all saved only by God's grace and forgiveness, so we should walk in humility and love for Him always.

5/17 - In the Shadow of the Almighty

Psalm 91:1-4: He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.

The peace of God available to the believer is incredible. He should know that the all powerful God is watching over Him.

5/18 - A Hill of Love

Psalm 15:1-5: LORD, who may dwell in your sanctuary? Who may live on your holy hill? He whose walk is blameless and who does what is righteous, who speaks the truth from his heart and has no slander on his tongue, who does his neighbor no wrong and casts no slur on his fellowman, who despises a vile man but honors those who fear the LORD, who keeps his oath even when it hurts, who lends his money without usury and does not accept a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things will never be shaken.

Like many other passages, this one can be summed up with the word "love." God requires His people to love, and if we walk in love, we walk in Him.

5/19 – Nothing Good

Psalm 15:2: I said to the Lord, "You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing."

Because nothing in this world lasts forever, there are no good things apart from the Lord. He, alone, is the source of eternal rewards.

5/20 - God Makes a Map

Psalm 16:5-8: LORD, you have assigned me my portion and my cup; you have made my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance. I will praise the LORD, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me. I have set the LORD always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

The Psalmist writes this as if God had “mapped out” his life and chosen all its boundaries. Whether we are rich or poor, young or old, healthy or ill, if we are believers then our "boundary lines" fall well for us, for we know that we will have eternal life, health and wealth beyond measure in our inheritance from the Lord.

5/21 - Bringing Down the Wicked

Psalm 17:13-15: Rise up, O LORD, confront them, bring them down; rescue me from the wicked by your sword. O LORD, by your hand save me from such men, from men of this world whose reward is in this life. You still the hunger of those you cherish; their sons have plenty, and they store up wealth for their children. And I--in righteousness I will see your face; when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness.

Many are those who think that there is nothing more to life than what happens in this world. But those who hope in the Lord know that this life is like a dream from which we will awake in the presence of Almighty God. At that time, all our sorrows will pass away, and we will be with Him forever.

5/22 - Whatever Assails Us

Psalm 18:1-3: I love you, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies.

Whatever assails us, we can make God our safe place. If we trust Him, we need never be afraid.

5/23 – Powerful Foes

Psalm 18:17-19: He rescued me from my powerful enemy, from my foes, who were too strong for me. They confronted me in the day of my disaster, but the Lord was my support. He brought me out into a spacious place; he rescued me because he delighted in me.

We are fighting a spiritual battle, and we have powerful enemies. But their power is nothing compared to the Lord, who delights in us.

5/24 - A Perfect Shield

Psalm 18:30-32: As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is flawless. He is a shield for all who take refuge in him. For who is God besides the LORD? And who is the Rock except our God? It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect.

We cannot make our own ways perfect. Only God can do that. But He has promised to be a shield to ALL who take refuge in Him.

5/25 - Creation as Witness

Psalm 19:1-4: The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.

The glory of God is proclaimed to everyone in the world through God's creation. There is no one who will stand before God on the day of judgment and say, "I had no knowledge of You." If we want a clear sign of God's power, wisdom and judgment, we need only look at the marvels of His creation.

5/26 - The Sweet Word

Psalm 19:7-10: The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb.

The Word of God has many benefits to us. If we respond to it, it should be pleasant to us. We need to spend as much time as we can in God's Word.

5/27 – Willful Sins

Psalm 19:11-13: By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward. Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults. Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then will I be blameless, innocent of great transgression.

Through God's Word, we are warned about what is sin. The warning is half the battle. Even if we are warned, we are capable of willfully sinning. The prayer here is that God would find all our hidden errors, and turn us away from them.

5/28 - Meditation

Psalm 19:14: May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

Our thoughts and our words are all open to our Creator. Do they please Him?

5/29 - Brought to the Knees

Psalm 20:6-8: Now I know that the LORD saves his anointed; he answers him from his holy heaven with the saving power of his right hand. Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God. They are brought to their knees and fall, but we rise up and stand firm.

Some trust in money or friends. Nothing is trustworthy compared to our God. On the day He comes to judge the world, only those who depend on Him will stand.

5/30 - A Psalm of Christ

Psalm 22:1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning?

Psalm 22:7-8: All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads: "He trusts in the LORD; let the LORD rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him."

Psalm 22:18 They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.

These three verses summarize a Psalm which, in a prophetic sense, might have been written by Christ as He was crucified. They teach us about the suffering Christ, and that He is well able to understand our suffering. This Psalm has a glorious ending which will be discussed tomorrow.

5/31 - A Glorious Ending

Psalm 22:27-31: All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him, for dominion belongs to the LORD and he rules over the nations. All the rich of the earth will feast and worship; all who go down to the dust will kneel before him--those who cannot keep themselves alive. Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord. They will proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn--for he has done it.

This Psalm began with an account of the great suffering of Christ. Now we are told the glorious result of that suffering. God excels at bringing triumph out of tragedy.

6/1 - The Shepherd Psalm

Psalm 23:1-3: The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

In this beautiful Psalm we are promised that God will guide us for our own good, and meet all of our needs.

6/2 - The Valley of Death

Psalm 23:4 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.

Even when we face death head on, we know that the end of death for believers is eternal life.

6/3 - On That Day

Psalm 23:6 Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

These words could be paraphrased like this: Every day that I walk this Earth, your goodness and love will be there for me, and on that day that I go to my eternal home, I know that I will live with you forever.

6/4 - Shame On Who?

Psalm 25:1-3: To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul; in you I trust, O my God. Do not let me be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me. No one whose hope is in you will ever be put to shame, but they will be put to shame who are treacherous without excuse.

Those who trust in God put their trust in the one sure thing. Those who seek to hurt God's children, and especially if they do so on account of their faith, will have to answer for their deeds big time unless they seek forgiveness in this life.

6/5 - Forgiveness of Great Iniquity

Psalm 25:10-11: All the ways of the LORD are loving and faithful for those who keep the demands of his covenant. For the sake of your name, O LORD, forgive my iniquity, though it is great.

A blessing is pronounced on those who keep God's law, but the psalmist admits that his sin is great. He is trying to teach us the blessings of pleasing God through grace rather than perfect living.

6/6 – Give Me a Testament

Psalm 26:2-3: 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.

Because of the Lord's love for him, the Psalmist asks to be tested so that he can be sure to walk always in God's truth.

6/7 - Nothing to Fear

Psalm 27:1-3: 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? When evil men advance against me to devour my flesh, when my enemies and my foes attack me, they will stumble and fall. Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then will I be confident.

We are all involved in a spiritual warfare, but we need have no concern about the battle if we make God our fortress.

6/8 - Great Emotional Joy

Psalm 28:6-7: Praise be to the LORD, for he has heard my cry for mercy. 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.

Can the sins of the past be overlooked? Can the punishment we deserve be avoided? Can the weak be protected by the strong? David here declares that in the Lord all this can be so, and it causes him great genuine emotional joy.

6/9 – Enthroned Forever

Psalm 29:10-11: The Lord sits enthroned over the flood; the Lord is enthroned as King forever. The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace.

No matter what flood or sorrows we face, God is King, and rules over all, and do so for eternity.

6/10 - Rejoicing Comes in the Morning

Psalm 30:4-5: Sing to the LORD, you saints of his; praise his holy name. 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.

A powerful statement that should bring us great joy. Compare it to Paul's statement: "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us." (Romans 8:18)

6/11 – In His hands

Psalm 30:7: O Lord, when you favored me, you made my mountain stand firm; but when you hid your face, I was dismayed.

Our fate is ultimately and always in His hands. Isn't it a wonderful thing that he delights in us.

6/12 - When Forever Begins

Psalm 30:10-12: Hear, O LORD, and be merciful to me; O LORD, be my help." You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, that my heart may sing to you and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give you thanks forever.

And on that day when "forever" begins, what a day of joy that will be.

6/13 - Hidden From Intrigue

Psalm 31:19-20: How great is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you, which you bestow in the sight of men on those who take refuge in you. In the shelter of your presence you hide them from the intrigues of men; in your dwelling you keep them safe from accusing tongues.

It is hard to believe that there is anyone who had never been the victim of gossip, slander or intrigue. If these things happen to us, we should just take refuge in God, knowing that He knows the truth, He loves us in our weakness, and He will make sure that one day the truth will come to light.

6/14 - Hope For the Sinner

Psalm 32:1-2: Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit.

This is the beginning of David's remarkable psalm of rejoicing for the forgiveness of God. Blessings are not pronounced on the perfect, but on the forgiven. If we would live under God's blessing, let us make sure that we forgive and are forgiven.

6/15 - Confessing Sin and Not Hiding It

Psalm 32:5 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.

In this verse David shows that he discovered what so many others have not: "That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you

confess and are saved." (Romans 10:9-10)

6/17 - A Great Hiding Place

Psalm 32:6-7: Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found; surely when the mighty waters rise, they will not reach him. You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.

The context of this verse is about the sinner who has been forgiven. The person who has been forgiven has a promise of a wonderful sanctuary in the Living God.

6/17 - A Fitting Thing To Do

Psalm 33:1-3: Sing joyfully to the LORD, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him. Praise the LORD with the harp; make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre. Sing to him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy.

Singing to the Lord is not an option or a good idea. It is a command of the Lord God. God deserves our praise and adoration, and it is only in such worship that we can truly begin to understand who God is.

6/18 - A Faithful God

Psalm 33:4-6: For the word of the LORD is right and true; he is faithful in all he does. The LORD loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love. By the word of the LORD were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth.

These are listed here as reasons that we should sing to the Lord. He is faithful, righteous, just, and full of mercy. And He is the creator of all things. Such an awesome God deserves our love and admiration.

6/19 - Plans that Never Fail

Psalm 33:10-11: The LORD foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples. But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.

When things don't go our way, we should remember that God is in control. No plan stands that is contrary to His will. No one can thwart God's plan. We need to recognize this, and then trust that God will make whatever happens turn out for the best.

6/20 - No Help in an Army

Psalm 33:16-19: No king is saved by the size of his army; no warrior escapes by his great strength. A horse is a vain hope for deliverance; despite all its great strength it cannot save. But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love, to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine.

It is extraordinary that God's eyes are on those who fear Him. This implies that he is interested in and controls even the very small details of the lives of such people. He is wonderfully careful for his children.

6/21 - The Protection of the Lord

Psalm 34:7-10: The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them. Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him. Fear the LORD, you his saints, for those who fear him lack nothing. The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.

What wonderful promises are made to God's people. God's angel will protect us, and we will never lack anything that is for our best good (though we may lack things which we think to be good, but God knows better). Truly "blessed is the man who takes refuge in him."

6/22 - How Long, O Lord?

Psalm 35:17-19: O Lord, how long will you look on? Rescue my life from their ravages, my precious life from these lions. I will give you thanks in the great assembly; among throngs of people I will praise you. Let not those gloat over me who are my enemies without cause; let not those who hate me without reason maliciously wink the eye.

In the entire 35th Psalm David lays his case before the Lord. He has been slandered and is in danger of his life from those to whom he has done nothing but good. He places his hope squarely on the Lord that his vindication will come from God. This situation is common enough. Can we follow David's lead? When David had to run for his life from Saul, he had chances for taking vengeance himself, but he always chose to leave that up to God.

6/23 - Committed to a Sinful Course

Psalm 36:1-4: An oracle is within my heart concerning the sinfulness of the wicked: There is no fear of God before his eyes. For in his own eyes he flatters himself too much to detect or hate his sin. The words of his mouth are wicked and deceitful; he has ceased to be wise and to do good. Even on his bed he plots evil; he commits himself to a sinful course and does not reject what is wrong.

This is a very sober thought, especially when we consider that this is someone who has once been wise and done good, or else he could not have ceased from these things. May we never lose our fear of the Lord and follow in this person's footsteps. May we never flatter ourselves too much to detect our sin. May we never commit ourselves to a sinful course. And if we do these things, may we remember the fear of the Lord and repent quickly.

6/24 - Infinite Qualities

Psalm 36:5-7: Your love, O LORD, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies. Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your justice like the great deep. O LORD, you preserve both man and beast. How priceless is your unfailing love! Both high and low among men find refuge in the shadow of your wings.

God's faithfulness, mercy and love are infinite. What an awesome God we serve.

6/25 - A Patient Wait

Psalm 37:7-10: Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; do not fret when men succeed in

their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes. Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret--it leads only to evil. For evil men will be cut off, but those who hope in the LORD will inherit the land. A little while, and the wicked will be no more; though you look for them, they will not be found.

These verses capture the theme of the entire 37th Psalm. We should not be envious of the wicked when they prosper, for the days of their prosperity are short compared to eternity, and the days of the prosperity of the righteous will last forever.

6/26 - A Painful Harvest of Righteousness

Psalm 38:1-3: O LORD, do not rebuke me in your anger or discipline me in your wrath. For your arrows have pierced me, and your hand has come down upon me. Because of your wrath there is no health in my body; my bones have no soundness because of my sin.

Not all hardships come from God's chastisement, but it is clear that God does discipline his children. This is a clear sign of his love for us, and we should remember that "no discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it." (Hebrews 11:7)

6/27 - A Phantom Going To and Fro

Psalm 39:4-7: Show me, O LORD, my life's end and the number of my days; let me now 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. Man is a mere phantom as he goes to and fro: He bustles about, but only in vain; he heaps up wealth, not knowing who will get it. But now, Lord, what do I look for? My hope is in you.

The older one gets, the more one realizes the truth of these words. Time flies and our destiny comes nearer each day. It would be wise then, if we made all our choices with eternity in mind, rather than choosing things that are only of benefit in this world.

6/28 - The Reward of Patience

Psalm 40:1-3: I waited patiently for the LORD; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the LORD.

God does not promise freedom from trouble, but he does promise ultimate deliverance. That deliverance might be something that we can see in this world (like Daniel in the lion's den) or it may be a reward in the next (like Stephen as he was stoned). But one thing is sure: God will reward those who trust Him.

6/29 - Regarding the Weak

Psalm 41:1-3: Blessed is he who has regard for the weak; the LORD delivers him in times of trouble. The LORD will protect him and preserve his life; he will bless him in the land and not surrender him to the desire of his foes. The LORD will sustain him on his sickbed and restore him from his bed of illness.

It is always a priority to the Lord that we care for the weak. Here, special blessings are pronounced on those who do. Let us determine that we care for the weak the way He desires.

6/30- Thirsting for God

Psalm 42:1-2: 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?

If we do not have this desire in our hearts, let us use even more effort to spend time with God so that we may learn to love Him better.

7/1 – Talking to Yourself

Psalm 42:11: Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

When we are overwhelmed with trials and depression, we can still reach out through faith and put our hope in God.

7/2 - Tears for Food

Psalm 42:3-5: My tears have been my food day and night, while men say to me all day long, "Where is your God?" These things I remember as I pour out my soul: how I used to go with the multitude, leading the procession to the house of God, with shouts of joy and thanksgiving among the festive throng. Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

An exiled believer mourns that his days of joy are over, yet he firmly proclaims (in verse 5 which is repeated again later in the Psalm) that there is no need to despair if one hopes in the Lord.

7/3 - Hard Times for the Blameless

Psalm 44:15-19: My disgrace is before me all day long, and my face is covered with shame at the taunts of those who reproach and revile me, because of the enemy, who is bent on revenge. All this happened to us, though we had not forgotten you or been false to your covenant. Our hearts had not turned back; our feet had not strayed from your path. But you crushed us and made us a haunt for jackals and covered us over with deep darkness.

This psalm is a request that God would intervene. But it is clear that the hard times that were coming on God's people here were not because they were unfaithful. At times God allows us to suffer even when we do no wrong. He has no need to us to tell us why. But we have been promised that God loves us, will never leave us, and allows such things only for our ultimate good. Such sufferings are only temporary.

7/4 - A River to Make the City Glad

Psalm 46:1-4: God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar

and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells.

We need fear no calamity, no matter how great, if we live in hope of the day when we call that city our home.

7/5 – King Above All

Psalm 47:6-8: Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise. God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne.

No matter what happens, we can rejoice in knowing that our God is in control.

7/6 - Redeemed from the Grave

Psalm 49:12-15: Man, despite his riches, does not endure; he is like the beasts that perish. This is the fate of those who trust in themselves, and of their followers, who approve their sayings. Like sheep they are destined for the grave, and death will feed on them. The upright will rule over them in the morning; their forms will decay in the grave, far from their princely mansions. But God will redeem my life from the grave; he will surely take me to himself.

The wicked have nothing to look forward to, for at the end of life death awaits them. But for those who believe, death is only the beginning of life.

7/7 – Losing it All

Psalm 49:16-17: Do not be overawed when a man grows rich, when the splendor of his house increases; for he will take nothing with him when he dies, his splendor will not descend with him.

Or to put it in the words of Jesus: “What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?” (Matthew 16:26)

7/8 – A Summoning

Psalm 50:1-4: The Mighty One, God, the Lord, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to the place where it sets. From Zion, perfect in beauty, God shines forth. Our God comes and will not be silent; a fire devours before him, and around him a tempest rages. He summons the heavens above, and the earth, that he may judge his people.

There is a day coming when everyone in all the earth will be summoned to stand before God in judgment. Let us seek mercy from Him before that day.

7/9 - God Doesn't Need Our Goats

Psalm 50:9-12: I have no need of a bull from your stall or of goats from your pens, for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird in the mountains, and the creatures of the field are mine. If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine, and all that is in it.

God has no need for the things that we can give Him. He asks us to give, not because of His need, but because He desires us to build a loving relationship with Him.

7/10 - Preparing for a Show

Psalm 50:23 He who sacrifices thank offerings honors me, and he prepares the way so that I may show him the salvation of God.

Let us not forget to offer thanks to our God.

7/11 - Blotting Out Transgressions

Psalm 51:1-2: Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

This was the prayer of King David after his sin with Bathsheba. God delights to hear such words spoken from a broken heart.

7/12 - Sinful Since Before Birth

Psalm 51:5-6: Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.

Our sin nature has been with us from birth, but God desires that every aspect of it be brought to the light so that it can be dealt with.

7/13 - Create, Renew, Restore

Psalm 51:10-12: Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

David's prayer is that his sin can be replaced by purity. His desire was to have a heart that desired nothing but to please God. Is this our prayer?

7/14 - A Broken Spirit

Psalm 51:15-17: O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. 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.

Break our spirits, o Lord, and humble our hearts, that we may please you.

7/15 - An Olive Tree Flourishing

Psalm 52:7-9: "Here now is the man who did not make God his stronghold but trusted in his great wealth and grew strong by destroying others!" But I am like an olive tree flourishing in the house of God; I trust in God's unfailing love for ever and ever. I will praise you forever for what you have done;

in your name I will hope, for your name is good. I will praise you in the presence of your saints.

The quotation in the first sentence is the words that the righteous will speak on the day that God brings the wicked to everlasting ruin. They are set in sharp contrast to the assurance that only peace and safety await the one who hopes in the Lord.

7/16 – No One Does Good

Psalm 53:1-3: The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, and their ways are vile; there is no one who does good. God looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. Everyone has turned away, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.

This passage is quoted in Romans 3 to prove that no one can stand before God in our own righteousness. Our only hope is the undeserved mercy and forgiveness of God.

7/17 – Wings of a Dove

Psalm 55:4-8: My heart is in anguish within me; the terrors of death assail me. Fear and trembling have beset me; horror has overwhelmed me. I said, "Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! I would fly away and be at rest. I would flee far away and stay in the desert; I would hurry to my place of shelter, far from the tempest and storm."

God has prepared a place such as this for us. "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." (Revelation 21:4)

7/18 - Betrayal from a Friend

Psalm 55:12-17 If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it; if a foe were raising himself against me, I could hide from him. But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, my close friend, with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship as we walked with the throng at the house of God. Evening, morning and noon I cry out in distress, and he hears my voice.

If you have ever had a close friend turn against you, you are in good company. David here is probably referring to King Saul, for whom he had been an armor bearer and harpist. Jesus might have used these words to describe Judas. When we suffer in this way, if we cry out to God, he promises to hear us.

7/19 - An Astonishing Promise

Psalm 55:22: Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall.

Here is a beautiful promise in clear words. We only need to trust them and obey them.

7/20 - What Do I Have to Fear?

Psalm 56:3: When I am afraid, I will trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me?

This can be a very comforting thought to those who are persecuted or mocked for their testimony. We should never fear "those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell." (Luke 12:4-5)

7/21 - A Scroll of Tears

Psalm 56:8 Record my lament; list my tears on your scroll--are they not in your record?

Isn't it wonderful to know that our Lord cares so much for us as to keep a record of even our tears?

7/22 - In the Shadow of Your Wings

Psalm 57:1-2: Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me, for in you my soul takes refuge. I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster has passed. I cry out to God Most High, to God, who fulfills his purpose for me.

When those in the path of a natural disaster like a tornado or hurricane hide in a basement or shelter, they can only hope that it will be enough to protect them. With our Lord, we need have no fear. If we take refuge in Him, we need have no fear, for He has a plan for our lives, and He will see it through to completion.

7/23 – Singing in the Morning

Psalm 59:16-17: 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. O my Strength, I sing praise to you; you, O God, are my fortress, my loving God.

Let us not forget to praise and worship God for His love and care.

7/24 - The High Rock

Psalm 61:2-5: 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. For you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the foe. I long to dwell in your tent forever and take refuge in the shelter of your wings. For you have heard my vows, O God; you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name.

David longs to dwell with Christ forever. This is the heritage of those who fear Him, to which we should all long, for we are "looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God." (Hebrews 11:10) David's weariness is compared to the promise of what is to come.

7/25 - Trust at All Times

Psalm 62:6-8: He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken. My salvation and my honor depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge. Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.

I find it interesting that this Psalm tells us to trust God at all times, not just in trouble or in pain. In all aspects of our lives, worry should be replaced by trust.

7/26 - Weightlessness

Psalm 62:9 Lowborn men are but a breath, the highborn are but a lie; if weighed on a balance, they are nothing; together they are only a breath.

Neither riches, nor celebrity, nor poverty make any difference to God because they are all so temporary. The only thing that matters is that we trust Him.

7/27 - A Thing or Two

Psalm 62:11-12: One thing God has spoken, two things have I heard: that you, O God, are strong, and that you, O Lord, are loving. Surely you will reward each person according to what he has done.

God has the love to desire to reward His people, and the strength and power to carry it out.

7/28 - Contentment in the Wilderness

Psalm 63:4-7: I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands. My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you. On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night. Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings.

Though he wrote this when he was living in the wilderness, David loved the Lord so much that he was thoroughly satisfied. It should be our prayer and desire to love Him in such a way also.

7/29 - The Hope of the Ends of the Earth

Psalm 65:4-7: 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. You answer us with awesome deeds of righteousness, O God our Savior, the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas, who formed the mountains by your power, having armed yourself with strength, who stilled the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, and the turmoil of the nations.

We are indeed blessed to have such an awesome God working on our behalf.

7/30 - Tough Tests from God

Psalm 66:10-12: For you, O God, tested us; you refined us like silver. You brought us into prison and laid burdens on our backs. You let men ride over our heads; we went through fire and water, but you brought us to a place of abundance.

It is interesting that in the context of the Psalm, God's testing is given as a reason for singing praise to God. Praise him for testing us, bringing us into prison, laying burdens on our backs, letting men ride over our heads and then bringing us to a place of abundance. Remember that God's testing is something to be thankful for, and there is joy waiting at the end of it all.

7/31 – A Testimony

Psalm 67:1-2: May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine upon us, that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations.

God's love and grace to us should be a testimony to everyone about the goodness of God.

8/1 - Champion of the Helpless

Psalm 68:4-6: Sing to God, sing praise to his name, extol him who rides on the clouds--his name is the LORD--and rejoice before him. A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families, he leads forth the prisoners with singing; but the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land.

It is an important fact about our God that he chooses to care for the fatherless, the widow the lonely and the prisoner. It is also important to remember that he will oppose the proud and the rebellious. We should live the way God wants us to live, and love the way He wants us to love.

8/2 - Shame Because of Me

Psalm 69:5-6: You know my folly, O God; my guilt is not hidden from you. May those who hope in you not be disgraced because of me, O Lord, the LORD Almighty; may those who seek you not be put to shame because of me, O God of Israel.

David acknowledges his own sin, and prays that it will not be a stumbling block for other believers. Let us pray that our deeds never cause such shame or pain.

8/3 - The Most Pleasing Sacrifice

Psalm 69:30-31: I will praise God's name in song and glorify him with thanksgiving. This will please the LORD more than an ox, more than a bull with its horns and hoofs.

To praise Him in song and glorify Him with thanksgiving pleases God more than any sacrifice or fast or other accomplishment we might make.

8/4 - Troubles, Many and Bitter

Psalm 71:14-15: But as for me, I will always have hope; I will praise you more and more. My mouth will tell of your righteousness, of your salvation all day long, though I know not its measure.

These words were written in the context of a great trial. The author speaks on faith saying, "my mouth will tell of . . . your salvation all day long, though I know not its measure." In his trial he had not seen the results of God's salvation, yet he was willing to trust God even to the point of proclaiming his salvation before it was complete. Later he says "Though you have made me see troubles, many and bitter, you will restore my life again; from the depths of the earth you will again bring me up." Psalm 71:20

8/5 - The Precious Blood of the Needy

Psalm 72:11-14: All kings will bow down to him and all nations will serve him. For he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help. He will take pity on the weak and the needy

and save the needy from death. He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in his sight.

These words of King Solomon are prophetic of the eternal reign of Jesus Christ to which we eagerly look forward. We also see the character of our God, who champions the helpless.

8/6 - Understanding Their Final Destiny

Psalm 73:3-5: For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong. They are free from the burdens common to man; they are not plagued by human ills.

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

The wicked may prosper in this world, but that is but a breath compared to eternity, and in the end their prosperity will be meaningless. The only thing with meaning will be a right relationship with God.

8/7 – It Was You All Along

Psalm 74:12-17 But you, O God, are my king from of old; you bring salvation upon the earth. It was you who split open the sea by your power; you broke the heads of the monster in the waters. It was you who crushed the heads of Leviathan and gave him as food to the creatures of the desert. It was you who opened up springs and streams; you dried up the ever flowing rivers. The day is yours, and yours also the night; you established the sun and moon. It was you who set all the boundaries of the earth; you made both summer and winter.

We serve an awesome God.

8/8 - The Pillars of the Earth

Psalm 75:1-3: We give thanks to you, O God, we give thanks, for your Name is near; men tell of your wonderful deeds. You say, "I choose the appointed time; it is I who judge uprightly. When the earth and all its people quake, it is I who hold its pillars firm.

Instead of blaming God for the Earthquake, he is praised for being the One who held all together. Instead of blaming God for our hard times, we should praise Him for sustaining us through them.

8/9 - An Appeal to the Past

Psalm 77:2 When I was in distress, I sought the Lord; at night I stretched out untiring hands and my soul refused to be comforted.

Psalm 77:10-12: Then I thought, "To this I will appeal: the years of the right hand of the Most High." I will remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago. I will meditate on all your works and consider all your mighty deeds.

The Psalmist relieves his distress by thinking on the deeds of God from the past. This is a good way to bolster our faith. If you find it hard to trust God in the present situation, think of what He has done for you in the past, or what He has done for others.

8/10 - Turning Back From Battle

Psalm 78:9-11: The men of Ephraim, though armed with bows, turned back on the day of battle; they did not keep God's covenant and refused to live by his law. They forgot what he had done, the wonders he had shown them.

God has given us weapons of battle also. He has given us His Word and the authority of Christ and other gifts from His Spirit. Let us not be guilty of turning back from the battle because of our disobedience, or because we have forgotten how much God has done for us.

8/11 - Hearts Not Loyal

Psalm 78:36-38: But then they would flatter him with their mouths, lying to him with their tongues; their hearts were not loyal to him, they were not faithful to his covenant. Yet he was merciful; he forgave their iniquities and did not destroy them. Time after time he restrained his anger and did not stir up his full wrath.

This passage refers to the children of Israel in the wilderness. They "talked the talk" but they didn't "walk the walk" because their hearts were not in it. The lesson for us is that we need to love Him with our whole heart, and not just with the words of our mouth.

8/12 - A Passing Breeze

Psalm 78:38-39: Yet he was merciful; he forgave their iniquities and did not destroy them. Time after time he restrained his anger and did not stir up his full wrath. He remembered that they were but flesh, a passing breeze that does not return.

It would be well for us to remember also that our days in this world are like a passing breeze that does not return. If that is so, then it is not too much to give the Lord our whole lives.

8/13 - Commanded to Sing

Psalm 81:1-4: Sing for joy to God our strength; shout aloud to the God of Jacob! Begin the music, strike the tambourine, play the melodious harp and lyre. Sound the ram's horn at the New Moon, and when the moon is full, on the day of our Feast; this is a decree for Israel, an ordinance of the God of Jacob.

Praising God joyfully was not an option to the children of Israel. It was a decree to which they were required to obey. And it is so for us also, for we have been commanded to "Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Ephesians 5:19-20)

8/14 - Yearning For Home

Psalm 84:1-3: How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD Almighty! My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young--a place near your altar, O LORD Almighty, my King and my God.

The Psalmist tells us what the New Testament teaches us more clearly: There is no home in this world to compare to our eternal home in the presence of God. "People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country--a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them." (Hebrews 11:14-16)

8/15 - From Strength to Strength

Psalm 84:5-6: Blessed are those whose strength is in you, who have set their hearts on pilgrimage. As they pass through the Valley of Baca, they make it a place of springs; the autumn rains also cover it with pools. They go from strength to strength, till each appears before God in Zion.

Even our lives in this world will be more blessed if we have set our hearts on pilgrimage. The idea behind this is to see our lives here as temporary, a journey only, that leads to eternal life. If we do so then we will have joy unspeakable in this world as a comfort in our journey to the next.

8/16- A Happy Doorman

Psalm 84:10-11: Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked. For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless.

Or, as Paul says, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9) The greatest blessing in this world does not compare to the least blessing in God's eternal kingdom.

8/17 - Returning to Folly

Psalm 85:8 I will listen to what God the LORD will say; he promises peace to his people, his saints--but let them not return to folly.

God rescued us from our sinful way of life and gives us many wonderful promises. Let us not be guilty of insulting His kindness by returning to that life.

8/18 - Bringer of Joy

Psalm 86:4-5: Bring joy to your servant, for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. You are forgiving and good, O Lord, abounding in love to all who call to you.

We are commanded throughout the New Testament to be joyful, but here the psalmist prays that God would bestow such joy. If we are joyless, we should pray this prayer also.

8/19 - An Undivided Heart

Psalm 86:11-12: Teach me your way, O LORD, 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.

What a prayer David prays: that God would give him an undivided heart, totally committed to the Lord. Do we echo his desire?

8/20 - In the Light of Your Presence

Psalm 89:15-17: Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you, who walk in the light of your presence, O LORD. They rejoice in your name all day long; they exult in your righteousness. For you are their glory and strength, and by your favor you exalt our horn.

If such blessings are pronounced on those who acclaim the Lord, then let us do so. To acclaim Him is simply to tell any who would hear about our Lord.

8/21 - How Fleeting is Life

Psalm 89:46-48: How long, O LORD? Will you hide yourself forever? How long will your wrath burn like fire? Remember how fleeting is my life. For what futility you have created all men! What man can live and not see death, or save himself from the power of the graven?

Hebrews 11 teaches us that the ultimate fulfillment of God's promises does not take place in this world, but in the next. So if we suffer as the psalmist does here, we need to look to His promise that the resurrection of Christ has triumphed over death and we will live forever in joy.

8/22 - From Everlasting to Everlasting

Psalm 90:2 Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

It is amazing to realize when we talk with God that we are talking to a being who has existed from eternity past and will continue to exist until eternity future. Yet He loves us as individuals so much that He sent His son to die to redeem us. What an awesome God.

8/23 - A Thousand Years Like a Day

Psalm 90:4-6 For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night. You sweep men away in the sleep of death; they are like the new grass of the morning--though in the morning it springs up new, by evening it is dry and withered.

Our days in this world are nothing compared to eternity, so our suffering is also momentary compared to the eternal glory that shall be ours as believers.

8/24 - Numbering Our Days Aright

Psalm 90:10-12: The length of our days is seventy years--or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away. Who knows the power of your anger? For your wrath is as great as the fear that is due you. Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

Let it be our prayer that we would understand that our days are short, and that we would use them with

the wisdom of God.

8/25 - Satisfied in the Morning

Psalm 90:14-15: Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days. Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us, for as many years as we have seen trouble.

The fact is that the afflictions of this world won't even compare to the eternity in which God will make us glad.

8/26 - God's Profound Thoughts

Psalm 92:4-5: For you make me glad by your deeds, O LORD; I sing for joy at the works of your hands. How great are your works, O LORD, how profound your thoughts!

We should rejoice that God's understanding and power exceed all that we could imagine, because that power and wisdom is at work in for us.

8/27 - Unmoved For All Eternity

Psalm 93:1-2: The LORD reigns, he is robed in majesty; the LORD is robed in majesty and is armed with strength. The world is firmly established; it cannot be moved. Your throne was established long ago; you are from all eternity.

What God says and does, no one can thwart. He is the ruler of all creation from eternity past to eternity future. One may disobey Him only with his permission, and only for a time without consequences. It would be far better for us to submit to Him as ruler now, than to wait for the day when He judges all.

8/28 - He Will Never Forsake His Inheritance

Psalm 94:12-14: Blessed is the man you discipline, O LORD, the man you teach from your law; you grant him relief from days of trouble, till a pit is dug for the wicked. For the LORD will not reject his people; he will never forsake his inheritance.

It seems strange that we are told that the man God disciplines is blessed because He is relieved from trouble. But the point is that God's discipline corrects us from falling into far worse trouble. It is truly a blessing.

8/29 - The Flock Under His Care

Psalm 95:6-7: 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.

God has a right to our love and obedience because He is our creator. And He also has such a right because He has cared for us like a shepherd cares for His sheep.

8/30 - While It Is Still Today

Psalm 95:7-11: Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the desert, where your fathers tested and tried me, though they had seen what I did. For forty years I was angry with that generation; I said, "They are a people whose hearts go astray, and they have not known my ways." I declared on oath in my anger, "They shall never enter my rest."

I could not write a better commentary on this verse than the one found in Hebrews 3:12-14: "See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first."

8/31 - Guarding the Loves of His Faithful

Psalm 97:10 Let those who love the LORD hate evil, for he guards the lives of his faithful ones and delivers them from the hand of the wicked.

All too often those who have tasted of the Lord still tend to cling to evil as if it were something desirable. But if we want what's good for us, we must remember that God's protection is over those who are faithful to Him.

9/1 - Mountains Sing For Joy

Psalm 98:4-9: Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music; make music to the LORD with the harp, with the harp and the sound of singing, with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn--shout for joy before the LORD, the King. Let the sea resound, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it. Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy; let them sing before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth.

If all of creation is to praise the Lord in such a way, how much more should we who have been purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ?

9/2 - Our Creator and Caregiver

Psalm 100:2-3: Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. 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.

Knowing that God is our creator and our caregiver should give us reason to worship and praise Him.

9/3 - Eyes on Nothing Vile

Psalm 101:1-3: I will sing of your love and justice; to you, O LORD, I will sing praise. I will be careful to lead a blameless life--when will you come to me? I will walk in my house with blameless heart. I will set before my eyes no vile thing.

To set no vile thing before our eyes means that we will make it our goal to walk blameless before God. Like David, we might fail at times, but we will keep our eyes on righteousness.

9/4 - Things Perish but God Remains Forever

Psalm 102:25-27: In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. 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. But you remain the same, and your years will never end.

It is a wonderful thing to know that the promises on which we base our hope and our lives are made by an unchanging all powerful God

9/5 - A List of Benefits of the Godly

Psalm 103:1-5: Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits--who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

This list of "benefits" is incredible: forgiveness, healing, redemption, love, compassion, good things, and the promise of renewed youth. Indeed we should praise him, not just with our mouths, but with our inmost being.

9/6- Slow to Anger, Abounding in Love

Psalm 103:8-12: The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

This passage should help us retool our image of ourselves: We should not be too proud because God treats us with mercy, and with justice. We should never despair or think of ourselves as worthless because God finds such value in us.

9/7 - Compassion for Dust

Psalm 103:13-17: As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust. As for man, his days are like grass, he flourishes like a flower of the field; the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more. But from everlasting to everlasting the LORD's love is with those who fear him, you his servants who do his will.

Though we are temporary by nature, God's gift allows us to enjoy His love forever.

9/8 - Remember and Hope

Psalm 105:3-5: Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice. Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always. Remember the wonders he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced.

No matter what kind of uncertain future we face, it is always best to look to God for the answer to that future. He will never let us down.

9/9 - Joining the Inheritance of the Chosen

Psalm 106:4-5: Remember me, O LORD, when you show favor to your people, come to my aid when you save them, that I may enjoy the prosperity of your chosen ones, that I may share in the joy of your nation and join your inheritance in giving praise.

What a day that will be.

9/10 - A Job for the Redeemed

Psalm 107:1-2: Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever. Let the redeemed of the LORD say this--those he redeemed from the hand of the foe,

If you are among the redeemed, it is your job to be thankful. But it should also be our natural response to God's provision for our sin.

9/11 - Pondering the Works of the Lord

Psalm 111:2-3: Great are the works of the LORD; they are pondered by all who delight in them. Glorious and majestic are his deeds, and his righteousness endures forever.

We should ponder the great works of God. If we count the blessings that He has done in us, it will give us all the more reason to praise Him.

9/12 - Light Dawns in Darkness

Psalm 112:4 Even in darkness light dawns for the upright, for the gracious and compassionate and righteous man.

That is why we can rejoice in our affliction. We know that the darker the night is, the brighter the morning will be.

9/13 - The God Who Hears

Psalm 116:1-2: I love the LORD, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy. Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live.

God hears us, and so deserves our love.

9/14 - Precious in God's Sight

Psalm 116:15 Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.

Any true believer should be able to look forward to that day as a sort of graduation from life's trials to the rest that God has promised. Our only regret might be those that we love and will no longer be able to help.

9/15- Small Psalm with Big Message

Psalm 117:1-2: Praise the LORD all you nations; extol him, all you peoples. For great is his love toward us, and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever. Praise the LORD.

This is the entire 117th Psalm, a small chapter with a big message: God deserves our praise because of His love and faithfulness. Isn't it wonderful to be certain of the fact that God's love and faithfulness will never end?

9/16 - Where to Go for Help

Psalm 118:8-9: It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes.

The words are easy to say and to understand but hard to put into practice. Many a king in Israel or Judah, when under attack, would look for allies instead of help from God. Where do you turn in time of need?

9/17 - A Heritage of Joy

Psalm 118:24 This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

How much rejoicing do we do in our lives? Great joy should be the heritage of the people of God in this world.

9/18 - A Blameless Goal

Psalm 119:1-3: Blessed are they whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the LORD. Blessed are they who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart. They do nothing wrong; they walk in his ways.

Our goal should be complete whole hearted obedience to God's Word.

9/19- A Shield Against Sin

Psalm 119:9-11: How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

A thorough knowledge of God's word is an excellent shield against sin.

9/20 - True Freedom

Psalm 119:30-32: I have chosen the way of truth; I have set my heart on your laws. I hold fast to your statutes, O LORD; do not let me be put to shame. I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free.

True freedom comes only from obedience to God's Word. Otherwise we are a slave to our sin natures. Let us run in the path of His commands.

9/21 - Worthless Things

Psalm 119:37 Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word.

Are there worthless things in your life to which your eyes are turned? Let us pray that we can see such things through God's eyes.

9/22 - The Preservation Promise

Psalm 119:49-50: Remember your word to your servant, for you have given me hope. My comfort in my suffering is this: Your promise preserves my life.

The true source of our joy rests in the promise of the hope to come. Whatever hardship may come our way, his promise outweighs. Nothing compares.

9/23 - The Benefits of Affliction

Psalm 119:67-68: Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word. You are good, and what you do is good; teach me your decrees.

Psalm 119:71 It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees.

Psalm 119:75-76: I know, O LORD, that your laws are righteous, and in faithfulness you have afflicted me. May your unfailing love be my comfort, according to your promise to your servant.

If affliction causes us to obey the Lord better, then a loving God would be certain to afflict us. What else should we expect?

9/24 - A Light for my Path

Psalm 119:105-106: Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. I have taken an oath and confirmed it, that I will follow your righteous laws.

If God's Word is a guide for our way, we would be foolish not to resolve to obey it.

9/25 - In the Shade of the Lord

Psalm 121:5-8: The LORD watches over you--the LORD is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD will keep you from all harm--he will watch over your life; the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.

This does not mean that nothing bad will ever happen to us. It means that any bad thing that happens will be for our best good in the eternal plan of God. Sometimes it is best that we suffer so that we can learn and grow. God would not call such suffering "harm." He will keep us in His hand in any circumstance.

9/26 - Serving God with Friends

Psalm 122:1 I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD."

The psalmist finds blessing in the encouragement from friends to serve the Lord. Let us be a blessing to

each other in this way.

9/27 - The Object of Ridicule

Psalm 123:3-4: Have mercy on us, O LORD, have mercy on us, for we have endured much contempt. We have endured much ridicule from the proud, much contempt from the arrogant.

And so it still goes, that the godly are held in ridicule and contempt by the unbelievers, but God will be the ultimate judge.

9/28 - Not Swept Away

Psalm 124:2-6: If the LORD had not been on our side when men attacked us, when their anger flared against us, they would have swallowed us alive; the flood would have engulfed us, the torrent would have swept over us, the raging waters would have swept us away. Praise be to the LORD, who has not let us be torn by their teeth.

We are in a spiritual battle "against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." This is a battle that we can win only if the Lord is on our side.

9/29 - Joy After Weeping

Psalm 126:5-6: 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.

In all our trials we can know that there is joy at the end. This is especially true of those who are under discipline from the Lord. A harvest of righteousness is the result.

9/30 - Only God's Plan Succeeds

Psalm 127:1 Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain.

No plan can succeed unless the Lord allows it. So it would be wise to make our plans in line with God's will.

10/1 - No Record of Sins

Psalm 130:3-4: If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared.

Thank you, Lord, that you have not kept a record of my sins.

10/2 - Simple Trust

Psalm 131:1-3: My heart is not proud, O LORD, my eyes are not haughty; I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me. But I have stilled and quieted my soul; like a weaned

child with its mother, like a weaned child is my soul within me. O Israel, put your hope in the LORD both now and forevermore.

The thought here is that the Psalmist has decided to quit worrying about things, but to place them in God's hands in simple trust. We need to rest content in God's care of us.

10/3 - Pleasant Brothers in Unity

Psalm 133:1-3: 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.

This is the entire 133rd Psalm, and its message is the beauty of unity among God's people. Jesus prayed that all believers "may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you" (John 17:20-21). This unity should be a priority in our lives.

10/4 - Enduring Love

Psalm 136:1-3: Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good. His love endures forever. Give thanks to the God of gods. His love endures forever. Give thanks to the Lord of lords: His love endures forever.

No matter what we've done, no matter where we've gone, no matter who we've hurt, God's love will continue to endure.

10/5 - The Right Hand of God on Our Behalf

Psalm 138:7-8: Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life; you stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes, with your right hand you save me. The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me; your love, O LORD, endures forever--do not abandon the works of your hands.

This passage indicates that God has a purpose for each of us individually. It is comforting to know that He will see to it that this purpose is fulfilled.

10/6 - Before I Even Speak

Psalm 139:1-4: O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD.

God knows us so well that his knowledge extends to the number of the hairs on our head. If His knowledge is so complete, it makes sense to trust Him with our lives.

10/7 - No Place to Hide

Psalm 139:7-10: 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.

We can never leave His presence, and He will never forsake us. His loving kindness will follow us everywhere and forever.

10/8 - My Days Ordained Before One Came to Be

Psalm 139:13-16: For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

The God who created us in this way will take special care for His people. He can see all ends, and knows us beyond our ability to comprehend. It is a great comfort to know that we are in the hands of such a being.

10/9 - Testing for Offensive Ways

Psalm 139:23-24: 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.

If we were tested this way, what would the results be? Do we desire to be tested in this way?

10/10 - Justice for the Poor

Psalm 140:12 I know that the LORD secures justice for the poor and upholds the cause of the needy.

If God cares for the poor and needy this way, it would be good for us to be like our Lord and have the same concern.

10/11 - The Guarding of the Mouth

Psalm 141:3-4: Set a guard over my mouth, O LORD; keep watch over the door of my lips. Let not my heart be drawn to what is evil, to take part in wicked deeds with men who are evildoers; let me not eat of their delicacies.

It is amazing how easy it is to say the wrong thing when in the company of unbelievers. The psalmist asks that the Lord guard his mouth in such circumstances, so that he does not end up participating in the deeds of the wicked. We also should watch what we say, and where it may lead.

10/12 - A Righteous Man Strikes

Psalm 141:5 Let a righteous man strike me--it is a kindness; let him rebuke me--it is oil on my head. My head will not refuse it.

If a righteous man truly sins, a brother should see it as a kindness to rebuke him. The one who has been rebuked should also see the love behind the rebuke. We should beware though, that we are not rebuking each other of things that annoy us (rather than sins). It should also be something that is done carefully and prayerfully.

10/13 - When No One Cares

Psalm 142:1-4: I cry aloud to the LORD; I lift up my voice to the LORD for mercy. I pour out my complaint before him; before him I tell my trouble. When my spirit grows faint within me, it is you who know my way. In the path where I walk men have hidden a snare for me. Look to my right and see; no one is concerned for me. I have no refuge; no one cares for my life.

When it seems like no one cares, God always does. In fact, we should look to Him for help first whenever we face trials.

10/14 - What to Do Today

Psalm 144:3: O LORD, what is man that you care for him, the son of man that you think of him? Man is like a breath; his days are like a fleeting shadow.

If our days in this world are so short, then we need to use them wisely. What will you do with today?

10/15 - Slow to Anger with Love for All

Psalm 145:8-10: 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. All you have made will praise you, O LORD; your saints will extol you.

Notice especially how wonderful it is that God is slow to anger, and that His love extends to all of His creation, even those who do not love Him.

10/16 - Holding Those Who Fall

Psalm 145:14 The LORD upholds all those who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down.

So if you stumble, or if you are bowed down, turn to Him for help. He will not forsake you.

10/17 - Near to All who Call

Psalm 145:18-20: The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them. The LORD watches over all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy.

If we call on Him in truth, we can know for sure that He will hear. He may not answer as we like (as is seen in the book of Job) but he will never forsake us.

10/18 - The Plans of Mortal Men

Psalm 146:3-6: Do not put your trust in princes, in mortal men, who cannot save. When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing. Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God, the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them--the LORD, who remains faithful forever.

Nobody is as dependable as our God. At best, a man can only make plans in hopes that he can carry them out before He dies. Our God has all power, never dies, and never changes. Where would you put your trust?

10/19 - Naming the Stars

Psalm 147:3-5: He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. He determines the number of the stars and calls them each by name. Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit.

It is incredible that God created, knows and understands every star in the cosmos, yet cares for each and every sparrow. And he has chosen to care for even the most humble who call on Him.

10/20 - God Rejoices in Us

Psalm 149:2-4: Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; let the people of Zion be glad in their King. Let them praise his name with dancing and make music to him with tambourine and harp. For the LORD takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with salvation.

We should rejoice in Him because He takes joy in us.

10/21 - A Band with No Restraints

Psalm 150:3-5: Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre, praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute, praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals.

We should never hold back, rather we should praise Him in every way we can.

10/22 - Sooner is Better than Later

Psalm 150:6 Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD

One day everyone will give honor to the Lord. Let us be among those who choose to do so now.

10/23 - Before You Were Born

Jeremiah 1:5: Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.

God's knowledge of us springs from before creation. One who knows us so well and loves us so much can be trusted to choose what's best for us.

10/24 - Nothing but a Child

Jeremiah 1:6-8: "Ah, Sovereign LORD," I said, "I do not know how to speak; I am only a child."

But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a child.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the LORD.

It is God's way to use the weak in order to prove that He is the One working us. He can and does use even the weakest and most humble.

10/25 - A Conditional Promise

Jeremiah 1:17-19: "Get yourself ready! Stand up and say to them whatever I command you. Do not be terrified by them, or I will terrify you before them. Today I have made you a fortified city, an iron pillar and a bronze wall to stand against the whole land--against the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests and the people of the land. They will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the LORD.

Jeremiah is given a conditional promise. He will prevail in every situation, but he must not be terrified by the challenge. In other words, he must stand firmly in his trust of God or else he will be terrified by what he is to do. This sounds like a familiar situation, and reminds me of Peter trying to walk on water. His faith held him firm till his doubt overcame his faith.

10/26 - Walking Away from a Faithful God

Jeremiah 2:5: This is what the LORD says: What fault did your fathers find in me, that they strayed so far from me? They followed worthless idols and became worthless themselves.

Of course, the answer is that they found no fault with God, but strayed anyway. We need to be careful lest we stray from a God who never fails us.

10/27 - Changing gods

Jeremiah 2:11: Has a nation ever changed its gods? (Yet they are not gods at all.) But my people have exchanged their Glory for worthless idols.

In our materialistic society, there are hundreds of things that seem to be of value, but have no eternal significance at all. We must be careful that we do not pursue such things, but rather that we cling to our glorious God.

10/28 - Trading a Spring for an Empty Hole

Jeremiah 2:13: 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.

A cistern is dug as a means of catching and capturing rain water for later use. If it is broken, it is of no use at all, for the water leaks away. In the same way, if we are busy looking for ways to meet our own needs, we will fail, but if we turn to a spring that never runs dry, we will never be disappointed.

10/29 - Evil and Bitter

Jeremiah 2:19: "Consider then and realize how evil and bitter it is for you when you forsake the LORD your God and have no awe of me," declares the Lord, the LORD Almighty.

When we lose our awe and fear of God, then we no longer see Him as He truly is, and we lose the

ability to respond correctly to Him. In fact, we could develop hearts of stone that do not respond at all. Help us, O Lord, never to lose our awe of You.

10/30 - No More Frown

Jeremiah 3:12-13: "Return, faithless Israel", declares the LORD, "I will frown on you no longer, for I am merciful," declares the LORD,

"I will not be angry forever. Only acknowledge your guilt--you have rebelled against the LORD your God," declares the LORD.

God's mercy is not based on great acts of sorrow or penance. It is based simply on acknowledging our guilt and turning to Him in faith.

10/31 - Idolatrous Deceptions

Jeremiah 3:23: Surely the idolatrous commotion on the hills and mountains is a deception; surely in the LORD our God is the salvation of Israel.

There can only be one truth about creation, salvation and eternity. Salvation cannot be found through other religions, but only through God.

11/1 - Breaking Unplowed Ground

Jeremiah 4:3-4: This is what the LORD says to the men of Judah and to Jerusalem: Break up your unplowed ground and do not sow among thorns. Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, circumcise your hearts.

If a farmer has farmland which he doesn't plow, it will bring weeds and thorns. Only plowing and planting will prevent that. In the same way, if we have areas of our lives which have not been given over to the Lord, nothing good can come of it. We must give our entire hearts to Him.

11/2 - Bitter Consequences

Jeremiah 4:18: Your own conduct and actions have brought this upon you. This is your punishment. How bitter it is! How it pierces to the heart!

A man must reap what he sows. Our sins will catch up with us. Even sins which God has forgiven may have consequences (as is seen in David's sin with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah).

11/3 - A Boundary for the Sea

Jeremiah 5:22: "Should you not fear me?" declares the LORD. "Should you not tremble in my presence? I made the sand a boundary for the sea, an everlasting barrier it cannot cross. The waves may roll, but they cannot prevail; they may roar, but they cannot cross it.

If God is powerful enough for such creative acts, shouldn't we be anxious that His power acts in our behalf and not in our judgment?

11/4 - Hating to Hear

Jeremiah 6:10: To whom can I speak and give warning? Who will listen to me? Their ears are closed so they cannot hear. The word of the LORD is offensive to them; they find no pleasure in it.

It is ironic that in all ages, the message that can bring eternal life and healing cannot reach many who need it because they hate hearing it so much that they refuse to listen.

11/5 - A Serious Wound Not Treated

Jeremiah 6:14: They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious. 'Peace, peace,' they say, when there is no peace.

The sickness of the sinful heart is so great that only the death of Jesus Christ can bring healing. But today our society treats it as something not serious: something that a little education or compassion can heal. Only regeneration through the death of Christ can heal a sinful heart.

11/6 - Ask for the Ancient Paths

Jeremiah 6:16: 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."

The solution to life's problems is to walk in God's ways. To trust God wholly is to give up the need for worry. The end result will always be for our best good.

11/7 - Hurting God, or Hurting Themselves?

Jeremiah 7:18-19: They pour out drink offerings to other gods to provoke me to anger. But am I the one they are provoking? declares the LORD. Are they not rather harming themselves, to their own shame?

When we sin against God, we do not hurt God nearly so much as we hurt ourselves.

11/8 - Lost Instincts

Jeremiah 8:7: Even the stork in the sky knows her appointed seasons, and the dove, the swift and the thrush observe the time of their migration. But my people do not know the requirements of the LORD.

Even the simplest of God's creatures knows what God has required of them, but humankind (even among believers) has seared consciences and has lost the ability to know right from wrong. The solution to this is to commune with God, to encourage the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, and to study God's Word.

11/9 - Utterly Rejecting Wisdom

Jeremiah 8:9: The wise will be put to shame; they will be dismayed and trapped. Since they have rejected the word of the LORD, what kind of wisdom do they have?

Even the wisest and smartest men and women have rejected wisdom utterly if they have rejected the Lord.

11/10 - Not Ashamed of Loathsome Conduct

Jeremiah 8:12: Are they ashamed of their loathsome conduct? No, they have no shame at all; they do not even know how to blush. So they will fall among the fallen; they will be brought down when they are punished, says the LORD.

It will be a terrible thing for those with a seared conscience when they stand before the judgment seat of God.

11/11 - Comfort in Sorrow

Jeremiah 8:18 O my Comforter in sorrow, my heart is faint within me.

Jeremiah needs comfort as he considers the judgment soon to fall on Israel. That judgment comes from God, but Jeremiah also turns to God for comfort. It is wonderful to know that in any circumstance He is willing to be our Comforter.

11/12 - Living in the Midst of Deception

Jeremiah 9:6: You live in the midst of deception; in their deceit they refuse to acknowledge me," declares the LORD.

These words ring true today, as modern science, education, politics and ethics refuse to acknowledge God. We must be wise to the deception and seek truth in God.

11/13 - Boasting About God.

Jeremiah 9:23-24: 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.

Nothing in this world (not wisdom, strength, riches, fame, beauty or anything that this world values) is of any eternal value compared to knowing God. The benefits of knowing Him outweigh them all.

11/14 - No One Like God

Jeremiah 10:6-7: No one is like you, O LORD; you are great, and your name is mighty in power. Who should not revere you, O King of the nations? This is your due. Among all the wise men of the nations and in all their kingdoms, there is no one like you.

God is unique among the living for His might and His power and His love. He is unique among gods, because He alone lives and reigns eternally.

11/15 - Mercy Rather Than Wrath

Jeremiah 10:10 But the LORD is the true God; he is the living God, the eternal King. When he is angry, the earth trembles; the nations cannot endure his wrath.

No one can stand before the wrath of God, so it is wiser to stand before His mercy.

11/16 - Awesome God

Jeremiah 10:12-13: But God made the earth by his power;
he founded the world by his wisdom
and stretched out the heavens by his understanding.
When he thunders, the waters in the heavens roar;
he makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth.
He sends lightning with the rain
and brings out the wind from his storehouses.

We should be in awe at the glory of our creator and savior. Such a God can be trusted in any situation.

11/17 - Inquiring of the Lord

Jeremiah 10:21: The shepherds are senseless and do not inquire of the LORD; so they do not prosper and all their flock is scattered.

Let us not be guilty of forgetting to inquire of the Lord for all decisions we make in our lives.

11/18 - Not Your Job

Jeremiah 10:23 I know, O LORD, that a man's life is not his own; it is not for man to direct his steps.

We do not belong to ourselves. We were purchased by the blood of Christ. God has every right to direct our steps, and he knows what's best for us anyway, so we have no reason to try to go our own ways.

11/19 - Not In Your Anger

Jeremiah 10:24 Correct me, LORD, but only with justice--not in your anger, lest you reduce me to nothing.

The justice of God is satisfied in God's wrath falling on Christ instead of on us, otherwise we would all be reduced to nothing. Jeremiah here is talking about the benefit of being disciplined by God rather than being punished as we truly deserve.

11/20 - Racing a Horse on Foot

Jeremiah 12:5 "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?"

These words are spoken to one who tries to understand the wisdom of God. We might just as well try to

beat a horse in a foot race as to match our wisdom with God's. Better just to trust Him than to take issue with Him.

11/21 - The Trap of Arrogance

Jeremiah 13:15 Hear and pay attention, do not be arrogant, for the LORD has spoken.

Arrogance is the biggest trap that can be set for those who would try to do what's right. The arrogant cannot be corrected by God's Word because they cannot admit they have done anything wrong. This is why the Pharisees of Jesus' day failed, and it is a problem for many church going people today.

11/22 - Crying Night and Day

Jeremiah 14:17: "Speak this word to them: 'Let my eyes overflow with tears night and day without ceasing; for my virgin daughter--my people--has suffered a grievous wound, a crushing blow.'"

Though God punished His people for their sin, he cried for their suffering. His love was so complete that He hurt Himself when He corrected them. This is seen in greatest detail at the crucifixion when the deliverance of God's people brought about the death of God's son.

11/23 - Who Brings the Rain

Jeremiah 14:22: Do any of the worthless idols of the nations bring rain?

Do the skies themselves send down showers?
No, it is you, O LORD our God.
Therefore our hope is in you,
for you are the one who does all this.

There are many places that people turn to in times of trouble, but only God can actually help.

11/24 - Eating God's Words

Jeremiah 15:15-16: You understand, O LORD;
remember me and care for me.
Avenge me on my persecutors.
You are long-suffering--do not take me away;
think of how I suffer reproach for your sake.
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.

These words of Jeremiah could be echoed by many of God's children today. When we choose to love God's Word and speak it, we will encounter opposition. But we will find comfort in God's presence.

11/25 - Turn Them to You, but don't Turn to Them

Jeremiah 15:19: "If you repent, I will restore you
that you may serve me;

if you utter worthy, not worthless, words,
you will be my spokesman.
Let this people turn to you,
but you must not turn to them.”

These are the words of God spoken to Jeremiah. I draw your attention to the last part: “Let this people turn to you, but you must not turn to them.” Many a man of God (like Samson) has been tempted and corrupted by the things of the enemy. God’s children should avoid falling into such a net.

11/26 - The Day Has Come

Jeremiah 16:14-15: "However, the days are coming," declares the LORD, "when men will no longer say, 'As surely as the LORD lives, who brought the Israelites up out of Egypt,' but they will say, 'As surely as the LORD lives, who brought the Israelites up out of the land of the north and out of all the countries where he had banished them.' For I will restore them to the land I gave their forefathers.

Today we see this at work, that God has indeed brought Israelites up from all the countries they were banished to. We can see the glory of God in predicting this years before it happened, and we can glorify God to see that He continues to work in the world today.

11/27 - The Curse of Trusting in Man

Jeremiah 17:5-7: This is what the LORD says: "Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the LORD. . . . But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him.

Ultimately, all our confidence should be on God, and not on men. The kings of Israel who depended on God in times of crises were all rewarded. Those who paid some other king to help them out usually fell into great misfortune.

11/28 - A Tree Planted by the Water

Jeremiah 17:7-8: 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."

A tree growing near a river will never lack in times of draught, for its roots can drink from the river water. In the same way, if we are tapped into the power of God (through our faith and trust in Him) we need never worry.

11/29 - The Deceitful Heart

Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?

In an age where many teach the virtue of “following the heart” let us be wise and understand that the desires of the heart are often in conflict with the things of God. It is better instead to follow the things of God and teach the heart to love Him.

11/30 - The Reward of the Righteous

Jeremiah 17:10 "I the LORD search the heart
and examine the mind,
to reward a man according to his conduct,
according to what his deeds deserve."

While it is true that no believer will suffer the punishment that his sins deserve, it is also true that believers will be rewarded for acts of obedience on the day we stand before God. Every small act of submission to God will have its reward on that day.

12/1 - Saving and Healing

Jeremiah 17:14 Heal me, O LORD, and I will be healed;
save me and I will be saved,
for you are the one I praise.

We should turn to God when we need saving or healing, for God is the only one who can carry out such works in a way that will last forever.

12/2 - Where is the word of the Lord?

Jeremiah 17:15 They keep saying to me, "Where is the word of the LORD? Let it now be fulfilled!"

Even in Jeremiah's day, the words spoken by Peter were true:
“First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. . . But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” --2 Peter 3:3-9

12/3- A Message Not Gladly Given

Jeremiah 17:16 I have not run away from being your shepherd; you know I have not desired the day of despair. What passes my lips is open before you.

Jeremiah did not enjoy being God's prophet. He didn't like the things he had to say to the people. But he obeyed God and told the people what they needed to hear, even if the message was terrible.

12/4 - The Potter and the Pottery

Jeremiah 18:1-4: This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: "Go down to the potter's house, and there I will give you my message." So I went down to the potter's house, and I saw him

working at the wheel. But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him.

As the potter has the right over his pottery, so the Lord has the right over his creation to make or remake us into anything He desires.

12/5 - Repaying Good with Evil

Jeremiah 18:20: Should good be repaid with evil? Yet they have dug a pit for me. Remember that I stood before you and spoke in their behalf to turn your wrath away from them.

It is the natural way of sinful man that they repay evil for good. They treated Christ this way, and so we should not be surprised if they treat us this way.

12/6 - A tired prophet

Jeremiah 20:7-9: O LORD, you deceived me, and I was deceived; you overpowered me and prevailed. I am ridiculed all day long; everyone mocks me. Whenever I speak, I cry out proclaiming violence and destruction. So the word of the LORD has brought me insult and reproach all day long.

But if I say, "I will not mention him or speak any more in his name," his word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot.

Jeremiah is weary and sick from the persecution that being God's man has brought Him. He spends his life trying to help the people, and for his efforts receives nothing but insult, reproach and suffering. But God's Spirit lives in him so strongly that he cannot disobey.

12/7 - Sing for the One Who Rescues the Needy

Jeremiah 20:13: Sing to the LORD! Give praise to the LORD!

He rescues the life of the needy from the hands of the wicked.

God considers it worthy of song and praise that He identifies with the needy. We should, then consider it a priority in our own lives.

12/8 - Why Was I Even Born?

Jeremiah 20:18: Why did I ever come out of the womb to see trouble and sorrow and to end my days in shame?

Righteous men and women often see great trials in their lives, and ask this question in their suffering. Paul tells us that "If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men." (1 Corinthians 15:19). It is the wonderful things that happen in the next life that makes our trials in this life tiny by comparison.

12/9 - Perhaps the Lord Will Perform

Jeremiah 21:1-2: The word came to Jeremiah from the LORD when King Zedekiah sent to him Pashhur son of Malkijah and the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah. They said: "Inquire now of the LORD for us because Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon is attacking us. Perhaps the LORD will perform wonders

for us as in times past so that he will withdraw from us."

It is just like so many people today who think that God is like a magic wand to be waved whenever there is trouble and put aside when the trouble is over. These people could not believe that God would allow Babylon to defeat them because of their own wickedness. If they had adopted life changing faith, things would have been different.

12/10 - Believe God and Surrender

Jeremiah 21:8-10: "Furthermore, tell the people, 'This is what the LORD says: See, I am setting before you the way of life and the way of death. Whoever stays in this city will die by the sword, famine or plague. But whoever goes out and surrenders to the Babylonians who are besieging you will live; he will escape with his life. I have determined to do this city harm and not good, declares the LORD. It will be given into the hands of the king of Babylon, and he will destroy it with fire.'

The wickedness of most of the people caused God to decide to destroy the city. Still, he was willing and able to care for individuals that trusted him. He stated simply that surrendering would bring about life, but refusing would mean death. The choice was a choice of faith, either believe God and surrender or disbelieve and die. It is always better to believe and obey God than to rely on our own understanding.

12/11 - Evidence of Judgment

Jeremiah 22:8-9: "People from many nations will pass by this city and will ask one another, 'Why has the LORD done such a thing to this great city?' And the answer will be: 'Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD their God and have worshiped and served other gods.' "

God has left evidence of His love for all to see (like the resurrection of Jesus) but He has also left evidence of His justice (like the fall of Jerusalem or the flood of Noah). If we would know God, we need to consider both.

12/12 - Defending the Cause of the Poor

Jeremiah 22:15-16: "Does it make you a king to have more and more cedar? Did not your father have food and drink? He did what was right and just, so all went well with him. He defended the cause of the poor and needy, and so all went well. Is that not what it means to know me?" declares the LORD.

These words were spoken to an unbelieving child of King Josiah who served God with all of his heart. It is noteworthy that defending "the cause of the poor and the needy" is defined as "what it means to know me." Those who claim to be believers but do nothing for the needy need to learn to know God.

12/13 - A Righteous Branch

Jeremiah 23:5-6: "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.

Jesus Christ is the righteous Branch of David. This astonishing verse prophesies His coming and His

kingdom. It also testifies to the salvation and righteousness He brings.

12/14 - A God Who Keeps His Word

Jeremiah 23:7-8: "So then, the days are coming," declares the LORD, "when people will no longer say, 'As surely as the LORD lives, who brought the Israelites up out of Egypt,' but they will say, 'As surely as the LORD lives, who brought the descendants of Israel up out of the land of the north and out of all the countries where he had banished them.' Then they will live in their own land."

We have seen this verse fulfilled in an amazing way with the creation of Israel as a nation and the restoration of Jewish people in living "in their own land." What other of the nations of long ago has been restored. But God is God who keeps His Word.

12/15 - Misleading in God's Name

Jeremiah 23:16-18: Do not listen to what the prophets are prophesying to you; they fill you with false hopes. They speak visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD. They keep saying to those who despise me, 'The LORD says: You will have peace.' And to all who follow the stubbornness of their hearts they say, 'No harm will come to you.' But which of them has stood in the council of the LORD to see or to hear his word? Who has listened and heard his word?

Even today we find "ministers" in churches that claim to be Christian who declare that God's love extends to all mankind and that there will be no day of judgment when people will stand before God to answer for their deeds. On that day, only those who have found God's mercy will have peace, and the false teachers will face the anger of God.

12/16 - A God Who Fills Heaven and Earth

Jeremiah 23:23-24: "Am I only a God nearby," declares the LORD, "and not a God far away? Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?" declares the LORD. "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" declares the LORD.

In this verse, God Himself declares His omniscience, that He is everywhere and no one can find a place without His presence or knowledge.

12/17 - Speaking to Those Who Will Not Listen

Jeremiah 25:3 For twenty-three years--from the thirteenth year of Josiah son of Amon king of Judah until this very day--the word of the LORD has come to me and I have spoken to you again and again, but you have not listened.

This verse summarizes the book of Jeremiah very well. God sent His prophet to the people to warn them, but they did not listen. Today we should still be like Jeremiah and sound God's warning, even if people will not listen.

12/18 - No Mercy For Those Who Will Not Repent

Jeremiah 25:8-11: Therefore the LORD Almighty says this: "Because you have not listened to my words, I will summon all the peoples of the north and my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon,"

declares the LORD, "and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants and against all the surrounding nations. I will completely destroy them and make them an object of horror and scorn, and an everlasting ruin. I will banish from them the sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of bride and bridegroom, the sound of millstones and the light of the lamp. This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

The warnings that God gave to the people were not idle. They were fulfilled in real and terrible ways. God's mercy did not extend to the unrepentant. Remember that mercy is found in repentance and faith alone.

12/19 - A Prophet's Death

Jeremiah 26:20-23: Now Uriah son of Shemaiah from Kiriath Jearim was another man who prophesied in the name of the LORD; he prophesied the same things against this city and this land as Jeremiah did. When King Jehoiakim and all his officers and officials heard his words, the king sought to put him to death. But Uriah heard of it and fled in fear to Egypt. King Jehoiakim, however, sent Elnathan son of Achbor to Egypt, along with some other men. They brought Uriah out of Egypt and took him to King Jehoiakim, who had him struck down with a sword and his body thrown into the burial place of the common people.

Very little is known of this man of God. He gave his life to the Lord and will receive his reward in eternity. Undoubtedly, it is men like him that are referred to in Hebrews 11:36-40: "Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated--the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground. These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect."

12/20 - Strangers Taking Root

Jeremiah 29:4-7: This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: "Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper."

In the same way, though we are strangers and aliens in this world, we should live our lives and pray for the peace and prosperity of the places in which we live, for this pleases God.

12/21 - Plans For Prosperity

Jeremiah 29:11-14: 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. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile."

Even the righteous among God's people went into exile, but His love followed them there, and He gave them a promise full of hope that we can also claim today.

12/22 - Forgiveness With Discipline

Jeremiah 30:10-11: 'So do not fear, O Jacob my servant; do not be dismayed, O Israel,' declares the LORD. 'I will surely save you out of a distant place, your descendants from the land of their exile. Jacob will again have peace and security, and no one will make him afraid. I am with you and will save you,' declares the LORD. 'Though I completely destroy all the nations among which I scatter you, I will not completely destroy you. I will discipline you but only with justice; I will not let you go entirely unpunished.'

Israel as a nation was loved by God, but even so the nation needed to be punished in order to learn righteousness. Let us never forget that even though God forgives sins, He still disciplines us as a father disciplines his children.

12/23 - Discipline With Healing

Jeremiah 30:17 But I will restore you to health and heal your wounds,' declares the LORD, 'because you are called an outcast, Zion for whom no one cares.'

God punished His people, but He also healed them. The lesson to us is that God will also discipline us but will continue to care for us and restore us after.

12/24 – A Child of God

Matthew 1:18: This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.

This was no ordinary child. He was not conceived by Joseph, but by the Holy Spirit. And this one act was turning point for the whole world.

12/25 – A Baby with a Mission

Matthew 1:20-21: An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

This special child who was conceived by the Holy Spirit came to Earth with a mission: To save people from sin. This was completed when he died on the cross as punishment for our sins, and rose again, conquering death.

12/26 - Drawn With Loving-kindness

Jeremiah 31:3-4: The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness. I will build you up again and you will be rebuilt, O Virgin

Israel."

Through all of Israel's sinful times, God's love never ceased. Through all of our shortcomings, God's love will never cease.

12/27 - Sorrow No More

Jeremiah 31:11-12: For the LORD will ransom Jacob and redeem them from the hand of those stronger than they. They will come and shout for joy on the heights of Zion; they will rejoice in the bounty of the LORD--the grain, the new wine and the oil, the young of the flocks and herds. They will be like a well-watered garden, and they will sorrow no more.

Just like sinful Jacob was ransomed, so are we ransomed by Christ, purchased through His blood so we could be forgiven. We also have been given this promise, that we will be like a well-watered garden and with no need to sorrow ever again.

12/28 - Filled With Bounty

Jeremiah 31:13-14: Then maidens will dance and be glad, young men and old as well. I will turn their mourning into gladness; I will give them comfort and joy instead of sorrow. I will satisfy the priests with abundance, and my people will be filled with my bounty," declares the LORD.

The eternal blessings of God are always the inheritance of God's people in any age.

12/29 - The Child in Whom I Delight

Jeremiah 31:18-20: "I have surely heard Ephraim's moaning: 'You disciplined me like an unruly calf, and I have been disciplined. Restore me, and I will return, because you are the LORD my God. 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.'

Is not Ephraim my dear son, the child in whom I delight? Though I often speak against him, I still remember him. Therefore my heart yearns for him; I have great compassion for him," declares the LORD.

God's love for Ephraim (the nation of Israel) clearly resembles the parable of the prodigal son, and parallels God's love for us.

12/30 - A New Covenant

Jeremiah 31:31-33: "The time is coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people."

This is the covenant of grace under which we live. We are not bound by the letter of the law, but by love of Christ who shed His blood for us.

12/31 - An Amazing Promise Fulfilled

Jeremiah 31:35-36: This is what the LORD says, he who appoints the sun to shine by day, who decrees the moon and stars to shine by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar--the LORD Almighty is his name:

"Only if these decrees vanish from my sight," declares the LORD, "will the descendants of Israel ever cease to be a nation before me."

In this remarkable passage, there is a promise and a prophecy that Israel would always be a nation. It speaks to the love and faithfulness of God that He would make such a promise. It is a proof that God exists and that the Bible is true that this promise has been kept in a time thousands of years later when nearly all of the ethnic nations of that day have been destroyed and that land has been scoured by war repeatedly.