

Northminster Daily Devotions

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Northminster Devotionals

May these devotionals be a blessing to you as we are guided through the daily bible readings from *The One Year Bible*.

This resource has come to you because people from NPC have offered their gifts, to be a blessing to the entire Northminster community, to Tucson and beyond. Don't forget... this entire resource is on our website at www.godmorning.com. So tell your friends!

If you would like to use your God-given talent to become a part of the devotional writing team, call the church at 520-327-7121 and talk to Publications Editor, Jim Peck. This is a very flexible ministry and can be done from anywhere!

The next issue of the Northminster Daily Devotions will be available on Sunday, October 26, 2008.

Cover image: Stowe Community Church, Stowe, Vermont

You will note this new feature beginning in this issue of our daily devotion booklets. A grey box will appear on every page directing you to pray for a particular church, organization or group each day. These come from the Presbyterian Church (USA)'s 2008 Mission Yearbook for Prayer & Study.

I Don't Get It

by Andy Ross

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

Let's begin here: There are so many things I just don't get in life. I don't get how my computer can "search" an internet of information, and show me a testimony written by someone living in China. I don't get how my remote control changes the TV set, or, for that matter, how it makes pictures for me to see. I don't get calculus. I don't get Feng Shui. So many things I don't get... or understand.

But Asaph, who apparently wrote Psalm 73, had a chip on his shoulder; he didn't get how others could be so sleek and successful, when they obviously had their priorities mixed up and were not living righteous, godly lives. And once again, in the brutal honesty of our Bible, a poet goes ranting about "why do good things happen to seemingly bad people?"

But then, did you notice what he does in v17? He walks into the temple of the living God—and he begins to get it. In the sanctuary of God's holy presence, he begins to sense a bigger picture. Isaiah speaks of a bigger picture called hope, and how one day there will be a new Jerusalem, with an everlasting peace. Paul, in Philippians, writes about a friend who risked death in order to serve a bigger picture/purpose. Can you see the bigger picture in our scriptures today that may be difficult to "get" in our own understanding—unless you enter into the holy presence of God? In the presence of grace, offered in Jesus, we don't have to always get it, but simply know that he's got us!

Youth: What are some of the hard questions about life and God with which you struggle? How do you deal with your questions?

Adults: How does prayer and worship affect you with your questions and doubts?

Prayer: Dear Lord, thank you for drawing close to us, especially when we don't understand, but to offer us yourself anyway, and love us anyway. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

***Independent Presbyterian Church of Brazil
United Presbyterian Church of Brazil***

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 2 SCRIPTURE READINGS

Isaiah 66:1-24

Philippians 3:4-21

Psalms 74:1-23

Proverbs 24:15-16

No Great Loss

by Jennifer Monroe

But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.

-Philippians 3:7-9

What do you have? A beautiful home, a bright red sports car, a loving family, a great job, an advanced degree, a lot of money, a starting spot on the basketball team, the newest toy, a flawless church attendance record, a spotless moral character, a great deal of experience, enviable musical skills, a lot of knowledge, a splendid reputation, a head for business, the latest fashions?

Rubbish. Trash. Garbage, says Paul. All of the stuff in the world, all of the good favor of others, all of the accomplishments and degrees and jobs well done, all of these things mean nothing. Nothing, that is, compared with the incredible gift of knowing Christ, for whom you may be required to give it all up. Paul knows what he is talking about. He was a “Hebrew of Hebrews,” the perfect Pharisee, the most zealous protector of the Jewish faith, and a faultless keeper of the law. And yet, he looks at his own life and realizes that all of the things he used to prize he would now consider nothing better than litter, refuse, or junk. Paul had to give up everything that made him who he was, that defined his identity, and yet, when all is said and done, he realizes that none of it is any great loss compared with what he has gained in return. If only all of us could say the same!

Youth: What are some of your most prized possessions? What would you feel like if you had to give them up?

Adults: What are some of the things (material or immaterial) that make you unique? If you had to let them go, what would happen to you?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, may we hold our lives with open hands, grateful for the gifts you have given us, yet understanding that they are as nothing compared with the greatness of knowing you. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

***People in Mission: Joining Hands Against Hunger
Independent Presbyterian Church in Bolivia***

The Sentinel of Your Heart

by Dick Leon

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. -Philippians 4:7

The heart is the centerpiece of our well-being. What, or who, is your heart's protector? What kind of security system do you have against the forces in life that tempt us and attempt to pull us down?

Paul makes an exciting claim in today's text: God's gift of peace will guard our hearts and our minds and keep them in Christ Jesus! The "peace of God" is not something fleeting or flimsy... it is not a wishy-washy gooey sentimental emotion that makes us tingly and warm!

John 14:27 reminds us that the peace Christ brings us is not like the world's peace! It is gutsier, stronger, tougher, more enduring, and powerfully able to keep us secure in all the exigencies of life! I believe the substance of this peace is the sure knowledge, deep in our heart, that God is in control and that God can be trusted with our lives, our futures and our salvation!

The only reliable sentinel of our hearts is this peace of God... it is beyond fully understanding because our little minds cannot wrap themselves around the wonder and glory of God. But, no matter, it is a peace that works by keeping our hearts and our minds centered on the regal person of Jesus Christ.

Life is not easy! But, go ahead, let the rush of the world's ways assault us... they are no match for the peace of God!

Youth: What do you hold on to so that you don't lose your balance or lose your bearings when life gets dicey?

Adults: Have you found anything in your life that is as protective of your heart and mind as the contentment that comes from knowing deep down that God is in control and we are safe in his hands?

Prayer: Mighty and Gracious God, do bestow on us all this wondrous gift of your peace so that our hearts and minds are protected from life's traps! In Christ, our Savior, we pray. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

***Presbyterian Evangelical Church in Chile
Evangelical Theological Community in Chile***

Do You Remember or Have You Forgotten?

by Frank Shallenberger

Does a maiden forget her jewelry, a bride her wedding ornaments? Yet my people have forgotten me, days without number. -Jeremiah 2:32

Through Jeremiah, God asks two rhetorical questions which are as appropriate to us today as they were to those Israelites millennia ago. You and I find it so easy to remember to put on our watches, rings, crosses and other jewelry whenever we leave the house. It seems to be second nature for us. Yet how easy it is, I find, to forget to read our Bible daily, to give thanks before meals, to thank God that we awaken each morning refreshed, to say goodnight to him the very last thing before we close our eyes. Try doing that to your mate one evening. Just like your spouse, God isn't too happy when we do that either.

So many of us say praying is so difficult that they put it off. Yet we can get on our telephone and talk with friends and even acquaintances for long periods of time. Prayer is no different than the conversations with friends except that we are privileged to speak directly to Almighty God, the Creator of the universe; the same God who created us, who loved us so much he died on the cross for us to save us from the just consequences of our life of sin. Father Clinton Fowler, Vicar of St. Michael's and All Angels Episcopal Church, used to say to people "The reason you don't know how to pray is that you never do it."

God has done so very much for us that it is truly sinful if we forget to thank him and speak to him as a son or daughter as he has asked us to do.

Youth: Do you remember your class ring without any trouble but can never seem to remember to pray?

Adults: Have you trained your children and yourselves to say grace before meals, morning and evening prayers and daily "immersion" in Scripture? It's never too late to start.

Prayer: Send the Holy Spirit to us Lord to strengthen us in our determination to remember to offer thanks before meals, to say our morning and evening prayers and spend time in your word. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

Evangelical Institute for Higher Theological Studies (Argentina)

Waldensian Evangelical Church of the River Platte (Uruguay)

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5 SCRIPTURE READINGS

Jeremiah 4:19—6:15

Colossians 1:18—2:7

Psalms 77:1-20

Proverbs 24:23-25

Open Your Heart

by John McKee

The world's greatest love story
Ever recorded by man
That will give us all true peace of mind.

Is the story of Jesus
And the deep love he showed us
Through his self-sacrifice for mankind.

When we consider his love
Is undeserved by us all
We should fall down upon our knees to pray

To have a quiet word with Jesus
Telling how much we need him
Thanking him for his love every day.

There has been so much written
Of this Son of our God
Though he was mortal but for 33 years

His righteous life was exemplary
And his words so profound
Most people are soon moved to tears.

Invite him into your heart,
For he is awaiting your call
Allow Jesus to help see you through.

Do it today... wait no longer,
Open wide your heart's door
Receive the blessings he wants to give you.

Good things begin to happen
In your life you will find
The very moment you accept him as friend.

Allow him to remove from you
The heavy burdens you carry
He'll bring your troubles to an abrupt end.

Let us join in prayer for:

World Communion Sunday

It's Not a False Alarm

by Marshall Worden

I appointed watchmen over you and said, 'Listen to the sound of the trumpet!' But you said, 'We will not listen.' Therefore hear, O nations; observe, O witnesses, what will happen to them. Hear, O earth: I am bringing disaster on this people, the fruit of their schemes, because they have not listened to my words and have rejected my law... But they did not listen or pay attention; instead, they followed the stubborn inclinations of their evil hearts. They went backward and not forward. -Jeremiah 6:17-19; 7:24

It is amazing how easy it is to follow our own, often foolish and bad, impulses rather than listen to and follow wise instruction or proven counsel.

Invariably, at the beginning of a new academic year, I give my best advice to a new student on how to succeed in university life. And very often, the new student's response is more to humor me than to take seriously and do what I suggest. Well, of course, that's the same behavior I've demonstrated too many times in my own life and, so, I shouldn't be surprised.

In Jeremiah, God tries to get our attention and, in fact, the attention of anyone who will listen. He sounds an alarm. He blows a trumpet to stir us from our self-indulgence and evil impulses. But in *The Message*, humankind's response is, "It's a false alarm. It doesn't concern us." Unfortunately, it is a real big deal because God's judgment is at hand. Rather than seeking to grow in Christ and obedience to God, we are often stubborn, willful and more inclined to remain captive to worldly views and ideas. In Jeremiah, the people of Israel go backward. Despite God's efforts to once again get their attention, Israel turns away from God.

Youth: Jesus has excellent advice for you in the Bible. Are you regularly reading the Bible? If you don't have a Bible, ask your parents for one.

Adults: Are you going forward or backward in your faith and relationship with Jesus? What can you do to improve your journey toward God?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I want to be closer to you every day. Thank you for being here for me. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

The Synod of South Atlantic (Florida, Georgia & South Carolina)

How to Live All Day Every Day

by Judy Williams

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience... And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. -Colossians 3:12,17

Paul wrote this letter to the Colossian Christians in response to some difficulties they were having, probably arising from false teaching. He reminded them that God had chosen them and that he loved them, urging them to be compassionate, kind, humble, gentle and patient as well as forgiving of one another. And in verse 13, he stressed the importance of love.

I needed this reminder today. Little irksome details of the daily routine tended to distract my attention and my responses were far from kind, gentle or patient. I momentarily forgot to be humble and loving. I found that I had to ask for forgiveness before the situation could come into proper focus.

Whatever I am doing, whether it be washing the dishes, talking with a friend, answering a telemarketer, tending the garden, driving a carpool, or paying the bills, when I do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus it is easy to give thanks to God the Father for all of my blessings.

Youth: When you do and say things today, will you remember that you are doing and saying them in the name of Jesus? Will that make a difference in how you act?

Adults: Whatever you do and say today, will you remember to do and say it in the name of Jesus, thanking God for your abilities?

Prayer: Dear Father, be with me every moment today, enabling me to maintain an attitude of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, and love. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

Central Florida Presbytery

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8 SCRIPTURE READINGS

Jeremiah 10:1—11:23

Colossians 3:18—4:18

Psalms 78:56-72

Proverbs 24:28-29

Politics As Usual

by Scott Coverdale

Do not learn the ways of the nations... Like a scarecrow in a melon patch, their idols cannot speak; they must be carried because they cannot walk...

-Jeremiah 10:2b,5a

These are the days of the political rage. We are being bombarded by words, promises and clever speeches. It looks more like an advertising campaign beckoning consumers than a conversation about the correct direction to go as a country.

Lest I be misunderstood or thought of as a cynic, I think that everyone of age should go and vote when he or she has the chance. That said, I believe also that we should not place our hope in the political system. Today's verse is about the futility of idolatry. The idols that "the nations" trust in are not going to save us. They are made of wood and imported silver. They are a fraud and there is no breath in them.

Likewise, the idols of modern nations do not have breath in them. Those idols are economic power, military machines, diplomatic maneuvering, and public image. These things do not impress God. If we are to please the Lord, it will be because we live lovingly towards our neighbor, towards those in need, and because we honor God with the reverence in our hearts. There is no policy decision that puts us in good standing with God. There is no political party that can negotiate God's favor.

So let's be good sports about the politics of an election season. Go ahead and educate yourself, make good decisions insofar as good decisions are available to you. Don't get too griped at people that choose differently than you. But then let's commit ourselves to the real business of living in such a way that we bring honor to the true God.

Youth: How is an idol like a scarecrow?

Adults: What are the functions and limits of government and politics? What is the call of faith on our lives, and how is that different?

Prayer: Lord of All, teach us to discern your voice from the cacophony of political and advertisement noise that so dominate the airwaves. Please give us ears to hear and the courage to respond. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

Charleston-Atlantic Presbytery (South Carolina)

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9 SCRIPTURE READINGS

Jeremiah 12:1—14:10

1 Thessalonians 1:1—2:8

Psalms 79:1-13

Proverbs 24:30-34

No Weeds Allowed

by Karen Foss

I went past the field of the sluggard, past the vineyard of the man who lacks judgment; thorns had come up everywhere, the ground was covered with weeds, and the stone wall was in ruins. I applied my heart to what I observed and learned a lesson from what I saw: A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man. -Proverbs 24:30-34

This chapter of Proverbs is chock full of words to the wise and I love the visual of this particular Scripture reading. It's so easy to understand what they're trying to convey to us. Too much sleeping in and nothing gets done around the house. Soon the weeds pop up, paint peels off the house, the roof leaks, dust accumulates, bugs have a field day in the cupboards and the sink is full of dirty dishes! The lazy and foolish lie around and do nothing but the wise person takes care of business and keeps a clean house and yard.

I think the writers are telling us that we need to be just as diligent in our spiritual lives as well. Sure it's hard to come home from work and get ready for bible study group, but then we miss out on discussing God's Word with other Christians. Sunday would be a great day to sleep in but then you'd miss out on an awesome sermon given by any one of our four pastors. It takes a little effort but is so worth it.

We probably all have a little lazy streak in us. We get so much more out of life if we overcome that which drags us down.

Youth: How do you react when you are given chores to do? Do they get done? How about coming to Church? Do you make an effort to do so on a regular basis?

Adults: Is there something in your house or yard that needs attention? How would your spiritual life be enhanced with a bible study or class?

Prayer: Lord, I hope that if you looked at my house, you would be pleased and when you evaluate my life you will be even more pleased. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

Cherokee Presbytery (Georgia)

The Privilege of Planting and Watering

by Jerry Smith

But, brothers, when we were torn away from you for a short time [in person not in thought], we made every effort to see you. For we wanted to come to you—certainly I, Paul, did, again and again—but Satan stopped us. For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory, and joy.

-1 Thessalonians 2:17-20

Paul had a deep and profound love for all those he ministered to. He was so concerned that he consistently wrote letters to them to answer questions and to strengthen their faith and walk with the Lord Jesus. Praise the Lord for these letters for they make up half of the 26 books of the New Testament. Count them, from Romans to Hebrews, 13 letter/books. Let's not split hairs over who wrote Hebrews. Since we aren't sure let's give him the credit.

But, count the rich heritage we have because Paul was restricted from going to them, in person, he gave these deep, soul searching epistles for our spiritual enrichment as well as theirs.

In like manner, I have had the privilege to experience the joy of seeing lives changed by my involvement in Alpha. And you develop a Christ-centered love and concern for these new brothers and sisters in the Lord. Though only being a seed scatterer and/or waterer, watching God and his Spirit create his new sons and daughters is something I will always cherish.

Youth: Have you tried Alpha? It's never too early.

Adults: Have you tried Alpha? You'll find it is every thing you hoped for and a great deal more.

Prayer: Father, we thank you for the opportunities to share in the gardening of souls, but most of all for the increase that only you can provide. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

Flint River Presbytery (Georgia)

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11 SCRIPTURE READINGS

Jeremiah 16:16—18:23

1 Thessalonians 4:1—5:3

Psalms 81:1-16

Proverbs 25:6-8

Where Shall I Sit?

by Anne Price

Do not exalt yourself in the king's presence, and do not claim a place among great men; it is better for him to say to you, "Come up here," than for him to humiliate you before a nobleman. -Proverbs 25:6-7

Let us think of a time that a Bible verse came to mind that changed our actions immediately. Recently I lost my Aunt Flora who was like a mother, sister and admiring friend to me. Every time I went back to San Pedro to see my family I happily visited her. She thought of me as one of her children.

When funeral plans were being made I knew that her children would ask me to sit with the immediate family in the first row. Then Proverb 25 came to my mind. My own adult children would be in attendance sitting further back in the service. I immediately knew that I belonged in the main seating rather than on the front row. Oh yes, my cousins asked me to sit with them. I thanked them but said that I was with them in spirit but would be with my children. I gave one of the eulogies and did not mind walking up a few more rows to the podium.

When we read the Bible over and over again the lessons get into our subconscious to help us make decisions based on God's wisdom, not our own egos.

Thank you Father for your teaching from the Book Of Life.

Youth: Have you ever thought of a Bible verse and saw the lesson in it right away?

Adults: When you read the Bible, do you see how the teachings are relevant to our actions today?

Prayer: Thank you Father, for never leaving us alone. When we do not hear your words through our ears we can read them from your Book. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

The Presbytery of Florida

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12 SCRIPTURE READINGS

Jeremiah 19:1—21:14

1 Thessalonians 5:4-28

Psalms 82:1-8

Proverbs 25:9-10

In My Father's House

by John McKee

After dismissing Judas;
Jesus spoke to the Disciples
To describe what it was like in heaven

As they dined with him
In the "Upper Room"
He had the rapt attention of the eleven.

**"In my Fathers house
Are many mansions."**
To his Disciples Jesus long ago said.

In the still of the night
I imagine all of those places
While lying awake in my bed.

An eternal life of joy
Within those mansions
With loved ones who have passed on before

Shall be the reward
For those who accept Jesus as Lord
To worship, to honor and adore.

We'll meet with him one day
On that beautiful shore
When at last we are called to come home.

And with the Good Shepherd
To serve as our guide,
Through all of those mansions we'll roam.

Let us join in prayer for:

Presbyterian HIV/AIDS Awareness

MONDAY, OCTOBER 13 SCRIPTURE READINGS

Jeremiah 22:1—23:20

2 Thessalonians 1:1-12

Psalms 83:1-18

Proverbs 25:11-14

Are Your Words Pearls?

by Frank Shallenberger

A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver. -Proverbs 25:11

Probably most of the words that come out of our mouths each day are uttered without consideration of the reason and the person to whom we are speaking and most anything else. We are so anxious to let others hear our opinion on all manner of things, to give them an opportunity to admire our wisdom and our knowledge.

Solomon tells us that being careful with what we say, selecting our words with consideration and tact, is a smart thing to do. When our language is suitable and the words we use appropriate for the occasion, the group, the environment, and our respect for others, those who hear us will place a great value upon our speech and the ideas we express with it.

Our remarks are then appreciated as much as a fine piece of jewelry. I have no idea to what he was referring when he said “apples of gold in settings of silver.” But I do know that such an item, whether large enough for a table or small enough for an earring or a pin, would be quite valuable. Wouldn't it be nice to know that others around you appreciate the appropriateness of your remarks and the words with which you express them? This is not an impossible task, it is simply a matter of taking a moment before you utter your ideas to make sure that your words are suitable and appropriate for what you wish to say.

Youth: Are you so anxious to get a word in you don't stop to think?

Adults: Is your speech so rapid and nonstop you are never able to consider words aptly chosen, more suitable for the occasion?

Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus, your words were always chosen with care. Enable us Lord to monitor our speech so that what we say is valued by others as pearls to be cherished and not as trash mail to be discarded as soon as possible. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

Foothills Presbytery (South Carolina)

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 14 SCRIPTURE READINGS

Jeremiah 23:21—25:38

2 Thessalonians 2:1-17

Psalms 84:1-12

Proverbs 25:15

He is Always With Us

by Jennifer Hager

“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. -Jeremiah 23:23-24

The Lord tells his people through Jeremiah that he is present everywhere and in all things. He is with them nearby and far away. He warns them that the false prophets cannot hide in secret places because he fills the heaven and earth.

In this Scripture, the Lord assures us that those who give false prophecy will not escape him. He knows who they are and where they are.

The Scripture also provides us with the promise of God’s presence with us and in us. Sometimes in our worship and in our Bible study and while we are serving the Lord, we feel him with us in a very real way. We rest comfortably in Him as our focus is entirely on him.

Many times I have wished that I could just stay at church, in worship, singing, studying and in the fellowship of other Christians because of God’s presence there. I do not want to go out into the world! It is scary out there!

In this small passage in the Lord’s work, he promises me that he is with me far away too. He abundantly provides me strength when I am far away from his church also.

Youth: Turn to Jesus in prayer when you are lonely or afraid. Do you know he is always with you?

Adults: The Holy Spirit gives us strength to be God’s people even when we are in the world. Have you ever been certain of the Spirit’s presence with you?

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, Almighty God, thank you for the strength you provide me while I live in this world. Help me to see you in everything. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

The Presbytery of Greater Atlanta (Georgia)

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15 SCRIPTURE READINGS

Jeremiah 26:1-27

2 Thessalonians 3:1-18

Psalms 85:1-13

Proverbs 25:16

Shalom!

by Dick Leon

Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you. -2 Thessalonians 3:16

What are the most memorable gifts you've ever been given? I suppose we would all answer this in different ways depending on the ages when we received the gifts. I can still remember walking home from school on my ninth birthday and seeing a brand new red bike waiting for me on the front porch! Wow, was I thrilled!

By contrast, when I turned 70 my kids threw a surprise party for me and presented me with an amazing album with letters from each of them and a whole raft of others whom they had secretly contacted in the preceding months. I was amazed! It was better than the bike!

Well, God has a gift in mind for all of us that is suitable at any and every age of our lives. It is the gift of his peace. The Greek word for peace is ***eirenes*** from which we get the word "irenic" and we use it for someone who promotes peace amongst antagonists. But the richest biblical word for peace is the Hebrew counterpart that appears all through the Old Testament: ***shalom***. Its meaning includes the deep gift of contentment and rest and satisfaction of soul. There is nothing in life that is more precious or more lasting than this rich gift of *shalom* in our lives.

Paul's closing prayer to the believers who lived in a very troubled city and at a very troubled time was a prayer that the Lord of this deep peace would give that same gift of peace at all times and in every way! I like the way Paul tells us that Jesus himself is the Lord of peace so when he gives us *himself* he gives us his *shalom*... a peace that is not just the absence of conflict but the presence of contentment and calm deep within. In these troubled times that is one great gift!

Youth: What keeps your calm in the midst of troubled times?

Adults: Have you found a peace in your life that nothing can shake?

Prayer: Lord of Peace, give yourself to us in every way and at all times so that we know your presence which alone brings lasting peace to our lives. We pray in your precious and peaceful name! Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

The Presbytery of New Harmony (South Carolina)

Living Out Our Calling

by Marie Ruiz

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service... Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight, holding on to faith and a good conscience. -1 Timothy 1:12, 18-19a

Each of us has been called by God. That in itself is an awesome thought, that the creator of everything would think that I have value and that he has called me for a purpose. We sometimes overlook this incredible thought and underestimate what God can accomplish in and through us.

For Timothy, his calling was clear to him and to those around him: as a young man the elders had laid hands on him delivering a prophetic message regarding his call to ministry. Our calling is not without difficulties because of the very nature of the world in which we reside. It is a fallen world, and we are susceptible to errors in judgment when we are not fully committed to understanding the call that God has upon our life. Timothy had to make plain to those still stuck in traditions that ran contrary to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the work accomplished on the cross for all who believe. This was no easy task.

Yet, we have the freedom today to live according to the call that we have received; in doing so, we will cause others to see how to live this life of faith with good conscience. This is the testimony that we can have in this fallen world. This is the testimony that we have like Timothy, a true son in the faith. We must hold on to the faith, following hard after God so that we, like Timothy, can do so with a pure heart and a good conscience.

Youth: When you are urged by friends to do something wrong, do you speak up and share why you can't in good conscience do wrong?

Adults: Are you living out your calling in this world? Do your children see Christ in you?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, may we seek you first in everything so that the actions that follow will be a witness to you and the strength you provide for us to live life with a good conscience through faith. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

World Food Day

Praying for the Powerful

by Jennifer Monroe

I urge then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. 1 Timothy 2:1-2

At first glance, Paul's direction to Timothy seems innocuous enough: Pray for everyone, including kings, rulers, and all those in authority. Simple, right? As Christians it is our duty to pray for others.

This sounds pretty straightforward until you realize that the ruler of the Roman world at this time was the notorious emperor Nero. That's right. The Nero who murdered his mother, who reportedly fiddled while his capitol city burned to the ground, and who began the systematic persecution of Christians. If you were Timothy, you had to be thinking to yourself, "Come on Paul, you've got to be kidding me.

Sure, I'll pray for my friends and family, I'll even pray for people far away who are in need. But pray for *everyone*? Including the pagan Roman authorities who have made it their goal to make our lives miserable? That's going a bit far." It's relatively easy to pray for our leaders when we agree with the decisions they're making and we think that they are men and women of courage and high moral character. It's much more difficult when they prove themselves to be selfish, corrupt tyrants. Notice that Paul says to pray *for* (or *on behalf of*) everyone, not just *about* them. He emphasizes in verses three and four that this kind of prayer pleases God because he wants "all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth." That includes leaders like Nero, Hitler, Stalin, Robert Mugabe, and Kim Jong-il.

What might happen if Christians everywhere added some of our world's leaders to their prayer lists and interceded for their ultimate blessing and good?

Youth: Who is someone you know for whom you can pray?

Adults: Does the thought of praying on behalf of a notorious dictator make you uncomfortable? Why?

Prayer: God, we lift up to you all the leaders of our world, those whom we admire and those who seem to be instruments of evil, that all men may be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

Northeast Georgia Presbytery

What Did I Just Read?

by Judy Williams

If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. In doing this you will heap burning coals on his head, and the Lord will reward you. -Proverbs 25:21-22

At first reading, this passage was a puzzle for me. I certainly understood the first portion regarding giving help to an enemy in need. But the words "... heap burning coals on his head..." did not seem to be an action worthy of the Lord's reward!

So, consulting several other Bible translations was helpful for me.

The *Good News Bible* which belonged to my son when he was a teenager has it: "You will make him burn with shame, and the Lord will reward you." My *Living Bible* translates the passage: "This will make him feel ashamed of himself and God will reward you." Peterson's *The Message* said: "Your generosity will surprise him with goodness, and God will look after you." That made sense to me!

Then I remembered that in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven." And in his letter to the Romans, Paul encouraged them to "overcome evil with good."

Sometimes Scripture passages can be confusing, but when we prayerfully seek guidance from the Holy Spirit, the meaning will become clear to us. When at first you don't succeed: pray and ask that God would help you make sense of what you read: clearly all you need to know.

Youth: If a Bible passage is confusing to you, where can you go to find answers?

Adults: When a passage in Scripture seems unclear, do you scan over it quickly and skip to something that does make sense to you, or do you take the time to "dig deeper" to find out more?

Prayer: Dear Father, We treasure your gift to us of the Holy Bible and long to understand fully every word you have given us. Open our eyes and hearts to true understanding. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

Peace River Presbytery (Florida)

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19 SCRIPTURE READINGS

Jeremiah 33:1—34:22

1 Timothy 4:1-16

Psalms 89:1-13

Proverbs 25:23-24

The Fishermen

by John McKee

“Follow me,” said Jesus
To the two men fishing,
“And I will make you fishers of men.”

Simon Peter and Andrew
Then left their nets
To help Jesus save mankind from sin.

They didn't stop to weigh
The pros & the cons
About whether or not they should go.

Both immediately
Followed after the Savior.
Where he would take them they did not know.

What would we do,
Given the same circumstance,
If Jesus were to tell us today,

“Take up your cross and follow me now,
“Help me to show
“Lost sinners the Way?”

Would we be like the brothers,
Andrew and Peter,
Who left everything to be at his side?

Or would we tell him thanks,
But we'll think it over.
That we need more time to decide?

I would hope that we'd run
To his gentle call.
Eager to help him sow his Gospel Seed!

For we can all be assured
That he asks us each day
To help him serve others in need.

Let us join in prayer for:

Children's Sabbath

MONDAY, OCTOBER 20 SCRIPTURE READINGS

Jeremiah 35:1—36:32

1 Timothy 5:1-25

Psalms 89:14-37

Proverbs 25:25-27

Are Our Youth Encouraged?

by Frank Shallenberger

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. -1 Timothy 4:12

When I was a boy my dad used to tell me, "He who lives the longest knows the most." The idea was that most people who had lived for many years had experienced more of life and would be able to handle the situations that arose better than a youngster.

The future of the Christian Church has been passed on from the older generations to the younger generations for millennia. The youth of today will be the leaders of tomorrow. As we adults look about our church membership we see people of all ages; babes in arms, children, adolescents, teenagers, young adults, adults of middle-age and us old folks.

It's a tendency for many of us when we see young people taking active parts in our worship services to feel some resentment because of their youth, the pitches of their speech, the rapidity of their expressions and their manner of dress. Things were no different in the early Church. That's a reason why Paul wrote those words above. He was advising young people in the church to be careful of their speech and their expressions, their actions, how they cared for one another and respected people of all ages in the communion, how active they were in attending services and activities here at the church and their lives when not at church.

Youth: You are destined to be the leaders of the church of the future. This is a task not to be looked upon lightly. Are you trying to live your life as an example to us who are older than you?

Adults: Do you encourage your children to prepare for the role of leaders in the church of the twenty-first century? Do you guide them in matters of speech, dress, morals and faith?

Prayer: Jesus, you love children. Fill our hearts with the wisdom and desire to encourage the younger members of our church to take active parts in the church at every level. We ask this in your precious name. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

Providence Presbytery (South Carolina)

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21 SCRIPTURE READINGS

Jeremiah 37:1—38:28

1 Timothy 6:1-21

Psalms 89:38-52

Proverbs 25:28

Make Your Face Shine Upon Us

by John Charles Cheek

Restore us, O God Almighty; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved. -Psalm 80:7

I remember being stranded at a campsite once when I was a teenager. A group of my friends and I had gone on a week-long horseback trip in the Chiricahua Mountains. A powerful storm blew in and raised the creeks so that it wasn't possible for us, or my parents who had brought us supplies, to get out. As we were making our way to higher and safer ground, I was stunned by the beauty of the sun as it shone brightly on a canyon wall far above us. That lovely sight, occurring in the midst of a tough situation for us, signaled hope to me.

God never promises us that our lives will be comfortable. He promises that he will not abandon us. His renewing presence is the hope of our salvation

Youth: Think of a time that you were afraid. God was with you, even if you didn't know it.

Adults: What are the times and places in your life that cause you to struggle or fear? How can the prayer in Psalm 80:7 impact that?

Prayer: Restore us, O God Almighty; make your face shine upon us, that we might be saved. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

The Presbytery of St. Augustine (Florida)

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 22 SCRIPTURE READINGS

Jeremiah 39:1—41:18

2 Timothy 1:1-18

Psalms 90:1—91:16

Proverbs 26:1-2

Tariri

by Dick Leon

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." -Psalm 91:1-2

While in college, I spent a summer mission trip with the Wycliffe Bible Translators in Peru. We lived in grass huts at their jungle base on the banks of Lake Yarina Cocha in the Amazon basin. We helped support their outreach to some of the most primitive tribes in the world. When we swam in it every evening, we had to watch for piranha that were drawn to any blood from any cuts! It made for an exciting swim!

The chief of one tribe was brought to the base to share in an anniversary celebration with government officials. His tribe was known for shrinking heads of their enemies and wearing them on their belt! I'll never forget his speech (translated into English and Spanish for the gathering) in which he told of his former life of smoking their home grown weeds and drinking their home brewed beer and killing anyone who dared to offend them. His name was Tariri.

Tariri used Psalm 91 in his testimony, saying that when he turned his life over to Jesus Christ he found that God provided him a new shelter and now he lives under the shadow of the Almighty rather than by the power of his blow gun! He moved his whole tribe from killers into peaceful people who learned to forgive rather than pass on violence from one offense to another and from one generation to another. I learned a great lesson that summer from Tariri: it makes a difference in how we deal with conflict when we trust the Lord and make him our refuge and our fortress!

Youth: Have you discovered that the Lord is a better refuge and fortress than your own strength?

Adults: What are the changes in your life since you became a Christian?

Prayer: Almighty Lord, thank you for being a shelter for our lives and for granting us a life of goodness and peace unlike anything we could ever find were we to put our trust in anyone or anything else! Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

Savannah Presbytery (Georgia)

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23 SCRIPTURE READINGS

Jeremiah 42:1—44:23

2 Timothy 2:1-21

Psalms 92:1-93

Proverbs 26:3-5

Dolphins

by Scott Coverdale

God's Word is not chained. -2 Timothy 2:9

A while ago, my family was down in Rocky Point, Mexico, for a little beach vacation with some friends. These friends also have a sea kayak, which my boys and I like to take out into the water on an early morning. One such morning, I was out with Brandon on the kayak, and a pod of dolphins came up around our little boat. We were very excited to see the sleek animals come up again and again. It was a little funny to try to follow them as they cruised for breakfast, because we never knew exactly where they were going to surface next. They would come up for air, descend into the deep blue sea, and come up again fifty or a hundred feet away. Sometimes, we would be in the right spot—other times we would have paddled in the wrong direction, and would have to change course to get back to the amazing animals.

Today, Paul is writing about how although he is imprisoned in chains for teaching the gospel, the gospel itself, Christ, the Word, is not in chains at all. Sometimes popular culture tries to make it appear old-fashioned and irrelevant. Sometimes governments try to repress faith and the churches themselves try to get the gospel nailed down and safe and predictable. But like those free-swimming dolphins in the ocean, the gospel of Christ is not going to be managed out of existence or managed into predictable patterns. The gospel, the good news, is that we can have a relationship with God through Christ, and that is a living thing, an ever-changing, ever-growing relationship. This does not lend itself to formulation and is not subject to social, political or religious controls. The best we can do is to follow that gospel wherever it may lead us.

Youth: Is God more like a fish in an aquarium or a dolphin in the sea? Why?

Adults: Has your relationship to Christ ever led you in a surprising direction? How did you feel about that, and what did you do with that leading?

Prayer: Lord God, please give us faith and courage to follow you wherever you might lead us in our lives. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

The Presbytery of Tampa Bay (Florida)

Bible Study

by Jerry Smith

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. -2 Timothy 3:16-17

I'm certainly not the last word on Bible study but I thought I might share some thoughts with you.

1. I will take the particular Scripture I'm interested in and read it in several or all of the six different translations we have in our home.
2. I'll use a good reference Bible and look up key words and thoughts in companion verses such as, [God-breathed]; "Knowing this that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:20-21).
3. I believe the Bible is the best commentary we have on the Bible. By studying it in this manner we become more familiar with the Bible and see how it is one book consisting of the Old and New Testaments, all tied together.
4. I also believe that the Bible "... is alive and active, sharper than a surgeons scalpel" (Hebrews 4:11 Petersen). Therefore, as we search the Scriptures and listen to the God's Word he can speak to us. Please don't misunderstand what I'm saying. I do believe God speaks to people who write commentaries on Scripture. But my contention is that he wants to speak to you now, today and his best method to do that is as you delve into his Word.

Youth: Do you shy away from reading the Bible? Ask God to open it up to you by his Spirit.

Adults: How much time do you spend feeding your soul on God's Word? It takes time to be holy.

Prayer: Father you have given us the mind of Christ so let us use it to study Your Word. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

Trinity Presbytery (South Carolina)

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25 SCRIPTURE READINGS

Jeremiah 48:1—49:22

2 Timothy 4:1-22

Psalms 95:1—96:13

Proverbs 26:9-12

Unlikely Evangelist

by Anne Price

But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry. -2 Timothy 4:5

In this verse the Apostle Paul is charging Timothy to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with others no matter what.

I have been impressed by some of our well-known evangelists, like Billy Graham, Greg Laurie and Rick Warren. Yet, there have been individual people who truly shared God's truth through Jesus Christ that have changed my life on earth and into eternity.

Let me introduce them to you: Poppa Orbie Daniel, my father in law who didn't get past the eighth grade in DeKalb, Texas. The only book in his home was the Bible. Yet, he told me and showed me the truth of following Jesus Christ in his words and in his every day walk.

I was new in Houston, Texas and felt very alone. When attending a church service a lovely lady sitting next to me introduced herself to me as Maxine Poplin. When she saw my loneliness she offered to share the Bible with her once a week at her home. That was my very first true Bible study.

Over the years I have shared the Good News with individuals. Some may have gone on to know Jesus Christ and some just were not ready at that time. I have learned to put the results in the hands of God. However, we are ordered as was Timothy to do the work of an evangelist. Please note that the title is not capitalized. Each one of us can be an "Unlikely Evangelist." Who can we tell next?

Youth: Have you shared your belief in Jesus Christ with a friend?

Adults: Do you recognize an opportunity to tell another about how Jesus Christ has changed your life?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, please do not let me be hesitant about sharing the Good News with others? Please prepare my mind so that my mouth will open. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

The Presbytery of Tropical Florida

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26 SCRIPTURE READINGS

Jeremiah 49:23—50:46

Titus 1:1-16

Psalm 97:1—98:9

Proverbs 26:13-16

End of the Age

by John McKee

In describing the last days
The Apostle Paul wrote,
“Evil men shall wax worse and worse.”

Jesus warns of the same thing
In Matthew Twenty Four
Beginning with the fourth verse.

**“Take heed that no one
Leads you astray.
For many will come in my name**

Saying, ‘I am the Christ’”

Jesus said to disciples
When to the Mount of Olives they came

**“And you will hear of wars
And rumors of wars;
“See that you are not alarmed;”**

**“For this must take place,
“But the end is not yet.”**
The Lord Jesus, our Savior, then warned.

The evil unleashed
By Satan on earth
Is to increase as end times draw near

But we Christians draw strength
Knowing Christ shall return
And our joy overcomes all our fear

**“What no eye has seen
“Nor ear has heard,
“Nor heart of man has conceived.**

**“What God has prepared
“For those who love him.”**
Paul quoted to those who believed.

Let us join in prayer for:

Reformation Sunday

MONDAY, OCTOBER 27 SCRIPTURE READINGS

Jeremiah 51:1 –53

Titus 2:1-15

Psalm 99:1-9

Proverbs 26:17

Rejoice for Grace and Hope!

by Marie Ruiz

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. -Titus 2:11-14

This wonderful verse in Titus should be a comfort to all Christians regardless of your present circumstances. It talks about the grace we have received when we trusted Christ and how that grace provided the work of salvation for our souls. But it also refers to something that we don't often think about. It is this same grace that protects us and gives us the ability to live a blameless life here on earth while we wait for the glorious appearing of our Lord, Jesus Christ. God's grace provides for us an escape from those things that would tempt us to resort to ungodly living.

This verse also points to the hope we have in our Lord's return. Not a “hope it happens” kind of hope, but an expectant hope, with the full knowledge and assurance that it *will* happen in the Lord's timing. And we can be sure His timing is always perfect! Praise God!

If ever there is reason to rejoice and sing our praises to God it's now! We have that blessed hope. And by his grace we can live the kind of life that Christ intends for us to live right now here on earth. That is reason to rejoice!

Youth: Did you ever think about what “grace” and “hope” mean? Look these words up in a Bible dictionary and talk to your parents about what these words mean for you.

Adults: When did you truly understand what grace and hope meant for you? Do you think about these words and their meaning in your life even now?

Prayer: Lord how can we thank you enough for the grace and hope that we have in you? Help us to rejoice and in our rejoicing tell others about this saving grace and assured hope of your return. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

The Synod of Southern California and Hawaii

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28 SCRIPTURE READINGS

Jeremiah 51:54—52:34

Titus 3:1-15

Psalms 100:1-5

Proverbs 26:18-19

Do You Worship the Lord with Gladness?

by Frank Shallenberger

Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. -Psalm 100:1-2

Each time I read this Psalm I can't help but feel happiness throughout my whole body. David says "all the earth," meaning each and every one of us here on this earth. He is talking to you and me. We need to shout for joy to the Lord. Have you ever felt like doing that? When I think of all the blessings God gives me each and every day of my life I want to "shout for joy" to the Lord. My whole heart and soul rejoices. My God is so good to me. When there is a task I need to perform and I am unable to do it by myself I call upon him and he helps me. Alone, I can do nothing. With Christ I can do anything.

"Worship the Lord with gladness!" My wife and I do this each and every day of our lives. We don't consider it a chore. It is a time of blessing for both of us. We pray aloud and read the daily devotional. I can't imagine the creator getting much of anything out of that but we, the created, are immensely enriched. We never experience anything but an upbeat feeling when our time of devotion, joyful worship, is over.

David surely knew what he was doing when he wrote "Come before him with joyful songs, shout for joy to the Lord." I can no longer sing a song of any kind, joyful or not, but I surely can shout for joy to the Lord. When we gather in congregational worship while others lend their voices in joyful songs, I am shouting to myself with joy to the Lord.

Youths: Are you happy to be in Church on Sundays? Do you worship the Lord with gladness?

Adults: Do you feel like shouting to the Lord when you get up in the morning? Do you ever shout with joy to the Lord?

Prayer: Almighty God and father, give us the grace we need to experience such joy in our lives that we too might shout for joy to you from whom all blessings flow. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

Hanmi Presbytery (Korean-American non-geographic)

Extending Forgiveness

by Lisa Grenier

So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me. I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back—not to mention that you owe me your very self. —Philemon 1:17-19

Today's key verses come from a letter Paul wrote to Philemon, a prominent church member who came to know Christ through Paul's ministry. Philemon owned a slave named Onesimus who had run away from his master. Like many runaway slaves, Onesimus fled to Rome and was also led to Christ by Paul. Although Paul longed for him to stay in Rome. He knew that this slave needed to straighten things out with his master. Since a runaway slave could expect severe punishment, even death, Paul appealed to Philemon to be merciful. He asked that Onesimus be forgiven and received as a Christian brother. Paul offers restitution owed by Onesimus so that the slave and his master could be reconciled. Since Paul had led Philemon to the Lord where he received forgiveness for his sins (among many other priceless gifts), Philemon owed his spiritual life to the word of God preached by Paul. The new hearts given to these men by God and the realization of how much they had each been forgiven paved the way to reconciliation between Christian brothers, master and slave.

Paul's letter reminds us to forgive since we, like Philemon, have been forgiven so much more than any debt we would ever have to forgive! Jesus reconciled us to the Father when our sins were charged to him and he paid our penalty. Like Philemon, because we have been forgiven so greatly, we need to forgive others!

Youth: Do you truly understand how much God has forgiven you? Now can you more easily forgive others?

Adults: Thank Jesus for the reconciliation he made possible for you. How do you settle a conflict with a Christian brother or sister?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for paying the penalty for my sins so that I could be reconciled to God. Please keep me ever mindful of how much I have been forgiven so that I can extend forgiveness to others. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

The Presbytery of Los Ranchos (California)

Relationship Building

by Deb Van Scoyk

“And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God’s angels worship him”... To which of the angels did God ever say, “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet?” -Hebrews 1:6, 13

I had occasion recently to meet a group of people from many varied backgrounds. A couple of these folks had been previously described to me by friends I trusted so I, of course, had some preconceived notions of what I might expect of these new acquaintances. Since I knew absolutely nothing about the others, however, our relationship began from a vantage point of curiosity and inquisitiveness—a position I much prefer as it negates judgment and expectation.

In reading today’s Scripture, I could not help but marvel at the notions we might all have formed about Jesus at some point in our lives. With God’s adoration of his Son clearly expressed and instilled in our hearts, how could we, mere mortals, have the audacity to presume that Jesus would find us worthy of a relationship? If the angels were to worship him, how could our love, by comparison, have any merit? If Jesus was to ultimately sit at God’s right hand, why would he care about a relationship with us?

We know that “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son,” but perhaps our Lord made the love of Jesus even more profound by placing him above all else, imparting and communicating his own adoration of Jesus; then making Jesus completely accessible, in spite of any notions we might have formed, by granting us the gift of relationship with Jesus as a means to eternal life.

Youth: Do you tell Jesus how much you love him every day?

Adults: Knowing that God’s angels worship Jesus, how can we fail to fall on our knees in adoration?

Prayer: Lord, above all else, we thank you for the gift of our Jesus. We revel in his companionship, find peace in our growing relationship, and anticipate with joy meeting him face-to-face. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

The Presbytery of the Pacific (California and Hawaii)

Bless the Lord, O My Soul

by Karen Foss

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. The Lord works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed. He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel: the Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.-Psalm 103:1-8

Count yourself very lucky if you've ever heard Jerry Smith recite this Psalm. He gave the closing prayer at one of our small group bible studies and used Psalm 103. As I listened to his soft voice, I don't think I was the only one in the room with goose bumps. I had read this Psalm before but Jerry's way of reading it made it so much more meaningful.

With everything going on in our lives, it's important to take the time to thank God and praise him for all he's done in our lives.

I love the footnote interpretation in my Life Application Bible. It reads in part "David's list gives us plenty for which to praise God—he forgives our sins, heals our diseases, redeems us from death, crowns us with love and compassion, satisfies our desires, and gives righteousness and justice. We receive all of these without deserving any of them. No matter how difficult your life's journey, you can always count your blessings—past, present, and future."

Youth: Do you take the time to thank your parents for the things they do for you? Do you thank your Heavenly Father for the blessings in your life?

Adults: Are you ever mindful of the many blessings in your life? Do you thank your Creator for them?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me remember each day to thank you for all that you have given me. I know that I don't deserve a tenth of blessings you've bestowed on me. Amen.

Let us join in prayer for:

The Presbytery of Riverside (California)

Friends of Job

by John McKee

"You'd try the patience of Job!"

My dear mother would say
When we children got out of hand.

But back then we were small
And unaware *who* Job was
Of course today, we all understand.

Job's reputation for patience
Was to become legend
When God spoke to Satan one day

He said Job was blameless.
A good man who feared him
Who was upright in every way.

A righteous man of strong faith,
Job trusted in God,
For he had been blessed by his Grace.

Satan said Job's faith would falter
If bad times befell him
And he would curse God to his face.

God allowed Satan to attack Job
Just to prove him wrong,
With the caveat... *do not take his life.*

Satan destroyed the possessions
Of this God-fearing man,
Plus the children of he and his wife.

He afflicted him with sores
From his head to his feet
Yet, his God Job refused to deny.

His wife proffered bad advice
To poor Job in his torment
When she said to him, "*... Curse God and die!*"

Three friends heard of his troubles
And they came to see him
To offer solace during his time of grief.

They sat in silence with Job
For seven days and nights
But alas, did not afford him relief.

For his self-righteous friends
Placed the blame upon him,
Even for the loss of his health.

After repenting and praying
God restored to Job twofold
His family, his property and wealth.



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