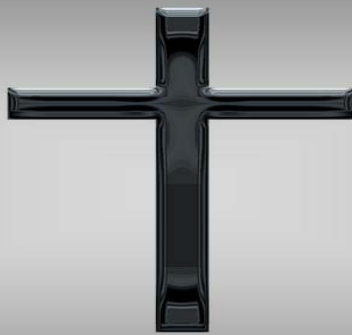
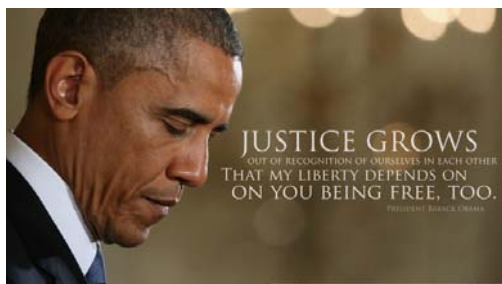


THE CROSS



“A CHURCH WHERE EVERYBODY IS SOMEBODY AND CHRIST IS LORD OF ALL”



A Prayer For Justice

Devotional Reading:
Psalm 73:1-3, 21-28.

Background Scripture:
Habakkuk 1

EXALT!

DECLARATION:
Habakkuk 1:1-4, 12-14

¹ *The oracle that the prophet Habakkuk saw.*

The Prophet's Complaint
² O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not listen? Or cry to you “Violence!” and you will not save? ³ Why do you make me see wrongdoing and look at trouble? Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise. ⁴ So the law becomes slack and justice never prevails. The wicked surround

(Justice Prayed on page 11)

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2020
Volume 24 Issue 6

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Visit our
Facebook page

Prayers on La Playa

Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted. Psalm 148:13

Psalm 148

1 Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights above. 2 Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his heavenly hosts. 3 Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars. 4 Praise him, you highest heavens and you waters above the skies. 5 Let them praise the name of the Lord, for at his command they were created, 6 and he established them for ever and ever— he issued a

(La Playa on page 10)

Justice

Lets take a few moments to discuss the subject of justice. In the book of Job, a very important question is raised. Doth God pervert judgment? or doth the Almighty pervert justice?

Of course, we know the answer is no. “Gods justice is pure, perfect, and also very timely.” (Job 8:3)

Job further tells us. “Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict.” (Job 37:23)

(Justice page 14)

If Justice Denied is Justice Delayed, Then What is Justice Misplaced?

There is a story in the national news that has been drowned out by the more dramatic events of this year, which I want to bring to your attention. Yes, the story of Covid-19 pandemic and its devastation and disruption of national and global lives has captured our attention much more than any other story. In addition, the uproar over national, local and domestic social and racial tension has taken over part of our collective attention. Not to mention the

fact that this is a presidential election year which, inevitably, comes with a lot of noise and rhetoric hard to ignore.

That story begins with a journey for justice that turned into a love story. You may have read somewhere that Maya Moore, one of the W.N.B.A.'s brightest stars, had married a person she helped to free from prison.

(Justice Denied on page 12)



From The Pastor's Desk

Dear Beloved Member(s),

Greetings in the Name of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

I write to thank you for all your prayers and participation in service during this Pandemic with love and immense appreciation. You have demonstrated great faith, love, and loyalty for Christ and His Church.

With Christ as our helper, we will press forward in faith and rise above this Pandemic. We weep with those who have had loved ones to pass during this season. We rejoice in knowing that those who die in the Lord will rest from their labors and the Spirit says their work will follow.

There is nothing in the world, like the comfort and encouragement of family and friends. They are blessings from God that hold us up when we feel that we cannot walk alone. With this sentiment in mind, we have planned for Sunday, November 22, at 4:00 P.M. Family and Friends Day at the Cross. The celebration will be a Zoom Service.

There will be a memorable sermon from our Bishop, The Right Reverend Dennis V. Proctor. We look forward to sharing with members who have relocated, Wesleyan Graduates, and our many family members and friends from every corner of the country.

It is at this time each year; we give a sacrificial offering to help the church finish strong financially for the year. The need is much greater because we have not been able to come together on Sunday in the sanctuary for worship and have consistent giving of tithes and offerings from the membership. We have not been able to have special events, rental of the facility, and other income stream opportunities.

For the most part, you have been extraordinary in your giving and responding to the needs to keep the church going in a Pandemic. It is through your generosity that we are able to bless families and help those in need in the community.

Let's pray and give. If you are unable to give at this time, we understand and thank you for supporting this event in other ways. We are seeking a record day of giving and attendance. Much love to all from the Pastor and First Lady.

This event has more significance as we look to Christ, our helper, and the sustainer.

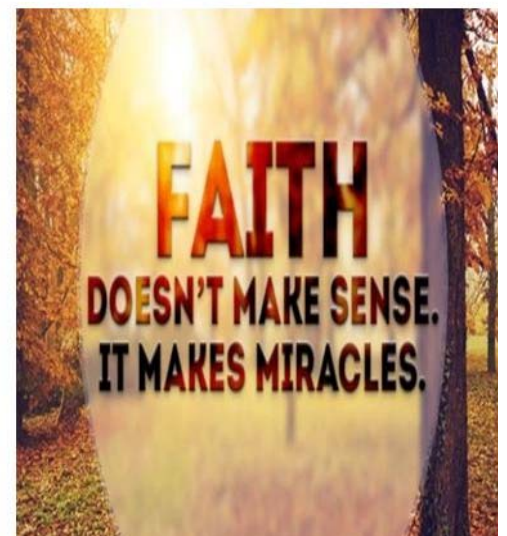
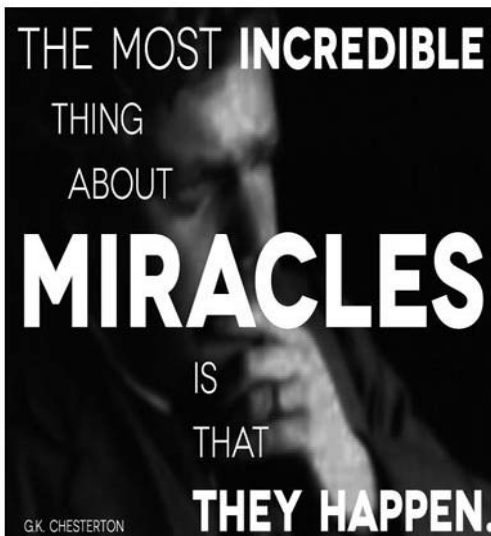
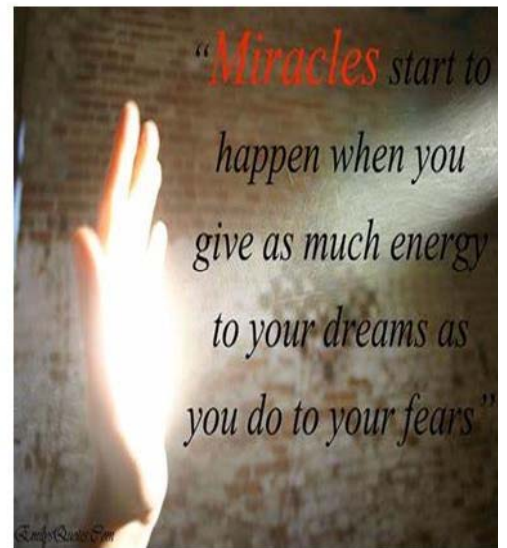
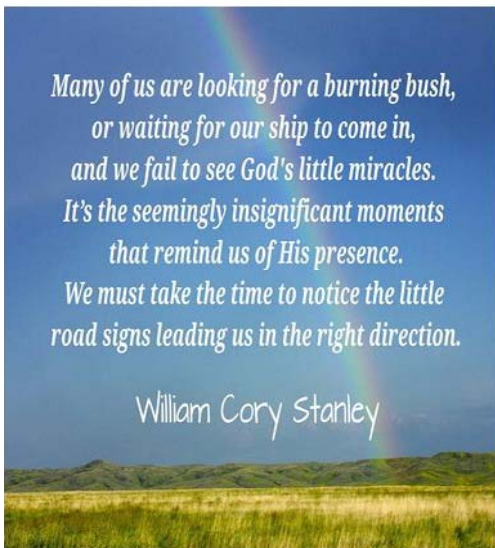
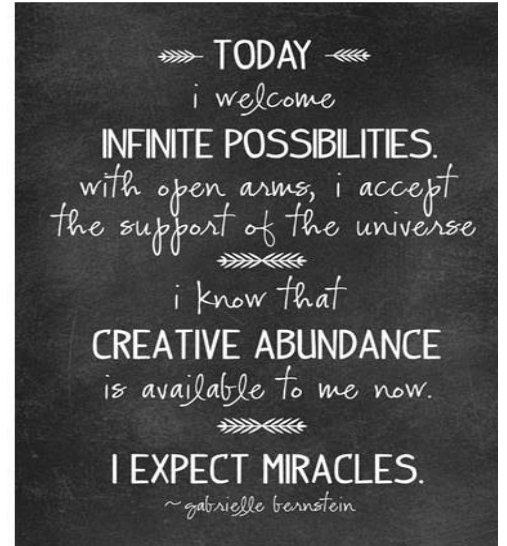
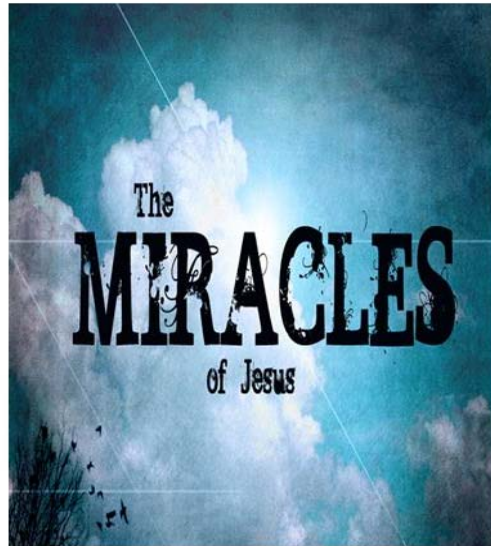
Faithfully yours,

Pastor Harvill

Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together! Psalm 34.3

2020 Vision

The Year of Expected "Miracles"



The fruit of the Spirit abides in us and it is up to us to cultivate it so that we may experience the blessing and the fullness of the Spirit. God is the husbandman..."He prunes, nurtures, waters and protects His own. The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit will energize and control every faculty of our nature when our will joins the will of God. Then the "beauty of the Lord will be upon us" (Psalm 90:17) and "we shall bring forth fruit unto God" (Romans 7:4)."

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

"But the fruit of the Spirit is LOVE, JOY, PEACE, LONGSUFFERING, GENTLENESS, GOODNESS, FAITH, MEEKNESS, TEMPERANCE: against such there is no law." (Galatians 5:22, 23)

The fruit of the Spirit abides in us and it is up to us to cultivate it so that we may experience the blessing and the fullness of the Spirit. God is the husbandman..."He prunes, nurtures, waters and protects His own. The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit will energize and control every faculty of our nature when our will joins the will of God. Then the "beauty of the Lord will be upon us" (Psalm 90:17) and "we shall bring forth fruit unto God" (Romans 7:4)."

The fruit of LOVE when properly motivated "is pure, far reaching, forgiving. There is no limit to the good that LOVE does. God is LOVE. (I John 4:7)

JOY never fades, it is never destroyed by circumstances, it is unaffected by wealth or poverty, sickness or health. It is found in the presence of God (Psalm 16:11)

PEACE "is a tranquility of mind as a result of a right relationship with God". The PEACE of God in our hearts challenges sin at every turn and deals with it immediately in order to maintain that right relationship. (Ephesians 2:14)

LONG-SUFFERING means steadfastness of the soul under provocation. It means forbearance and patient endurance of ill-treatment, without anger or thought of revenge. (Colossians 3:12, 13)

GENTLENESS is sweet reasonableness, calmness and graciousness. It calms troubled waters, settles turmoil and heals strife. (James 3:17)

GOODNESS does good to others. It is kindness of heart and good deeds. It may not always be a gentle word, but a stern rebuke done for the good of someone else. (Psalm 33:5)

MEEKNESS disarms the stormy, tempestuous person. The qualities of mildness and gentleness in dealing with others. It is not weak. It is a high quality of spiritual strength. (I Timothy 6:11)

FAITH means faithfulness to Christ and His cause. It manifests itself in being a trustworthy steward of God. It is trust and obedience, belief in God's word and promises. (Hebrews 11:1)

TEMPERANCE is power, it is strength, having self-control. It means discipline. It provides balance to the Christian's life. It enables him to praise Him whether in discipline or testing. (Proverbs 11:1) (Information taken in part from World-Wide Keswick publication and Holy Scriptures)

Satan tries to imitate the real thing with an artificial fruit. As you can see, the artificial fruit is very much like the real thing and if we are not careful, we can fall into the trap of expressing limited love, temporary joy, numbness, insensitivity, manipulation, hypocrisy, half-heartedness, false modesty and choosing lesser goals.

THE FRUIT, *The Artificial Fruit,* **The Weed**

LOVE, *limited love*, **hatred**; JOY, *temporary JOY*, **sorrow**; PEACE, *numbness, carelessness*, **anxiety strife**;
PATIENCE, *laziness, insensitivity*, **impatience**; KINDNESS, *manipulation by kindness*, **pride**;
GOODNESS, *hypocrisy*, **evil**; F A I T H F U L N E S S, *half-heartedness*, **infidelity**;
MEEKNESS, *false modesty*, **self-seeking**; SELF-CONTROL, *choosing lesser goals*, **lack of control**
(The Fruit of the Spirit, John W. Sanderson)

Prayer—90 devotions from Our Daily Bread Compiled by Dave Branon

CRUMBS OF TIME

Read: Daniel 6:10-23

Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. Daniel 6:10

A friend was coming to town. He is a very busy man and his schedule was tight, but after a difficult day in important meetings, he managed to see my family for half an hour for a late dinner. We enjoyed his visit, but I remember looking at my plate and thinking, "We only got the crumbs of his time."

Then I remember how many times God gets the crumbs of my time—sometimes just the last minutes before I fall asleep.

Daniel was a busy man. He held a high government position in the ancient kingdom of Babylon, and I'm sure he had a full schedule. However, he had developed the habit of spending time with God—praying three times a day, praising God, and thanking Him. This routine helped him develop a strong faith that did not waver when he faced persecution (Daniel 6).

God desires a relationship with us. In the morning we can invite Him into our day, and then we can praise Him and ask Him for His help throughout the day. At other times we can treasure some time alone with Him and reflect on His faithfulness. As we spend time with God in prayer and in His Word, we grow in our relationship with Him and learn to become more and more like Him.

As time with God becomes a priority, we enjoy His company more and more. -Keila Ocha

Prayer Tip: Get away as Jesus did (Luke 5:16).

DOING OUR PART

Read: 2 Kings 20:1-7

I have heard your prayer...I will heal you. On the third day from now you will go up to the temple of the Lord. 2 Kings 20:5

A runner at a school track meet crossed the finish line just ahead of his nearest rival. A bystander, noticing that the winner's lips were moving during the last couple of laps, wondered what he was saying. So he asked him about it. "I was praying," the runner answered. Pointing to his feet, he said, "I was saying, 'You pick 'em up, Lord, and I'll put 'em down,'" "That athlete prayed for God's help, but he also did what he could to answer his own prayer.

When we ask God for help, we must be willing to do whatever we can, using whatever means He gives. When Hezekiah heard that he was going to die, he prayed for a miracle, and God promised to extend his life fifteen years. Then Isaiah gave instructions to place a lump of figs on the troublesome boil (2 Kings 20:5-7). God did the healing, but He used human effort and natural means.

A couple of children were walking to school one morning when it suddenly dawned on them that unless they really hurried they were going to be late. One of them suggested that they stop and pray that they wouldn't be tardy. "No," the other replied, "let's pray while we run as fast as we can." Richard DeHaan

FIVE-FINGER PRAYERS

Read: James 5:13-18

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other. James 5:16

Prayer is a conversation with God, not a formula. Yet sometimes we might need to use a "method" to freshen up our prayer time. We can pray the Psalms or other Scriptures (such as the Lord's Prayer), or use the ACTS method (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication). I recently came across this "Five-Finger Prayer" to use as a guide when praying for others:

- When you fold your hands, the thumb is the nearest you. So begin by praying for those closest to you—your loved ones (Philippians 1:3-5).
 - The index finger is the pointer. Pray for those who teach—Bible teachers and preachers, and those who teach children (1 Thessalonians 5:25).
 - The next finger is the tallest. It reminds you to pray for those in authority over you—national and local leaders and your supervisor at work (1 Timothy 2:1-2).
 - The fourth finger is usually the weakest. Pray for those who are in trouble or who are suffering (James 5:13-16).
 - Then comes your little finger. It reminds you of your smallness in relation to God's greatness. Ask Him to supply your needs (Philippians 4:6, 19). Anne Cetas
- Prayer Tip: Always incorporate your church in your prayers—pray for and with the people.**

ALWAYS PRAY, AND DON'T GIVE UP

Read: Luke 18:1-8

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. Luke 18:1

Are you going through one of those times when it seems every attempt to resolve a problem is met with a new difficulty? You thank the Lord at night that it's taken care of but awake to find that something else has gone wrong and the problems remains.

During an experience like that, I was reading the gospel of Luke and was astounded by the opening words of chapter 18: "Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up" (v. 1). I had read the story of the persistent widow many times but never grasped why Jesus told it (vv. 2-8). Now I connected those opening words with the story. The lesson to His followers was very clear: Always pray, and never give up.

Prayer is not a means of coercing God to do what we want. It is a process of recognizing His power and plan for our lives. In prayer we yield our lives and circumstances to the Lord and trust Him to act in His time and in His way.

As we rely on God's grace not only for the outcome of our requests but for the process as well, we can keep coming to the Lord in prayer, trusting His wisdom and care for us.

Our Lord's encouragement to us is clear: Always pray, and don't give up! David McCasland

Prayer Tip: Make a daily appointment with God, and add it to your calendar

THE ARMOR OF GOD

EPHESIANS 6:10-18
"... Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes." v. 10, 11

The Shield of Faith (Eph. 6:16)
Faith is being sure that God will keep His promises. Faith in God protects you when you are tempted to doubt.

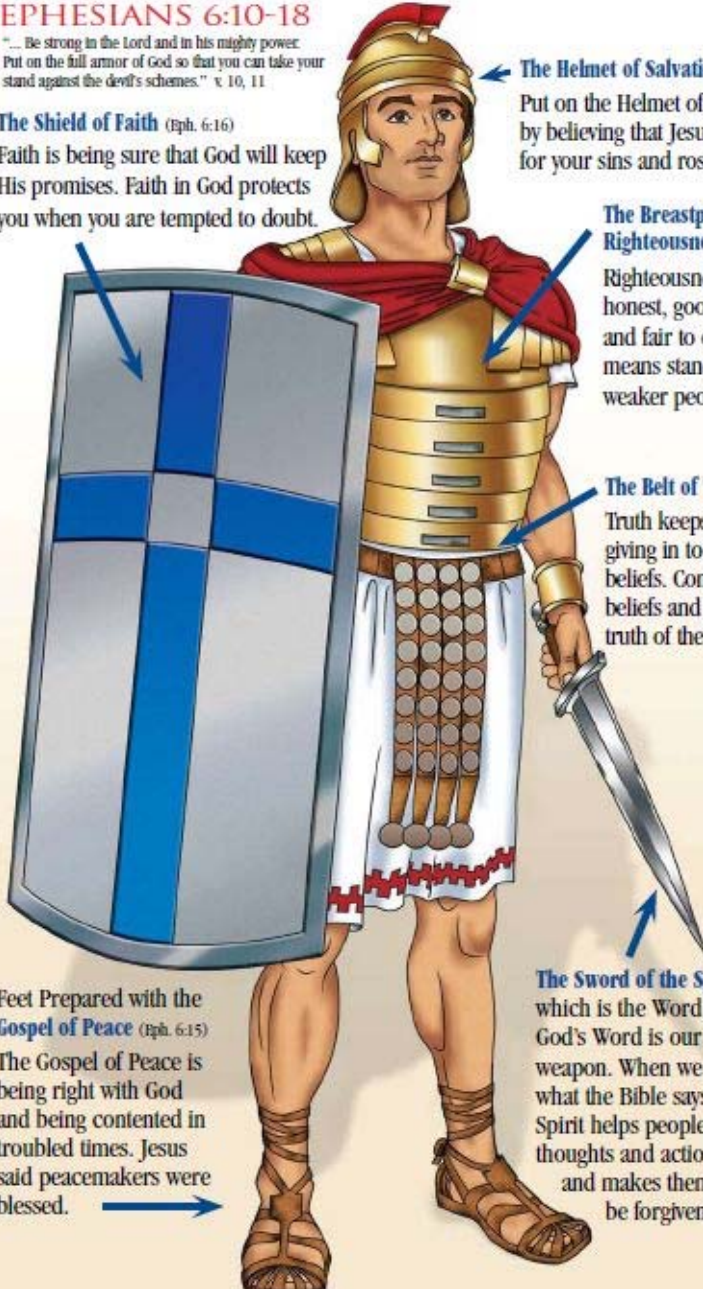
The Helmet of Salvation (Eph. 6:17)
Put on the Helmet of Salvation by believing that Jesus Christ died for your sins and rose again.

The Breastplate of Righteousness (Eph. 6:14)
Righteousness is being honest, good, humble, and fair to others. It means standing up for weaker people.

The Belt of Truth (Eph. 6:14)
Truth keeps us from giving in to the world's beliefs. Compare your beliefs and actions to the truth of the Word of God.

The Sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17)
which is the Word of God. God's Word is our offensive weapon. When we tell others what the Bible says, the Holy Spirit helps people see their bad thoughts and actions, and makes them want to be forgiven.

Feet Prepared with the Gospel of Peace (Eph. 6:15)
The Gospel of Peace is being right with God and being contented in troubled times. Jesus said peacemakers were blessed.



Ephesians 6:10-20 (New King James Version)

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age,^[a] against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; 18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints— 19 and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak

Read the BIBLE in ONE Year

November

1 Luke 22-24
2 John 1-3
3 John 4-6
4 John 7 10
5 John 11-13
6 John 14-17
7 John 18-21

8 Acts 1-2
9 Acts 3-5
10 Acts 6-9
11 Acts 10-12
12 Acts 13-14
13 Acts 15-16
14 Acts-17-18
15 Acts 19-21

16 Acts 22-24
17 Acts 25-26
18 Acts 27-28
19 Romans 1-4
20 Romans 5-8
21 Romans 9-11
22 Romans 12-16
23 1 Corinthians 1-4

24 1 Corinthians 5-8
25 1 Corinthians 9-12
26 1 Corinthians 13-16
27 2 Corinthians 1-3
28 2 Corinthians 4-6
29 2 Corinthians 7-9
30 2 Corinthians 10-13

DECEMBER

1 Galatians 1-3
2 Galatians 4-6
3 Ephesians 1-3
4 Ephesians 4-6
5 Philippians 1-4
6 Colossians 1-4
7 1 Thessalonians 1-5

8 2 Thessalonians 1-3
9 1 Timothy 1-3
10 1 Timothy 4-6
11 2 Timothy 1-4
12 Titus 1-3
13 Philemon
14 Hebrews 1-4
15 Hebrews 5-7

16 Hebrews 8-10
17 Hebrews 11-13
18 James 1-2
19 James 3-5
20 1 Peter 1-2
21 1 Peter 3-5
22 2 Peter 1-3
23 1 John 1-2

24 1 John 3-5
25 2 John, 3 John, Jude
26 Revelation 1-3
27 Revelation 4-8
28 Revelation 9-12
29 Revelation 13-15
30 Revelation 16-18
31 Revelation 19-22

January

01 Genesis 1-2
02 Genesis 3-5
03 Genesis 6-9
04 Genesis 10-11
05 Genesis 12-15
06 Genesis 16-19
07 Genesis 20-22

08 Genesis 23-26
09 Genesis 27-29
10 Genesis 30-32
11 Genesis 33-36
12 Genesis 37-39
13 Genesis 40-42
14 Genesis 43-46
15 Genesis 47-50

16 Exodus 1-4
17 Exodus 5-7
18 Exodus 8-10
19 Exodus 11-13
20 Exodus 14-17
21 Exodus 18-20
22 Exodus 21-24
23 Exodus 25-27

24 Exodus 28-31
25 Exodus 32-34
26 Exodus 35-37
27 Exodus 38-40
28 Leviticus 1-4
29 Leviticus 5-7
30 Leviticus 8-10
31 Leviticus 11-13

Kingdomtide begins on the last Sunday in August and continues until the beginning of Advent. The emphasis includes evangelism, world missions, and the work for peace and justice in all relationships. During this period, special emphasis is placed on the Kingship of the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The observance is wrapped up in the heightened awareness of one of the basic tenets of the Christian faith – the hope of the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven

Color: Green is symbolic of freshness of nature, hope, life and growth.

Advent is the season of expectation, hope and celebration of the past, present, and future comings of Jesus Christ to the world. Much of the focus is on the prophecy of the coming of the Messiah to Israel and the expectancy of that fulfillment. The Advent cry is “Come,” even though Emmanuel has come. Jesus has come, presently comes into the hearts of believers through grace, and is yet to return. This season is a time of anticipation as the Church makes ready for the coming of the Lord and the celebration of Jesus coming as a babe in Bethlehem. Therefore, Advent embodies a vital element of the Christian faith. The Advent season has marked the beginning of the Christian Year since the eight-century and consists of the four weeks before Christmas.

Color: Purple (violet or Lilac) is the color used to denote royalty, praying, fasting, and penitence. It represents a symbol of the majesty of Christ, and Jesus’ humanity, suffering, and fasting.

Name of God	Meaning	Application
JEHOVAH –RAPHA	The Lord Who Heals	God has provided the final cure for spiritual, physical, and emotional sickness in Jesus Christ. God can heal us.
JEHOVAH - ROHI	The Lord is My Shepherd	The Lord protects, provides, directs, leads, and cares for His people. God tenderly takes care of us as a strong and patient shepherd.
JEHOVAH – SABAOTH	The Lord of Hosts The Lord of Armies	The Lord of the hosts of heaven will always fulfill His purposes, even when the hosts of His earthly people fail.
JEHOVAH –SHALOM	The Lord is Peace	God defeats our enemies to bring us peace. Jesus is our Prince of Peace. God brings inner peace and harmony.



Sunday School is a Family Affair

8:45 a.m. to 9:45 a.m. We have classes for all ages – 3 to 103
New Members Class meets at the same time.
(For Transportation Needs Please call the Church 860-344-9527)

Come Grow with US!

SHARING LOVE

Devotional Reading:
2 Corinthians 6:1-10

Background Scripture:
Acts 4:32-5:11

EXALTI!:

DECLARATION:
Acts 4:32-5:11

They Had Everything in Common
³² Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. ³³ and with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. ³⁴ There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold ³⁵ and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. ³⁶ Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, ³⁷ sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Ananias and Sapphira

¹ But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, ² and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet. ³ But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? ⁴ While it

remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God." ⁵ when Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. ⁶ And great fear came upon all who heard of it. ⁶ The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him.

⁷ After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. ⁸ And Peter said to her, "Tell me whether you [a] sold the land for so much." and she said, "Yes, for so much."⁹ But Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out." ¹⁰ Immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. When the young men came in they found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. ¹¹ And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things.

Affirmation:

We are encouraged to seek ways to increase our giving for the common good.

ENGAGE

In every community, there are people who have less than they need to maintain healthy lives. How can we help to assure that the needs of everyone in our communities are met? As the first believers in Jesus shared everything in common, the needs of everyone were satisfied. We live in various societies throughout the world which have differing economic systems that determine the attitudes we have toward worldly possessions.

For instance, those living in a socialist economy will have a different attitude toward possessions and sharing of one's goods with others from those living in a capitalist economy. Break into groups and debate the issue: Christians are bound by the standards of the society they live in when it comes to possessions and sharing with others and not by biblical standards set by the Early Church. Consider also the following issues in your discussions.

We may view possessions as a way of "keeping score" -this is, we see wealth as evidence of importance.

We rarely see ourselves as being rich and often are envious of those who have more than we do.

We would like to be known for being generous even if we are not.

We are usually more likely to give when we learn of a specific project or an immediate need.

We prefer distributing our money as we see fit.

Finally, what would you conclude is the right attitude and character of Christians when it comes to meeting the needs of people both in the church and in the society?

EDUCATE

Acts 4:32-37: The sharing in the early church was not mandatory but was spontaneous and voluntary (Acts 5:4). Some, such as Mary (mother of John Mark) still owned a house in Jerusalem sometime later (Acts 12:12). Though the particular giving arrangement described in Acts 2 and 4 is not seen elsewhere in the New Testament, the spirit behind it does continue (2 Corinthians 9:7). The

(Wisdom on page 9)

Pray for all of our children, teens, young adults in this school years that God's hands will be upon them keeping them from all hurt, harm and danger. Also pray for all of our families, friends, and all of God's children.

(Wisdom from page 8)

explosive growth of the church from the beginning (Acts 2:41) may have created the need for the unique communal arrangement described in Acts 2:44 and 4:32. many of the Jewish pilgrims from all over the world who had stayed in Jerusalem between Passover and Pentecost (Acts 2:5) would have become believers and may have decided to extend their stay. That would explain why the church's practice of selling all of one's property for the good of the community did not appear to have extended beyond Jerusalem. The lack of poverty described in Acts 4:34 recalls the promise of Deuteronomy 15:4-6 and the apparent universal prosperity under the rule of Solomon (1 Kings 4:25). At the beginning of the nation of Israel, the tribe of Levi was not allotted land as an inheritance. By the time the church began, however, Joseph of Cyprus called Barnabas was a landowner. The selfless nature of Joseph that caused him to be known as the "son of encouragement" is evident in the following chapters of Acts. He reconciled Saul of Tarsus with the church that Saul once persecuted (Acts 9:26-27); led one of the first churches to have both Jewish and Gentile believers (11:19-24); and played a key role in the first major missionary campaign of the church (Acts 13-14).

Acts 5:1-11: The communal economic system of the early Jerusalem church was not utopian. It tempted Ananias and Sapphira to lie about their generosity (Acts 5:3, 8-9) and also stirred controversy when some believed that the goods were not distributed equitably (Acts 6:1). "This chilling account of the sudden deaths of Ananias (Hebrew, "the Lord is gracious") and Sapphira (Aramaic, "beautiful") makes us face the fact that God deals with sin, especially church members' deceit and lack of integrity. If God acts to preserve the integrity of the community that the gospel produced, we can have increased confidence in the truthfulness of the message itself (Luke 1:4). That's the

good news for the inquirer. This narrative is bad news, though, for any who would take a casual approach to entering the kingdom of God" (The IVP New Testament Commentary Series). One view of the incident of Ananias and Sapphira is, "Ananias and Sapphira learn that in this life God can and, when he chooses, will punish sinners either by immediate death or by some other means. This can happen to those who claim to be, and may truly be, a part of his covenant people, enjoy his salvation blessings and yet deliberately sin and remain unrepentant (1 Cor 5:5; 1 Jn 5:16-17). For Christians today this is still a temptation: to so luxuriate in the love and grace of God that we do not take seriously the consequences of our deliberate sinning. But God will not be mocked (Gal 6:7-8)" (Ibid).

ELEVATE

As a group share and discuss examples of communal living among Christian groups you know, such as Roman Catholic Nuns and Monks. How does the system work when taking the vow of poverty? Compare this with what Jesus tells the rich young ruler, "Go and sell all you have and give to the poor and come and follow me." what individuals do you know of in history and in your own time and experience have sacrificed great riches for the love of Christ and his mission in the world? Consider, for instance, the religious experiences and actions of Leo Tolstoy, who had a profound impact on Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Respond to the following questions:

1. How many Christians do you think use their resources to meet the needs of others?
2. Do we as Christians, even though we do not choose to live communally, recognize that our possessions are not really our own?
3. Would you say that many Christians share their time and unique abilities as well as their material wealth?
4. Do we as Christians trust the church leaders to distribute our offering gifts

responsibly?

5. Do we value the characteristic of humility in all aspects of life, including giving?

ITHINK

1. Display some bumper stickers or humorous signs that reflect our culture's view of money: e.g., "Always borrow money from a pessimist; he doesn't expect to be paid back." "Money talk-mine says 'Goodbye.'" "Double your money-fold it over and put it back in your pocket."
2. Perform an Internet search for "wealthiest Americans" and most generous Americans." Present those two lists to the class.
3. Discuss how the principles of loving others in 1 John 3 (session 11) may have been operative in Acts 4:32-37 and the experiences of the early church.
4. Since Joseph of Cyprus was given a nickname for his lifestyle, have the group try to come up with nicknames for Ananias and Sapphira that reflect what we know or can infer about them.
5. Have the group read Paul's words about giving in 2 Corinthians 7-8. even though this church did not have the same giving arrangements as the church in Jerusalem, compare the attitudes and purposes for the giving of both churches.
6. Help participants create personal "Time, Talents, and Treasures" lists. The lists should include specific ways they will pledge to be more generous in all three of these areas.

Key Verse: Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. Acts 4:32.

From The Young People-Adult Quarterly (Ages 18 and up) International Sunday School Lessons for Christian Teaching

Let's Get Radical

This is my church. It is composed of people just like me. It will be friendly if I am. It will do great work if I work. It will make generous gifts to many causes if I am generous. It will bring others into its fellowship if I bring them. Its seats will be filled if I fill them. It will be a church of loyalty and love, of faith and service. If I who make it what it is, am filled with these, Therefore, with God's help, I dedicate myself to the task of being all these things I want my church to be.

(La Playa from page 1)

decree that will never pass away. 7 Praise the Lord from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths, 8 lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding, 9 you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars, 10 wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds, 11 kings of the earth and all nations, you princes and all rulers on earth, 12 young men and women, old men and children.

13 Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted; his splendor is above the earth and the heavens. 14 And he has raised up for his people a horn, the praise of all his faithful servants, of Israel, the people close to his heart. Praise the Lord.

During a trip to celebrate our twenty-fifth anniversary, my husband and I read our Bibles on the beach. As vendors passed and called out the prices of their wares, we thanked each one but didn't buy anything. One vendor, Fernando, smiled wide at my rejection and insisted we consider buying gifts for friends. After I declined his invitation, Fernando packed up and began walking away...still grinning. "I pray God will bless your day," I said.

Fernando turned toward me and said, "He has! Jesus

changed my life." Fernando knelt between our chairs. "I feel His presence here." He then shared how God delivered him from drug and alcohol abuse more than fourteen years earlier.

My tears flowed as he recited entire poems from the book of Psalms and prayed for us. Together, we praised God and rejoiced in His presence...on la playa.

Psalms 148 is a prayer of praise. The psalmist encourages all of creation to "praise the name of the Lord, for at his command [everything was] created" (v. 5), "for his name alone is exalted; his splendor is above the earth and the heavens" (v. 13).

Though God invites us to bring our needs before Him and trust He hears and cares for us, He also delights in prayers of grateful praise wherever we are. Even on the beach.

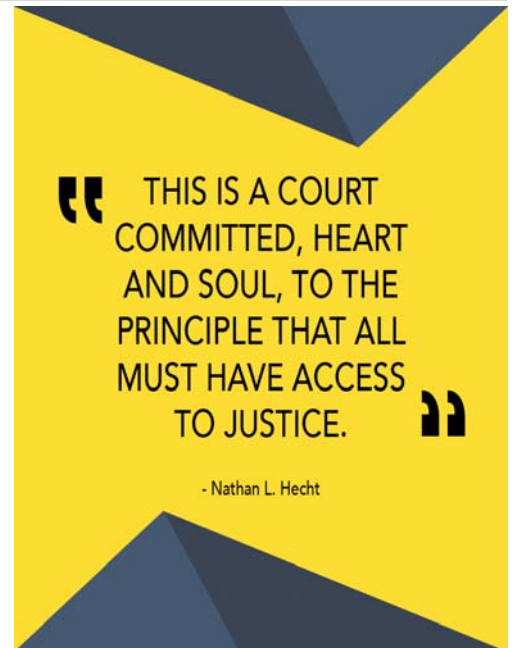
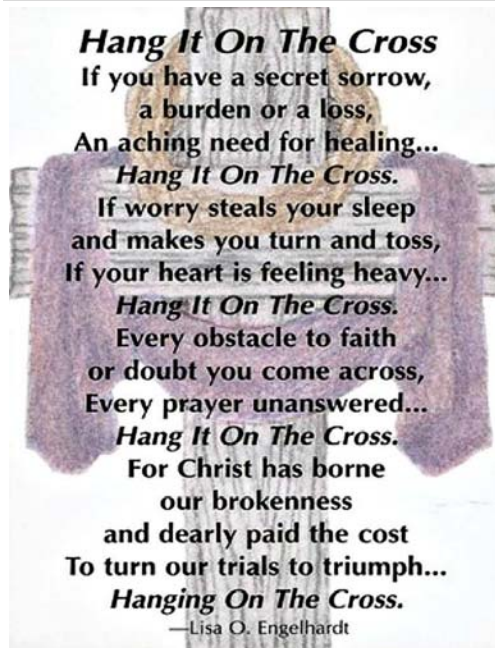
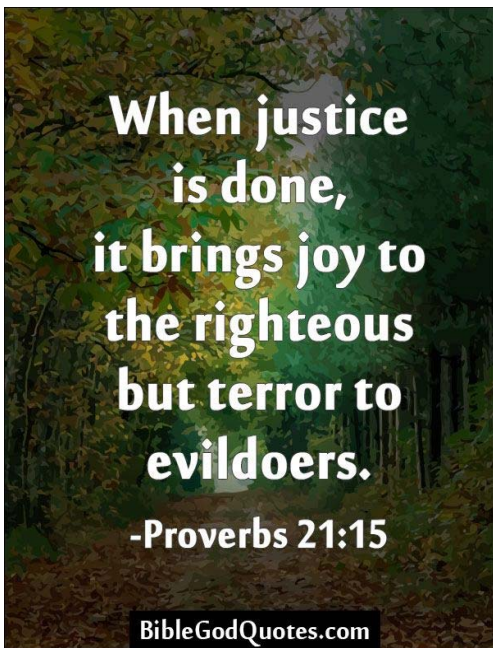
What will you praise God for today? How has He inspired you to praise Him after hearing someone else's story?

Help me praise You with every breath You've given me, God

Ministries, Grand Rapids, Michigan,
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A young man working in the army was constantly humiliated because he believed in God. One day the captain wanted to humiliate him before the troops. He called the young man and said: Young man come here, take the key and go and park the jeep in front. The young man replied: I cannot drive! The captain said: Well then ask for the assistance of your God! Show us that He exists! The young man takes the key and walked to the vehicle and begins to pray... He parks the jeep at the place PERFECTLY well as the captain wanted. The young man came out of the jeep and saw them all crying. They all said together: We want to serve your God! The young soldier was astonished, and asked what was going on? The CAPTAIN crying opened the hood of the jeep by showing the young man that the car had no engine. Then the boy said: See? This is the God I serve, THE GOD OF IMPOSSIBLE, the God who gives life to what does not exist. You may think there are things still impossible BUT WITH GOD EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE. To the person reading this, I pray the Lord work A SUPER MIRACLE in your life today. In Jesus Name I Pray... SHARE with your friends! I did!



(Justice Prayed page 1)

the righteous-therefore judgement comes forth perverted.

¹² Are you not from of old, O Lord my God, my Holy One? You [a] shall not die. O Lord, you have marked them for judgement; and you, O Rock, have established them for punishment. ¹³ Your eyes are too pure to behold evil, and you cannot look on wrongdoing; why do you look on the treacherous, and are silent when the wicked swallow those more righteous than they? ¹⁴ You have made people like the fish of the sea, like crawling things that have no ruler.

Affirmation: “Man comes closer to God through the questions he asks Him. Therein lies true dialogue.”

ENGAGE

Because injustice is so prevalent and frequent in our world and our communities, we must ask ourselves: have we become so accustomed to violence or injustice that it fails to move us, such that we feel no compassion for those who suffer? The more we understand God’s will for the world, the more compelled we fail to express our displeasure and dismay in the injustices we see in the world. What we feel about or toward various forms of injustice will no longer go unchallenged. Anyone who carries the passion for justice always finds a way for his or her voice to be heard.

Have you know anyone or personally been mistreated or suffered for someone who did wrong? We are familiar with events in the past that led to protest against wrong. Now, it will be our turn to teach present and future generations how to demonstrate or protest in the face of evil and how to show compassion to persons who are ill-treated. We need willing voices to speak up and be a voice for the people. Are you willing to be that voice?

EDUCATE

Our text and lesson today introduce us to a unique situation. Prophets often take on the role of speaking for God, but in the opening of the book of Habakkuk, the prophet is speaking with God, and doing so in a way that shows raw

emotions on the part of the prophet.

Habakkuk is speaking for the community. As one of the Minor Prophets, so called because of the length of their writings in Scripture, Habakkuk’s voice is heard in a major way as he complains to God. Habakkuk raises two areas of complaint. He is disturbed that God seems to tolerate evil; and he wonders how long it will be before God addresses or fixes the evil in the land. Habakkuk begins his writing/prophecy in chapter 1 by asking God, “O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not listen? Or cry to you ‘Violence!’ and you will not save?” (Habakkuk 1:1-2).

As we continue to read through the chapter, we notice how in verse 12, the prophet still has not had an answer from God. This is why Habakkuk appeals to God’s goodness and constancy. As he appeals, Habakkuk wonders or questions that if God is good, why does God not act? Why do bad things continue to happen? Why will God not intervene when injustices of all forms take place? The prophet asks in verse 12, “Are you not from old, O Lord my God, my Holy One? You shall not die. O Lord, you have marked them for judgement; and you, O Rock, have established them for punishment.” Habakkuk makes a plea to God to step in and address this situation, to change the landscape and do what he believes God can do. The prophet feels confident to express his concerns to God because, as he says of God. “Your eyes are too pure to behold evil, and you cannot look on wrongdoing; why do you look on the treacherous, and are silent when the wicked swallow those more righteous than they?” (v. 13)

Have you been told that we are not to question God? How do you feel about this instruction?

Often as we pray, there are specific questions that are present in our conversations with God. It may seem as if God does not hear our prayers because the answer or evidence does not always present itself in the time we would like or think it should. Have you ever wondered or doubted if God hears or is even concerned with what we are dealing with? Yet, when we hear or receive an answer to our prayers, it is reassuring, and we are encouraged.

As we seek to do God’s will, let us continue praying for those who are being treated unfairly. We must remain encouraged our faith in God (that is the meaning of Habakkuk’s name, from a root word in Hebrew that means, “to embrace”) because God is concerned about everyone.

ELEVATE

Quite often, as we watch events unfold in this world, it seems that evil is running amok. Wicked people seem to be in control and out of control! It’s enough to drive us to despair.

But Habakkuk discusses and engages God about those who do not live justly or walk by faith. This frustration leads the prophet to ask a series of “How long?” questions in his prophetic writings. It certainly is frustrating for us as it was for the prophet to observe people who claim to be followers of God, and yet do wickedly. The prophet’s words are a warning here. He admonishes the people that a just God will not tolerate their evil forever. The wicked are called to turn their lives around, and serve God in an acceptable way, as they know they should. The words of the prophet in Habakkuk chapter 1 are what prompts the response from God in chapter 2. Wicked people seem to be getting ahead. But Habakkuk’s message is simple and straightforward. They will not succeed in the end.

Ithink

Discuss ways that you have protested injustice.

How do you respond to someone who is indifferent about injustice, particularly when that person is in a responsible position to deal with or change the situation?

Key Verse:

Why do you look on the treacherous, and are silent when the wicked swallow those more righteous than they? Habakkuk 1:13b.

(Justice Denied from page 1)

The background is that Maya Moore's family had heard about a man who had been in jail for a felony he claimed he did not commit. Through a prison's ministry work back in 2007, Ms. Moore visited the felon in jail shortly before her own freshman year at the University of Connecticut, where she eventually, became one of the most heralded women's basketball players in collegiate history.

Not familiar with who this basketball player is?

Maya April Moore is an American and International professional basketball player for the Minnesota Lynx of the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA). In a "Performer of the Year" Inaugural ceremony in 2017, the Sports Illustrated magazine categorized Maya Moore as **the greatest winner in the history of women's basketball**. As at this time she has taken time off, on sabbatical, to pursue exploits that center on securing justice for individuals who may have been harmed by the justice system of this country.

Speaking of American justice system, we need to get a few facts out for clarity. First, we need to be aware of the fact that the incarcerating of people has systematically become the primary form of punishment and rehabilitation for people who commit felonies and other offenses. The actual process to investigate and interrogate, to prosecute and to punish and or to rehabilitate those who commit various crimes has become a mammoth business; a major industrial complex in America. According to a 2020 review study, this massive incarceration system in the United States "cannot be explained without reference to the centrality of racial politics" and cultural and systematic oppression. There is a general observation that minorities such as African Americans and Hispanics are more likely to be arrested for various crimes than white people in the United States.

It is also important to note that "tough-on-crime" laws adopted in the 1980s have filled American prisons with mostly nonviolent offenders. According to the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) in 2018 Black males accounted for 34% of the total male prison population, white males 29%, and Hispanic males 24%. The imprisonment

rate for Black males (2,272 per 100,000 Black male residents) was 5.8 times as high as for white males (392 per 100,000 white male residents). Out of all ethnic groups, African Americans, Puerto Rican Americans, and Native Americans have some of the highest rates of incarceration. The massive numbers of imprisonment point to serious incidents of false and made-up charges, as well as wrongful accusations that eventually end up to wrongful incarcerations.

Which is where we re-connect to Ms. Moore and the story of this essay. The other person in the story is Mr. Jonathan Irons. He was 16 at the time the crime for which he was convicted occurred. He was prosecuted for burglarizing a home in a St. Louis, Missouri suburb and assaulting the homeowner with a gun. Even though there were no corroborating witnesses, fingerprints, DNA or any blood evidence connecting Mr. Irons to the crime, he was dully convicted by an all-white jury on charges of burglary and assault. He had pleaded not guilty to the charges maintaining all along that he was not at the scene of the crime. Regardless of his protestations and in spite of legal defense, he ended up behind bars, to a 50 year term. He was 16 at that time but was tried as an adult.

You would think this is some extraordinarily weird case of random proportions, citing the fact that most inmates claim innocence to any manner of conviction. Not so simple, and not so fast. "Collecting data from the 281 known DNA exonerations in the US since the late 1980s, a conservative estimate is that 1 percent of the US prison population, approximately 20,000 people, have been falsely convicted. In fact, since the late 1980s there have been as many as 850 exonerations nationwide, according to University of Michigan law professor Samuel Gross, a leading researcher in this field. Many of them float under the radar, Dr. Gross says, unlike the highly publicized DNA exonerations."

Combining the earlier stats about the disproportionate levels of incarceration of Black men in American prisons, any reasonable observer can conclude that justice is not been served to a large number of black men in particular. In reality, it is easy to see that justice for a lot of people has been **misplaced** and **misapplied**. In February 2020, a total of 2,551 exonerations were mentioned in the [National Registry of Exonerations](#). A large percentage of these are black men who were convicted

on flimsy charges, prosecuted aggressively and found guilty by racially biased jurors and then sentenced based on racially biased judiciary systems waving flags of 'tough on crime' principles that clearly point to justice misplaced and misapplied.

The "**innocent project**" organization has stories of wrongfully convicted people, mostly black men, that will make you sick to your stomach. Here's an example:

Ronnie Long, now 64, was accused of raping a white woman. An all-white jury found him guilty of rape and burglary in 1976 and had him sentenced to life in prison. Even though he vehemently denied any wrongdoing and maintained his innocence, he was kept in jail for 44 years until this year, 2020. His conviction was vacated on the submission of alternate evidence by the "**innocent project**" team of lawyers, after the state of North Carolina filed a motion in federal court seeking to do so. Since Long was convicted, "a trickle of post-trial disclosures has unearthed a troubling and striking pattern of deliberate police suppression of material evidence," a clear case of justice misplaced and misapplied in another case of an innocent black man.

When will we be free from these horrible injustices? No one can tell, but the events of this year, 2020 from the uproar after the killing of George Floyd and others, coupled with the singular success story of Ms. Maya April Moore and Mr. Jonathan Irons provide ample conviction that individuals acting in good faith, buoyed by the facts and truth, will eventually rise to rescue victims of misplaced justices, and provide the necessary correction and remedy. As is common in Ghanaian diction, "God's time is the best". For the part I intend to play in this story, I am making all the effort and exploring every avenue to connect with the incomparable superstar Ms. Moore to see what I can do and how best I can spend my blessed time to help some brother or a sister in need, anywhere in this nation.

—kwame6@att.net

Our Daily Bread

When God Speaks

Amy Boucher Pye

So is my word that goes out from my mouth: it will not return to me empty. Isaiah 55:11

Read: Isaiah 55:10-13

Lily, a Bible translator, was flying home to her country when she was detained at the airport. Her mobile was searched, and when the officials found an audio copy of the New Testament on it, they confiscated the phone and questioned her for two hours. At one point they asked her to play the Scripture app, when happened to be set at Matthew 7:1-2: "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." Hearing these words in his own language, one of the officers turned pale. Later, she was released and no further action was taken.

We don't know what happened in the official's heart at the airport, but we know that the word that goes out from [God's] mouth" accomplish what He desires (Isaiah 55:11). Isaiah prophesied these words of hope to God's people in exile, assuring them that even as the rain and snow make the earth bud and grow, so too what goes "out from [His] mouth" achieves His purposes (vv. 10-11).

We can read this passage to bolster our confidence in God. When we're facing unyielding circumstances, such as Lily with the airport officials, may we trust that God is working-even when we don't see the final outcome.

When was the last time you saw God at work? How have you received God's love through the words He's declared?

Heavenly Father, thank You for what You've revealed, which brings me hope, peace, and love. Help me to grow in my love for you.

Strong and Courageous

Cindy Hess Kasper

As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you.

Read: Joshua 1:1-9

Each night, as young Celeb closed his eyes, he felt the darkness envelop him. The silence of his room was regularly suspended by the creaking of the wooden house in Costa Rica. Then the bats in the attic became more active. His mother had to put a nightlight in his room, but the young boy still feared the dark. One night Caleb's dad posted a Bible verse on the footboard of his bed. It read: "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid;...for the Lord your God will be with you" (Joshua 1:9). Caleb began to read those words each night-and he left that promise from God on his footboard until he went away to college.

In Joshua 1, we read of the transition of leadership to Joshua after Moses died. The command to "be strong and courageous" was repeated several times to Joshua and the Israelite's to emphasize its importance (vv. 6-7, 9). Surely, they felt trepidation as they faced an uncertain future, but God reassuringly said, "As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you" (v. 5).

It's natural to have fears, but it's detrimental to our physical and spiritual health to live in a state of constant fear. Just as God encouraged His servants of old, we too can be strong and courageous because of the One who promises to always be with us.

What are your deepest and persistent fears? How can meditating on God's promises help you overcome your fear and anxiety?

Faithful Father, thank You that You're always with me. Help me to remember Your promises and trust in You when I'm afraid.

Stick, Bricks and God

Arthur Jackson

The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised. Job 1:21

Read: Job 1:18-22

After praying about what God was calling them to do in the next phase of their lives, Mark and Nina determined that moving to the urban core of the city was what they needed to do. They purchased a vacant house and renovation was well underway-then came the storm. Mark wrote in a text message to me: "We had a surprise this morning. The tornado that came through Jefferson City, took out our renovation-down to sticks and bricks. God is up to something."

Uncontrollable storms are not the only things that surprise us and create confusion in our lives. Not losing sight of God in the midst of misfortune, however, is one of the keys of survival.

The weather catastrophe in job's life that resulted in his loss of property and the death of his children (Job 1:19) was but one of the shocking surprises he faced. Prior to that, three messengers has come bearing bad news (vv. 13-17).

On any given day, we can go from feasting to mourning, from celebrating life to processing death, or some other life challenge. Our lives can swiftly be reduced to "sticks and bricks"-financially, relationally, physically, emotionally, spiritually. But God is mightier than any storm. Surviving life's trials requires faith that's focused on Him-faith that enables us to say with Job and others, "May the name of the Lord be praised" (v.21).

(Justice on page 1)

There is plenty of justice with God.

When we look at the present state of our nation and even the world justice seems to be something that has been lost or forgotten.

We have class wars, social and racial injustices everywhere and national tensions are on the increase in our cities and across the world.

The difficult questions we must ask are:

Has God been removed from the equation?

Has God been rejected by those who rule over us?

Are His laws honored amongst the governments of this present evil world?

Regrettably, our answers will be yes. He has been removed and rejected by the governing bodies of the nations. His laws not honored. Rather they have been replaced with greed for power, control, money, and selfish gain. And yet God still has a people who serve Him in the midst of all this chaos.

We live in a time where there is so much disinformation and deception that we are made to believe that what's a lie is true and what's true is a lie. This in itself is a great injustice.

The definition of justice is giving to everyone what is his or her due. Justice is a fair representation of facts, A fair representation of truth. It is our duty to do justice to every man whether friend or foe.

Justice is honesty and at times merited retribution and punishment. Sooner or later justice will prevail and always overtakes the wrong doer We must realize that justice truly is in God's hands.

In Ecclesiastes 5:8 God confirms this. "If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter: for he that is higher than the highest regardeth; and there be higher than they."

God sees the injustice of man, He regards it, He knows all about it He is higher than they Nothing goes unnoticed in the eyes of the Lord.

God is also never mocked. Whatever injustice is sewn will be eventually repaid with the justice of God. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Galatians 6:7)

America has become like the house of Jacob in the book of Isaiah. "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins. Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God. Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labor's. Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high." (Isaiah 58:1-4)

God was not pleased because outwardly they were as a nation that sought God, yet inwardly they were full of strife, debate, and wickedness. Sound familiar?

America as a nation cannot and will not see the blessings of God along with Liberty and Justice for all prevail in this land, as long as she remains in this state. Yet God has a people reserved to Himself. You and I are that city set upon a hill that cannot be hid. It is now more than ever we must let our light shine.

So what can you and I do?

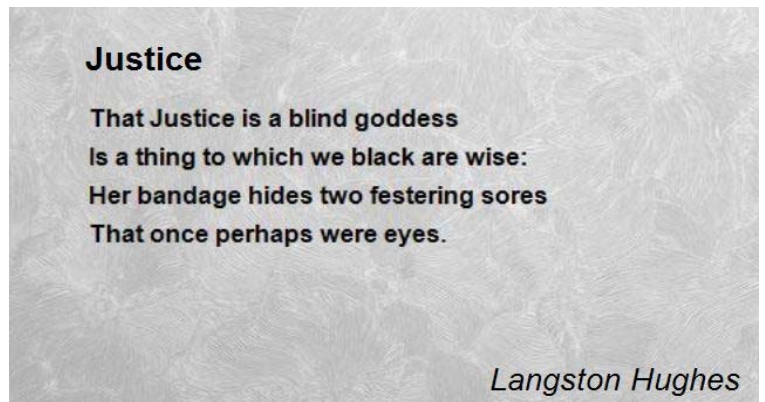
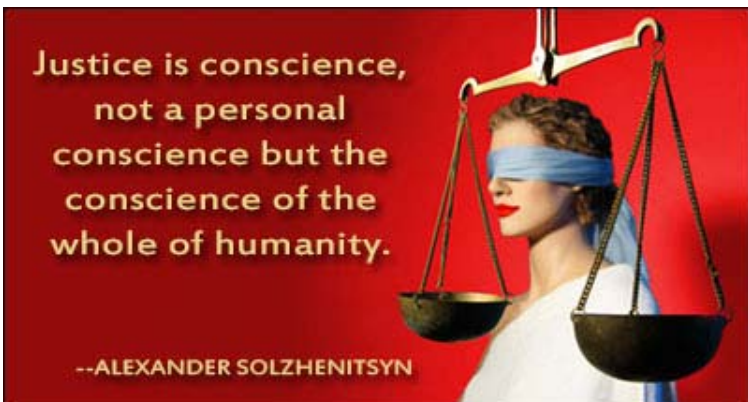
Where do we stand in this time?

- **We must** pray for all those in authority.
- **We must** recognize that God is just and that justice and retribution belong to Him alone.
- **We must** humble ourselves, seek His face and pray without ceasing.
- **We must** as much as lies within us to live peaceably with all men.

Perhaps God will give America a few more good years to come

Let our pray be like David's: "I have done judgment and justice: leave me not to mine oppressors." (Psalm 119:121)

Amen. -- Greg Adamo



Words To Live By

Don't give up.....

One day I decided to quit...
I quit my job, my relationship, my spirituality... I wanted to quit my life.
I went to the woods to have one last talk with God.
"God", I asked, "Can you give me one good reason not to quit?"
His answer surprised me...
"Look around", He said. "Do you see the fern and the bamboo?"
"Yes", I replied.
"When I planted the fern and the bamboo seeds, I took very good care of them.
I gave them light. I gave them water.
The fern quickly grew from the earth.
Its brilliant green covered the floor.
Yet nothing came from the bamboo seed. But I did not quit on the bamboo.
In the second year the Fern grew more vibrant and plentiful.
And again, nothing came from the bamboo seed. But I did not quit on the bamboo. He said.
"In year three there was still nothing from the bamboo seed.
But I would not quit.
In year four, again, there was nothing from the bamboo seed. I would
not quit." He said.
"Then in the fifth year a tiny sprout emerged from the earth. Compared
to the fern it was seemingly small and insignificant...But just 6
months later the bamboo rose to over 100 feet tall.
It had spent the five years growing roots. Those roots made it strong and gave it what it
needed to survive.
I would not give any of my creations a challenge it could not handle."
He asked me. "Did you know, my child, that all this time you have been struggling, you have
actually been growing roots".
"I would not quit on the bamboo.
I will never quit on you."
"Don't compare yourself to others." He said.
"The bamboo had a different Purpose than the fern.
Yet they both make the forest beautiful."
"Your time will come", God said to me.
"You will rise high"
"How high should I rise?"
I asked.
"How high will the bamboo rise?" He asked in return.
"As high as it can?" I questioned.
"Yes." He said, "Give me glory by rising as high as you can."
I left the forest and brought back this story.
I hope these words can help you see that God will never give up on you.
Never, Never, Never Give up.
For the Christian Prayer is not an option but an opportunity.
Don't tell the Lord how big the problem is,
tell the problem how Great the Lord is!
By unknown

“Daily Confession of Faith”

In Christ I am anointed and a powerful person of God.

I am a joint-heir with Jesus and more than a conqueror.

I am a doer of the Word of God and a channel for His blessings.

If God be for me, who can be against me?

I am blessed coming in and I am blessed going out.

My enemies are fleeing before me.

God has commanded His blessing on my storehouses.

He has opened His Good treasures and I shall lend and not borrow.

I am the head and not the tail.

He has given me power to make wealth.

I dwell in the secret place.

I have His protection and provision.

God is my refuge, my fortress.

I am not afraid of the snare of the fowler.

No Evil shall befall me and no plague shall come nigh my dwelling.

God has given his angels charge over me and they are bearing me up in their hands

lest I dash my foot against a stone, as declared in Psalm 91.

1 Peter 2:9 establishes I am a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation.

I am a peculiar person called out of darkness into His marvelous light.

1 Peter 2:24 states, I have been healed by the stripes of Jesus.

***Cancer, sugar diabetes, heart disease, sickness, afflictions, infections,
or any other disease cannot enter my body.***

I am without spot or blemish, an intercessor,

the righteousness of God, saved, and washed in the Blood of Jesus.

“No weapon formed against me shall prosper, and every tongue which rise against me in judgement You shall condemn.

This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD,

and their righteousness is from Me,” Says the LORD.

I am saved from wrath by Him and justified by the blood of the Lamb.

***Lord I pray that those may prosper that love Jerusalem and that peace will be within them
and prosperity in their houses according to Psalms 122:6-9.***

Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah!

Spirit Lifters

By Norman Vincent Peale

Depression Lifted

Many are sick because they are basically unhappy. For this condition a medicine is offered in these words:

A merry heart does good, like

medicine... Proverbs 17:22

Joy has healing value, but gloom is sickening. This is why Jesus so emphatically tells us to rejoice. Learn to live joyfully. Take a hopeful and

optimistic attitude. Think happy thoughts, say happy things and put joy into people's lives. The more you do this, the more surely you will keep your own spirits high.

Cast Your Care on God

In maintaining a high spirit, it is important to cultivate the attitude of spiritual surrender. Place yourself, your interests, hopes and purposes completely in God's hands.

Therefore humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. 1 Peter 5:6-7

direction of God, being guided by His hand, He will exalt us —He will help us attain our purposes and rise above all defeats. Cast all your care upon God; He cares for you. This is a supreme Spirit Lifter!

If we surrender our selves to the

What Christ Can Do for You

We read in the Bible of the marvelous things Jesus did for people--- and wish that the same experience might be ours. Through faith in Jesus Christ, they were able to accomplish the most astonishing achievements, or were rescued from sad plights or gained tremendous new power over difficulties.

Rather sadly we ask, "Why can't that happen to me?"

It can, and as proof I urge you to meditate upon this tremendous Spirit Lifter:

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

The simple truth stated here is that Jesus Christ never changes. He is an invariable factor in a variable world. He is just the same now as when He walked

the shores of Galilee. He has the same kindness, the same power to heal and change men's lives. He is the same restorer of courage, the same transformer of people's souls.

Any things that He ever did for anyone throughout all history, He can do for you. It all depends upon how completely you surrender yourself Him--- and how sincerely you believe.

Receive God's Blessing

Our spirits rise when we learn how to receive the abundance of good things God wants to give to us. The secret is in two verses:

So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be open to you. For everyone who ask receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Luke 11:9-10

Note that the word ask is immediately followed by the word will be given; that directly after the word seek are

the words you will find; and that quickly after the word knock is assurance that it will be opened. It is to emphasize that everyone who seek finds, and to all who knock the storehouse is opened.

Therefore, confidently ask. Then visualize yourself as now receiving; seek, then affirm that you have found; knock, then believe that God's storehouse is opened.

Practice receiving. Believe that you have been given. Then feel your spirits lift as you realize that God's blessings are actually showered upon you.

Nothing Can Defeat You

Spirit goes out of you when you feel overwhelmed and defeated. Get firmly rooted in spiritual understanding; fill your life with faith and goodness. Then nothing can defeat you.

Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock. Matthew 7:24

Live by the saying of Jesus Christ and become like that wise man who built his house upon rock---an unshakable house against which the storms beat in vain. You can have an inner serenity, strength and courage that defy all the storms of life. Christ makes you strong. You can be undefeatable!

You Are Never Alone

Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go... I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you. Genesis 28:15

Uncertainties can be frightening, but these reassuring words show that God will be with you wherever you go on in whatever situation you find yourself. You are never alone. He will always see you through.

Barbara Perry Speaks

“Peace Stealers”

Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. Hebrews 4:11

Let us pray, “Father, thank You that we can make it our top priority to feed on Your Word and be built up with Your truth. We ask that You show us where we need to put up boundaries from anyone or anything that steals our peace. We ask today that You keep us free from comparing ourself to

others, its In Jesus’ Name we ask and pray, Amen, Amen, Amen.”

See “the rest of God” in today’s Scripture is a place where we know God is in control. But here’s the key: once we enter that rest, we’re not automatic going to stay there. Life is full of peace stealers. If we watch the news all day, we’re going to worry, be fearful, and on edge. If we get on social media constantly compare ourself to others, we’ll never feel good about who we are because someone more beautiful, more talented, or more

successful.

But if we let people dump all their problems on us, they will steal our peace and exhaust us and there will always be people and circumstances trying to pull us out of God’s rest. But if we’re going to live in peace, we have to put some boundaries up and be careful about what we feed our inner person—encouraging things that build us up and cause us to be positive, hopeful, inspired. Amen.

“In the Night Season”

2 Chronicles 15:7 says, “But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded.” Amen.

Let us pray, “Father, thank You that You are the God of the night seasons. We believe that no matter what comes our way, it’s not a surprise to You, and You still have us in the

palms of Your hands. Today we believe that though it may be night now, morning is coming, its in Jesus’ Name, Amen.”

There are times in all our lives when we’re praying and believing, but we don’t see anything changing. We can feel alone, forgotten. It’s a night season. We can’t see what God is doing, but God is working behind the scenes.

See He does His greatest work in the dark. Our story doesn’t end in the night. If we keep moving forward in faith, keep believing. The bad breaks, the disappointments, the losses, and the sicknesses are simply additional steps on the way to our destiny. It’s just a matter of time before the morning breaks forth, Amen.

“Your Destiny is Calling”

And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father. And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John. Luke 1:59-60

Let us pray, “Father, thank You that You put a promise and dream in our heart. Thank You for calling us to our destiny. We are not going to be moved by who’s not cheering us on. But we know You being for us is more

than enough to get us to where we supposed to be. It’s In Jesus’ Name we pray, Amen, Amen, Amen.”

It’s interesting that when John the Baptist was born, the neighbors and relatives decided his name should be Zechariah, after the father. But even before John was conceived, the angel Gabriel had told Zechariah that his name was John. We all have “theys” in our life. We should take counsel and listen to advice, but we cannot let other people name our future.

See sometimes people will try to name us something we’re not. They’ll name us addicted, or average, or not that talented. Don’t let them put limitations on you and convince you that you can’t accomplish your dreams. The principle is: let your heavenly Father name your future. You are who God says you are—blessed, strong, talented, prosperous, forgiven, and healthy. God is telling us what we can become. Our destiny is calling. We have to believe it, then we’ll see it, Amen.

“Praise Brings Down Walls”

Joshua 6:5 says, “And when they make a long blast with the ram’s horn, when you hear the sound of the trumpet, then all the people shall shout with a great shout, and the wall of the city will fall down flat.” Amen

Let us pray, “Father, thank You that no obstacle is so high and wide that it can withstand Your touch. Thank You that You’re fighting our battles, and You hold victory in

store for the upright. Today we believe that You will get us to where we supposed to be, its In Jesus’ Name we ask and pray, Amen, Amen, Amen.

See if things looked impossible we must remember what God told Joshua. God told Joshua to march around the wall for six days, then on the seventh day on the seventh time around, they were to give a great shout of praise. It didn’t make sense, but God was

saying, “If you praise Me while the wall is still standing, we’ll see things begin to change.”

So will you trust God enough to praise Him in spite of a bad medical report?, in spite of you having a bad day, in spite of the loss of a love one, in spite a bad relationship, but instead thank Him for freedom. Knowing that we’re so close but we don’t see how we can get passed it. Just don’t complain, just turn up your praise. Praise is what’s going to bring the wall down, Amen.

“Ordered Steps”

Psalms 37:23 says, “The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD, and He delights in his way”. Amen

Let us pray, “Father, thank You that You never allow anything out of which You can’t bring good. Thank You that You purposefully order our steps in the way that is best for us.

We believe that You have us right where You want us, and it’s working for us. So we thank You In Jesus’ Name, Amen, Amen, Amen.”

Sometimes God will inconvenience us in order to help somebody else. Instead of getting frustrated when our plans don’t work out, we need to remember that it’s not all about us. We have to quit fighting everything we don’t like. If God has us there, He’s

ordered our steps. It may be uncomfortable, but instead of resisting it, trying to pray it away, why don’t we embrace it? Say, “God, this is where You have us right now, so we’re going to be our best. We may not like it, but we know a secret: it’s all good.” if we’ll stay in faith, everything that was meant to stop us, God is going to use to push us forward. He’s bringing it all together right now, Amen.

“Seeking Better Opportunities

“Lord we ask for Your guidance today as we set out for better opportunities than yesterday. Today do not let us stray from our path for You’re our shepherd, oh Lord. Let Your staff prevent us from any error and let Your eyes watch over us and protect us from all danger because You’re the only God and no matter is too big for You. So, let flattened all issues that may plague our day, its in Jesus name we ask and pray, Amen, Amen, Amen.”

THE BEAUTY OF HOLLAND

I AM OFTEN ASKED TO DESCRIBE THE EXPERIENCE OF RAISING A CHILD WITH DISABILITY - TO TRY TO HELP PEOPLE WHO HAVE NOT SHARED THAT UNIQUE EXPERIENCE TO UNDERSTAND IT, TO IMAGINE HOW IT WOULD FEEL. IT'S LIKE THIS...

WHEN YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE A BABY, IT'S LIKE PLANNING A FABULOUS TRIP TO ITALY. YOU BUY A BUNCH OF GUIDEBOOKS AND MAKE YOUR WONDERFUL PLANS. THE COLISEUM, THE MICHELANGELO DAVID. THE GONDOLAS IN VENICE. YOU LEARN SOME HANDY PHRASES IN ITALIAN. IT'S ALL VERY, VERY EXCITING!

AFTER MONTHS OF EAGER ANTICIPATION, THE DAY FINALLY ARRIVES. YOU PACK YOUR BAGS AND OFF YOU GO. SEVERAL HOURS LATER THE PLANE LANDS. THE FLIGHT ATTENDANT COMES IN AND SAYS, "WELCOME TO HOLLAND.

"HOLLAND!!!" YOU SAY, "WHAT DO YOU MEAN HOLLAND! I SIGNED UP FOR ITALY. I'M SUPPOSED TO BE IN ITALY! ALL MY LIFE I'VE DREAMED OF GOING TO ITALY."

BUT THERE'S A CHANGE IN THE FLIGHT PLAN. THEY LANDED IN HOLLAND AND YOU MUST STAY. THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT THEY HAVEN'T TAKEN YOU TO A HORRIBLE, DISGUSTING, FILTHY PLACE, FULL OF PESTILENCE, FAMINE AND DISEASE. IT'S JUST A DIFFERENT PLANE.

SO YOU MUST GO OUT AND BUY NEW GUIDEBOOKS. AND YOU MUST LEARN A WHOLE NEW LANGUAGE. AND YOU WILL MEET A WHOLE NEW GROUP OF PEOPLE YOU WOULD NEVER HAVE MET.

IT'S JUST A DIFFERENT PLACE. IT'S SLOWER-PACED THAN ITALY, LESS FLASHY THAN ITALY. BUT AFTER YOU'RE BEEN THERE AWHILE AND CATCH YOUR BREATH, YOU BEGIN TO LOOK AROUND, AND YOU BEGIN TO NOTICE THAT HOLLAND HAS WINDMILLS, HOLLAND HAS TULIPS. HOLLAND EVEN HAS REMBRANDTS.

BUT EVERYONE YOU KNOW IS BUSY COMING AND GOING FROM ITALY, AND THEY'RE BRAGGING ABOUT WHAT A WONDERFUL TIME THEY HAD THERE. AND FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE YOU WILL SAY, "YES, THAT'S WHERE I WAS SUPPOSED TO GO. THAT'S WHAT I HAD PLANNED."

AND THE PAIN WILL NEVER, EVER GO AWAY, BECAUSE THE LOSS OF THAT DREAM IS A VERY SIGNIFICANT LOSS.

BUT IF YOU SPEND YOUR LIFE MOURNING THE FACT YOU DIDN'T GO TO ITALY, YOU MAY NEVER BE FREE TO ENJOY THE VERY SPECIAL, THE VERY LOVELY THINGS ABOUT HOLLAND.

SOURCE UNKNOWN

Joyce Meyer: Promises for your Everyday Life - a Daily Devotional

Setting Your Enemies Free

¹⁴ ***Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.*** Romans 12:14

When dealing with past hurts, we all know that it's right to forgive, even when it's difficult. However, few of us rarely take the next step that God wants us to take.

A common misconception is that all we have to do is make the decision to forgive and our job is finished, but Jesus also said, "Invoke blessings upon and pray for the happiness of those who

curse you, implore God's blessing (favor) upon those who abuse you [who revile, reproach, disparage, and high-handedly mis-use you]" (Luke 6:28 AMP). In addition, Romans 12:14 says that we are to bless the people who persecute us and treat us cruelly.

We are to actively bless our enemies. God calls us to extend mercy to people who do not deserve it. Why?

When you forgive, it opens a door for God to heal you, but honesty, it doesn't do much for the person who offended you. But when you bless them, you ask

God to bring truth to them so they can repent and experience the real freedom He provides. Forgiveness sets you free...blessing your enemies sets them free.

Prayer Starter: God, I thank You for helping me walk in forgiveness, but I don't want to stop there. I ask You to bless those who have hurt me. In the same way that You have brought healing to my life, bring healing to them so they can experience Your goodness and walk in Your love.

Making the Most of Your Time

¹⁵ ***See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,*** ¹⁶ ***Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*** Ephesians 5:15-16

Time really does fly, doesn't it? On the other hand, in some situations, it may seem like time crawls! No matter how fast or slow it feels like time goes by, each of us only has a certain amount of time on this earth. With that in mind, I want to ask you, what are you doing with your time?

Time is such a gift from God! I see every day how He takes His time to make us what He wants us to be. And then, in His mercy and grace, He gives us time to get in agreement with what He's doing in our lives so we can

experience His goodness. What a loving God!

So, ask yourself, "Am I in agreement with what God is doing in me? Or, am I struggling and fighting, impatiently trying to do things my way?"

I can assure you, if you're struggling with God, you're just wasting your time, but if you're in agreement with Him, you're using your time for great things.

Remember, God is gracious. He takes His time. We might think He's taking too long when, in His goodness, He is just waiting for us to line up with the work He's doing in us. He won't rush. He is patient. Our struggling only delays our progress.

So maybe this a good time to change

your outlook and start looking ahead to a new way of doing things, a new vision for life, a renewed faith and trust in the One who is always at work in us, and always for our good.

My encouragement to you is to trust God and spend your time getting in agreement with what He is doing in your life. Let Him define your purpose. Know in your heart that He has great plans, and no matter how much time He takes, He loves you, and He always has your best interest at heart.

Prayer Starter: Lord, I want to spend my time agreeing with, not fighting, the great work You are accomplishing in me. I thank You that when I start to waste time, You always remind me that You love me and that Your timing is always best.

God's Agape Love

¹⁶ ***For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*** John 3:16

The Bible talks about various kinds of love. There's the Greek word "phileo," which means friendship or tender affection. Then there's "eros," which is the passionate love we feel for a lover. But there's a third kind, a higher kind of love.

"Agape" is the kind of love God has toward His Son and the human race. It's a love that sacrifices, the love that we see in John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only

Soo..." (NIV)

There are so many scriptures on this topic. It's really something you should sit down and study personally. Another scripture that teaches the concept of agape love is Matthew 5:44. It tells us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us.

It's not difficult to pray for people who are good to you. But it does stretch you to pray for people who have wounded you. It's easy to hang out with your friends at church. But it's harder to seek out that person who looks like they're miserable and alone and just listen to them for awhile. That's agape love. It's sacrificing your comfort to do what's righteous.

You can "agape love" people by being patient with them, by being understanding with them, by saying something encouraging or by not saying anything when you could. As humans, we are inherently selfish, constantly asking, "What about me?" It's time to declare war on selfishness with the power of agape love.

It's time to be good and loving to people on purpose as we study and understand what scripture says about love. And let the agape love of God in you overflow to others

Prayer Starter: Lord, Your powerful agape love is amazing. Empower me as I declare war on selfishness and make a decision to, on purpose, live a life of agape love.

A Bird's Eye View Of The Bible

Old Testament

There are 39 books in the Old Testament library.
There are four types of writing in the Old Testament:
Law, History, Poetry, Prophecy.

It is helpful to know which kind of literature you are reading before you start: is it poetry, or is it history?

LAW

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

The first five books of the Bible are sometimes called the Law of Moses. They give many of God's laws about how to live.

HISTORY

Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1&2 Samuel, 1&2 Kings, 1&2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther.

These 12 historical books cover the occupation of the Promised Land, the time of the Judges, Israel's kings, the fall of the two kingdoms and a return to Jerusalem.

POETRY

Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs.

Nearly one third of the Old Testament is written in poetry. These five poetical books ask profound questions about evil, pain, love, wisdom and God.

PROPHECY

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

The 17 prophetic books account for almost a quarter of the Bible. They are divided into "Major Prophets" (the first five books) and, "Minor Prophets" (the last 12). The "Minor" ones are shorter, not less important.

New Testament

There are 27 books in the New Testament library.
There are three types of writing in the New Testament:
History, Letters, Prophecy.

Before you study a New Testament book it helps to consider what kind of literature you are reading: is it a letter or is it history?

HISTORY

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts

The first four books, called gospels, are not like our modern biographies. But they do give four portraits of Jesus. Acts is part two of Luke, about the early church.

LETTERS

PAUL'S LETTERS

Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon.

We have 13 of Paul's letters. Except for one personal one, Philemon, they were all written to groups of Christians.

OTHER LETTERS

Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude.

We don't know who wrote Hebrews. Tradition states that all the writers of the New Testament, except for John, were martyred.

PROPHECY

Revelation

Written by the apostle John, this book has seven letters to churches and numerous visions about God.



A Prayer for Our World

God, You alone are worthy of honor, glory, and praise. With You, we can overcome every storm—including the global impact COVID-19 is having on our world.

Right now, we are asking You to:

- Heal those who are sick and protect those who are not.
- Give our leaders extra wisdom as they navigate this pandemic and economic uncertainty.
- Strengthen Your global Church. Reveal to us how we can partner together to reach the needs of those around us.
- Calm our fears. Fill us with Your hope, joy, and peace as we continue to trust in You.
- Use this pandemic to pave the way for spiritual renewal. We want Your glory, power, and healing to be on display.

Come Lord Jesus, come.
In Jesus' Name, Amen.

YouVersion

JOY TO THE WORLD

God so loved the world. John 3:16

Every Christmas we decorate our home with nativity scenes from around the world. We have a German nativity pyramid, a manger scene fashioned out of olive wood from Bethlehem, and a brightly colored Mexican folk version. Our family favorite is a whimsical entry from Africa. Instead of more traditional sheep and camels, a hippopotamus gazes contently at the baby Jesus.

The unique cultural perspective brought to life in these nativity scenes warms my heart as I ponder each beautiful reminder that Jesus' birth was not just for one nation or culture. It's good news for the whole earth, a reason for people from every country and ethnicity to rejoice.

The little baby depicted in each of our nativity scenes revealed this truth of God's heart for the entire world. As John wrote in relation to Christ's conversation with an inquisitive Pharisee named Nicodemus, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

The gift of Jesus is good news for everyone. No matter where on earth you call home, Jesus' birth is God's offer of love and peace to you. All who find new life in Christ, "from every tribe and language and people and nation" will one day celebrate God's glory forever and ever (REVELATION 5:9). Lisa M. Samra

In what unique ways do you celebrate the birth of Jesus? How might the reminder of God's love for the whole world bring joy this Christmas season?

Father, thank You for providing salvation through the gift of Your Son

Today's Scripture — John 3:1-8, 13-16

¹ Now there was a pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. ² He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not

with him."

³ Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."

⁴ "How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!"

⁵ Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the spirit. ⁶ Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. ⁷ You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' ⁸ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the spirit."

¹³ No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. ¹⁴ Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wildness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, ¹⁵ that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him."

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Insight

Nicodemus is first mentioned in John 3:1. He was a pharisee and a member of the Sanhedrin, the highest Jewish civil and judicial authority. The Sanhedrin was led by the high priest and consisted of seventy members: "the chief priests, the elders and the teachers of the law" (Mark 14:53). Nicodemus is mentioned again in John 7:45-52 and finally in John 19:38-42. Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man and another prominent member of the council, asked Pilate for Jesus' body to be taken down from the cross. Nicodemus and Joseph embalmed His body and buried Him in a new tomb, which belonged to Joseph (Matthew 27:57-60; Mark 15:43; Luke 23:50-53).

Ministries, Grand Rapids, Michigan,
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Cross Street Recovery Ministry the "Hope Line" is in operation 24 hours per day. Please call 860-754-4606

if you, a friend and/or a family member are in need of counseling and/or are in crisis,

PLEASE dial the "Hope Line". All information will be confidential.

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Let the spirit of God work for you in a Mighty, Mighty Way

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Church office 860-344-9527.or

Rev. Gregory B. Winborne: Days: 860-616-3834

BLACK LIVES MATTER



When you have a scale that is out of balance, to even things up, you can either add more to one side or take away from the other. The **Black Lives Matter** movement suggests that the scales of justice are out of balance.

To get into balance, this movement is asking us to add more attention to the civil rights and treatment of black individuals and ensure that the weight put upon the value of protecting black lives is equal to the weight put upon that of all Americans' lives. This movement is not about taking away from the value of other lives, but, simply, balancing the scales.

To counter with "All Lives Matter" is to suggest that you think the scale is already balanced – I assure you, it is not. The Black Lives Matter movement does not suggest any lives should matter less, just that they all should matter equally as much.

YES, ALL LIVES MATTER
BUT WE'RE FOCUSED ON THE BLACK ONES RIGHT NOW, OK?
— BECAUSE IT IS VERY APPARENT
THAT OUR JUDICIAL SYSTEM DOESN'T KNOW THAT.

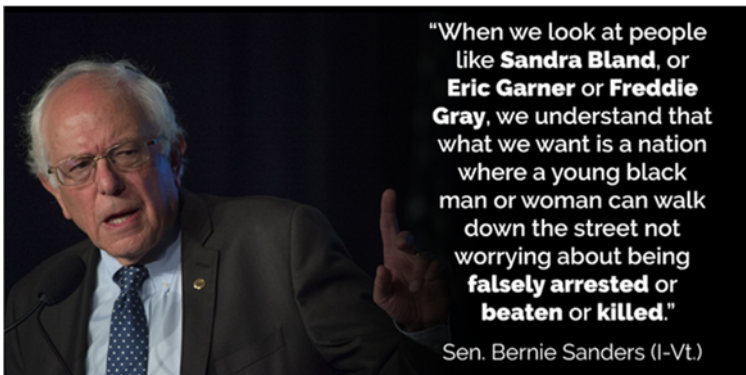
PLUS, IF YOU CAN'T SEE WHY WE'RE EXCLAIMING #BLACKLIVESMATTER YOU ARE PART OF THE PROBLEM.

Lets Be Clear, We Said:
BLACKLIVESMATTER
We NEVER Said
ONLYBLACKLIVESMATTER
That Was The Media, Not Us
In Truth, We Know That
ALLLIVESMATTER
We've Supported Your Lives
Throughout History
Now We Need Your Help w/
BLACKLIVESMATTER
For Blacks Lives Are In Danger

FREEDOM IS NEVER VOLUNTARILY GIVEN BY THE OPPRESSOR; IT MUST BE DEMANDED BY THE OPPRESSED.
-MLKJ

Law and order exist for the purpose of establishing justice and when they fail in this purpose they become the dangerously structured dams that block the flow of social progress.

– Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



"When we look at people like **Sandra Bland**, or **Eric Garner** or **Freddie Gray**, we understand that what we want is a nation where a young black man or woman can walk down the street not worrying about being **falsely arrested** or **beaten** or **killed**."

Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.)

Until justice is blind to color, until education is unaware of race, until opportunity is unconcerned with the color of men's skins, emancipation will be a proclamation but not a fact.
– Lyndon B. Johnson

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

<p>Sunday 8:45 a.m. Church School 10:00 a.m. Worship Service 2nd Sunday Senior Usher Board Meeting (following service) Youth Meeting 1st & 4th Sunday's (following service)</p> <p>Monday 6:00 p.m. Zumba 7:00-9:00 p.m. Bible Study, Eddy Shelter 7:00 Media Ministry (1st and 3rd of month)</p> <p>Tuesday Special Prayer for Pastor Harvill 6:00—7:00 p.m. Prayer meeting and</p>	<p>bible study.</p> <p>Wednesday 6:00 p.m. Zumba 6:00 p.m. Ministerial Staff (1st of month)</p> <p>Thursday 6:00 p.m. Steward Board 7:00 p.m. Trustee Board (2nd of month)</p> <p>Friday Day of Fasting 6:00 p.m. Vision Choir (3rd & 4th of month) 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm Cross Street Recovery Ministry (room 2)</p>	<p>Saturday 10:00 a.m. Pastors Aide (2nd) 11:00 a.m. Security Ministry Meeting (2nd Saturday of month) 12:00 noon Missionaries (2nd Saturday of month)</p> <p>Choir Rehearsals Men - 7 p.m. Monday Women - Tuesday & Friday before 5th Sunday Children - 7 p.m. Friday before 1st Sunday Unity - 7 p.m. Thursday Praise & Worship Choir 7:00 pm Wednesday</p>
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MONTHLY ACTIVITIES

<p>Sunday Morning Worship Time: EVERY SUNDAY @ 10:00 AM Join Zoom Meeting Link: (Just type into your browser) https://zoom.us/j/959628798 Dial-In Phone#: (929) 205-6099 Code: 959628798#</p>	<p>BIBLE STUDY INFO: Time: EVERY TUESDAY @ 6:00 PM Join Zoom Meeting Link: (Just type into your browser) https://zoom.us/j/562367770 Dial-In Phone#: (929)205-6099 Code: 562367770#</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Sunday School ZOOM Meetings</p> <p>8:30 a.m.- Dr. Long's Sunday School Class Voice Only Call: (929) 205-6099; Code: 734629713# Web-link for Video Call: https://zoom.us/j/734629713</p> <p>9:00 a.m.- Contemporary Sunday School: Adults Voice Only Call: (929) 205-6099; Code: 140827210# Web-link for Video Call: https://zoom.us/j/140827210</p> <p>9:30 a.m.- Beginners Sunday School: Ms. Carolyn Smith Voice Only Call: (929) 205-6099; Code: 233007146# Web-link for Video Call: https://zoom.us/j/233007146</p> <p>11:00 a.m.- Primary Sunday School: Rev. Earlene Grant Voice Only Call: (929) 205-6099; Code: 614890401# Web-link for Video Call: https://zoom.us/j/614890401</p> <p>11:30 a.m.- Juniors Sunday School: Rev. Greg Winborne Voice Only Call: (929) 205-6099; Code: 856361645# Web-link for Video Call: https://zoom.us/j/856361645</p>
<p>12Noon PRAYER MEETING: Time: EVERY WEDNESDAY @ 12:00 PM Join Zoom Meeting Link: (Just type into your browser) https://zoom.us/j/528449909 Dial-In Phone#: (929) 205-6099 Code: 528449909#</p>	<p>6pm PRAYER MEETING: Time: EVERY WEDNESDAY @ 6:00 PM Join Zoom Meeting Link: (Just type into your browser) https://zoom.us/j/695948020 Dial-In Phone#: (929) 205-6099 Code: 695948020#</p>	

We thank you for your generous giving. Ways you can give:

- Online: crossstreetamezion.org
- 1. Realm, (Realm: <https://onrealm.org/TheCross/-/give/> TJXKDEVIXE)
- 2. Text 73256 (Thecross)
- 3. PayPal, CASHAPP: \$TheCross440
- 4. Mail: P.O. Box 223 Middletown, Ct 06457,
- 5. Drop off on Sunday 11:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.
- 6. Call the office for someone to pick up
- 7. Church outside Lockbox

(Note: you can find links on the website; <http://www.crossstreetamezion.org/Give>)

The Cross Street Journal is published Bi-monthly. It can be found on our website: **crossstreetamezion.org & in the front lobby.** If you would like a PDF copy sent to you, Email your request to: **ken46@snet.net.** If you have an article or information (word count 1000 - 1500 or less) for current and future publications the deadline for this information is the Monday after the 2nd Sunday of each Month. **You may submit your information in the following ways:** place the information on a CD (Window format) and leave it in the Cross Street office, E-mail Ken Simmons (Ken46@snet.net), or give it to him. **Praise God!!!**

The Year of Expected "Miracles"



CROSS STREET A.M.E. ZION CHURCH

Organized in 1823

440 West Street P.O. Box 223
Middletown, CT 06457

Phone: 860-344-9527 Fax: 860-344-1740

crossstreetchurch@snet.net
www.crossstreetamezion.org

Sunday School — 8:45 a.m.
Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Rev. Moses L. Harvill, M. Div.,
Pastor

Email: mharvill@snet.net

The Rev. Dr. Terry L. Jones
Presiding Elder

Mrs. D. Diane Proctor
Missionary Supervisor

The Right Reverend Dennis Proctor
Presiding Prelate

Ministerial Staff

- Rev. Robyn Anderson-Turner
- Rev. William D. Wilson
- Rev. Ella Frances Perry
- Rev. Karen Nesmith
- Rev. James Battle
- Rev. Myrtle Turner
- Rev. Gregory Winborne
- Rev. Joyce Johnson
- Rev. Earlene Grants
- Sister Felicia Freeman



"I am a Christian"

By Maya Angelou

When I say ... "I am a Christian"
I'm not shouting "I'm clean livin'."
I'm whispering "I was lost,
Now I'm found and forgiven."

When I say ... "I am a Christian"
I don't speak of this with pride.
I'm confessing that I stumble
And need Christ to be my guide.

When I say ... "I am a Christian"
I'm not trying to be strong.
I'm professing that I'm weak
And need His strength to carry on.

When I say ... "I am a Christian"
I'm not bragging of success.
I'm admitting I have failed
And need God to clean my mess.

When I say ... "I am a Christian"
I still feel the sting of pain.
I have my share of heartaches
So I call upon His name.

When I say ... "I am a Christian"
I'm not holier than thou.
I'm just a simple sinner
Who received God's good grace,
somehow!

The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:9-13 (KJV)

Our Father which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom
come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is
in heaven. Give us this day our daily
bread. And forgive us our debts, as we
forgive our debtors. And lead us not
into temptation, but deliver us from evil:
For thine is the kingdom, and the
power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.



Then the Lord answered me and said:
Write the vision and make it plain on
tablets, that he may run who reads it.
Habakkuk 2:2

The Jabez Prayer

And Jabez called on the God of Israel
saying, "**Oh, that You would bless
me indeed, and enlarge my territory,
that Your hand would keep me from
evil, that I may nor cause pain!**" So
God granted him what he requested.
1 Chronicles 4:10 (NKJV)

"God's Word

*For the word of God is quick, and power-
ful, and sharper than any two-edged
sword, piercing even to the dividing
asunder of soul and spirit, and of the
joints and marrow, and is a discerner of
the thoughts and intents of the heart"*
Hebrews 4:12

Prayer: Forever, O Lord, your Word is
settled in heaven. I bless you because
you have given me rest according to all
that you have promised to me. Not one
word of all your good promises has ever
failed. In light of this truth, I will walk in
your Word at all times.
I love your Word, Father, it is a lamp
unto my feet, and a light unto my path.
All of your words are pure, O God, and
you are a shield to me. Lord God, your

way is perfect, and your Word is tried.
You are a shield and a mighty buckler to
me as I trust in you.
With your Word you made the heavens,
O Lord. all of your promises are yes in
Christ, unto your glory, O God. You
have spoken through your Word since
ancient times, in order to give light to
those who sit in darkness, and you guide
my feet in the way of peace.
Your Word is quick, alive, and powerful,
and sharper than any two-edged sword.
It pierces even to the dividing asunder of
my soul and spirit, and of my joints and
marrow, and is a discerner of the
thoughts and intents of my heart.
Father, I am thankful for your Word, and
I will endeavor to walk in the light of your
Word all the days of my life.

If you were to die today, do you know where you will spend eternity ???

Doxology

Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.
Jude 24-25