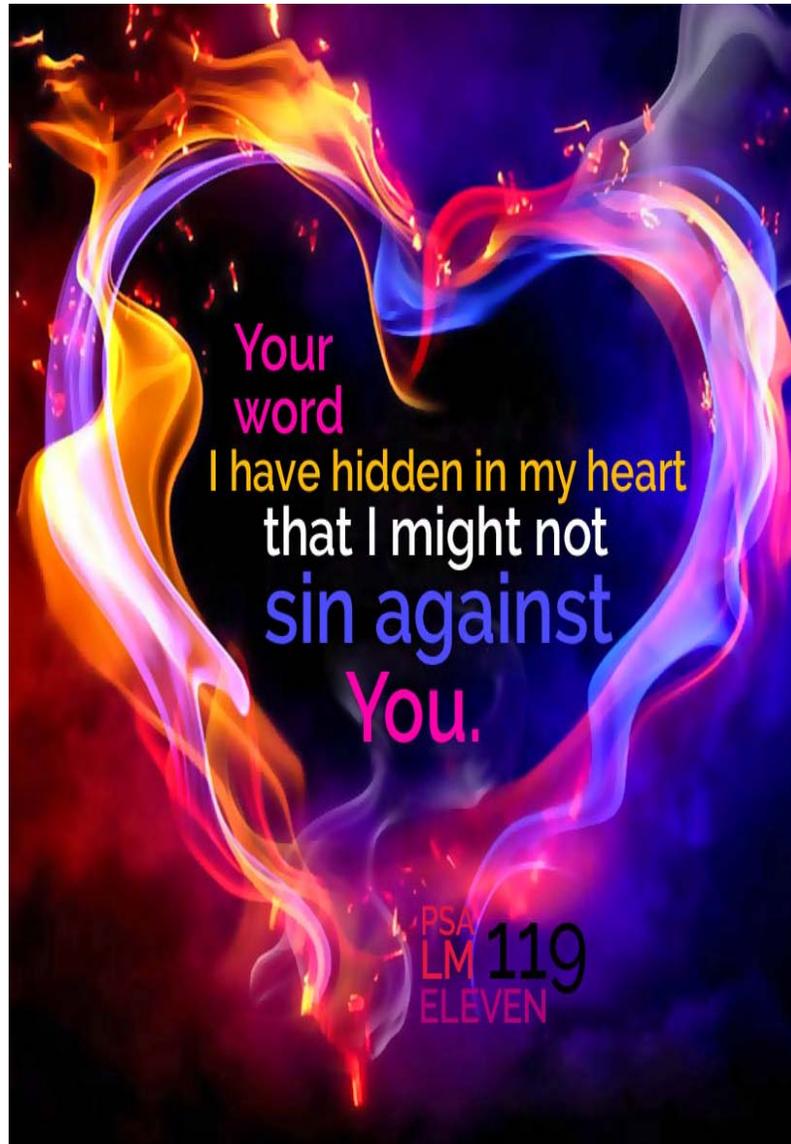


# Daily Devotional

September 2016



## Foreword

This month we will be closing out our study of Exodus as well as beginning I Corinthians—a very good combination. Recall that whenever our devotions cover only a few verses in a chapter, I give you a reading assignment that may or may not relate to the lesson discussion. These additional assignments are to help develop the habit of daily reading in God's Word.

I trust you are continuing to find the daily Bible reading and devotional comments to be a blessing. Even after studying to teach these books, I find I can't be reminded too often of the timeless truths contained in God's Word. For each new day and each new set of circumstances brings the need to recall truth afresh and make new application.

I am blessed we are working at this together, and let us praise God for the gift of His priceless Word.

In His grace,



Kevin Redig



Bible references in this booklet are taken from the New King James Version (NKJV) or the 1986 New International Version (NIV)

# Finishing Exodus

Thursday, September 1: Read Exodus 34  
(Exodus 13: 21-22)

We are trying to discern from the study of the newly redeemed Israelites, how God wants a redeemed people to live. The first thing we learn is that God intends to be personally involved with His redeemed—to have relationship with them. Consider Exodus 13:21-22 and 14:19-20.

*By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. Neither the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people.*

*Then the angel of the Lord, who had been traveling in front of Israel's army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them, coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel.*

Do you see that God is both going before the redeemed to lead them and providing a rear guard behind to protect them. Can you think of any New Testament parallels? How about the promise in Hebrews 13:5 that God will “*never leave us nor forsake us;*” or right at the end of the Great Commission where Jesus promises that “*I will be with you always even to the end of the age.*”

Deism, among other things, teaches that God is an all powerful but isolated and uninterested observer of His creation. It is not that deism is illogical, it is that it is not Biblical! From a relational standpoint, is there any promise more precious to a New Testament believer, than,

*“I will ask the Father and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever. . .”* (John 14:17)

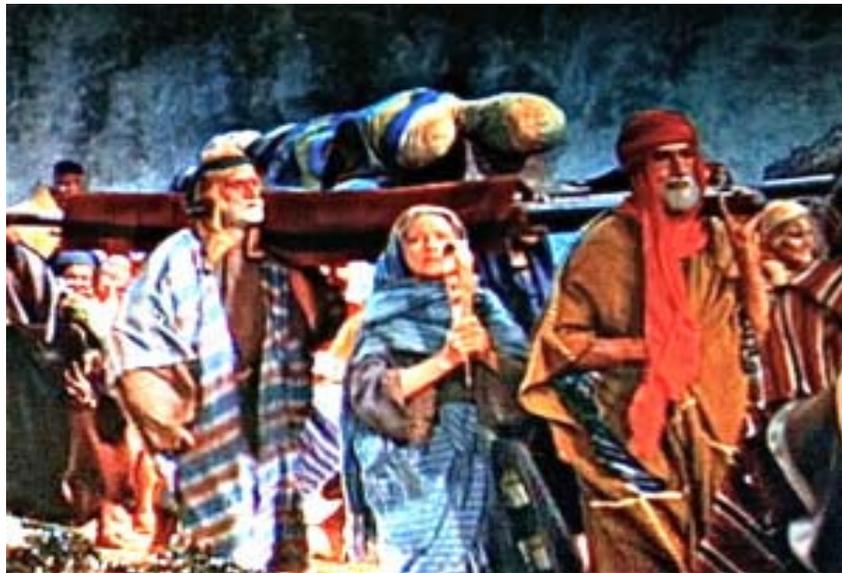
This is because God made us to have a relationship with Him, so it should be no surprise that it is an immediate part of what we see as the heritage of the redeemed—and this includes you and me.

# Finishing Exodus

Friday, September 2: Read Genesis 50  
(Exodus 13: 21-22)

The second thing that we can learn about God's expectation for the life of the redeemed is the role of faith. The call for the redeemed to trust God is a major theme throughout Scripture. There are many great expositions to which we could turn, but for today let me point out one of my favorites. It is a minor passage, often overlooked, but still one of my favorites because it shows the premium God places upon seemingly insignificant acts of faith. Exodus 13:19 tells us that:

*Moses took the bones of Joseph with him. . .*



Why would Moses do this? He did this because back in Genesis 50, at the end of his life, Joseph both extracted a promise from his family as well as closed out his life with a clear expression of his faith in God.

# Finishing Exodus

**Friday, September 2: Read Genesis 50  
(Exodus 13: 21-22)** (Continued)

Exodus 13:19 relates these words of the dying Joseph:

*God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up with you from this place.*

Joseph made his family promise not to bury him in Egypt. He did this because he believed the promise of God to bring the descendants of Abraham—his family—back to the land of Canaan, and he wanted to go with them.

Do you see it? Joseph believed God was going to fulfill a promise over 400 years in the future, and he was so certain of it that he wouldn't let them bury his bones. Joseph wanted his bones kept ready for the Exodus—400 years before it happened. Can you imagine those bones standing as a beacon of hope for the Jewish people during their time of slavery bearing witness to one man's faith in the promises of God.

When you think of the life of Joseph, there are many great examples of his faith in God. And, we learn from the Bible how God elevated him to the number two position in all of Egypt. Yet when the book of Hebrews gives an account of the great acts of faith of Old Testament saints, how does it summarize the life of Joseph?

*By faith Joseph, when his end was near. . .gave instructions about his bones. Hebrews 11:22*

I love this remembrance of this seemingly insignificant act because it teaches me that what God takes note of in my life are the times I trust Him, whether or not they seem noteworthy to others! We please our God, and draw His attention, when we trust Him.

# Finishing Exodus

## Monday September 5: Read Exodus 14

We have not finished considering the importance of faith in the life of the redeemed. Although God is leading the Israelites, He chooses to lead them on an unorthodox route. Why? To begin with, in Exodus 13:17, He keeps them away from the Philistines because He doesn't think they are ready for war. And then in Exodus 14:3 we read:

*Pharaoh will think the Israelites are wandering around the land in confusion. . .*

God led them in a circle. The text goes on to tell us God's purpose—that He might be glorified and the Egyptians taught a lesson. As the narrative continues the outcome is exactly as God said it would be. Pharaoh changes his mind yet again and decides to get his slaves back. How do the Israelites feel about this?

*They were terrified and cried out to the Lord.* Exodus 14:10

They even accuse Moses of bringing them out into the desert to die—forgetting the fact that it was God who redeemed them out of Egypt. We must realize that this was no accident. By design God brought His redeemed people into this seemingly hopeless situation. Why would He do that? So they would continue their development in learning to trust Him in any and every situation. Mark it down and remember the guidance that Moses gives:

*Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. . .the Lord will fight for you; you need only be still.* Exodus 14:13-14

There are times in our lives when the need is great, but there is nothing we can do. Why would God let this happen? Because He wants His redeemed to learn to trust Him! There are times when all we can do is to stand still and watch the deliverance of the Lord. For the God who formed a nation and brought them out of Egypt is equally capable of working in our lives

# Finishing Exodus

## Tuesday, September 6: Read I Samuel 17

While we are thinking about the subject of faith, I wanted to have you see another aspect of the “faith of the redeemed” that is manifest by David in this chapter of I Samuel. Once again, the Israelites are in a jam—what are they to do? If we apply what we learned last time, they are to turn to the Lord and bring the situation to Him. In faith, they should then “stand still and watch the deliverance of the Lord.” And that Biblical advice applies to every single Israelite on the scene but one! For God has a different faith response in mind for David, and we need to understand it as well.

You will recognize this chapter right away as the story of David and Goliath. Remember, this is set in a time when the Philistines were militarily more powerful than the Israelites. Furthermore, the entire Israelite camp was in awe and afraid to challenge the Philistine champion, Goliath. When David arrives on the scene, he is shocked that no



one has taken up the challenge, and so he does! How can a young shepherd boy hope to overcome a trained military professional?

Continued on the next page

# Finishing Exodus

## Tuesday, September 6: Read I Samuel 17 (Continued)

First, notice David has a history of seeing God's faithfulness, and he is able to remember it in a crisis. (I Samuel 17:34-35) Then note his ability to make application to present circumstances in Verse 37:

*The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion  
and the paw of the bear will deliver me from  
the hand of this Philistine.*

And David is not just bluster, read what he says standing in front of the giant—a place no one else dares go:

*You come against me with sword and spear and javelin,  
but I come against you in the name of the  
Lord Almighty. . . Samuel 17:45*

What a powerful expression of reliance upon God's power rather than his own. Now here is the part I most want you to understand. Just before battle is joined between David and Goliath, look closely at what David says and does:

*. . .it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the  
battle is the Lord's. . .David ran quickly toward the  
battle line to meet him. . .I Samuel 17:47-48*

Do you see how this is both the same and different than the situation in Exodus 14. In both cases, faith carried the day! However, the Israelites were to "stand still and watch," while David was to "charge!"

Here is the point of application for us: there are times when there is nothing that we can do but stand still and watch the Lord provide deliverance. Then there are other times when He is calling us to charge the giants in our lives. But always, always we are to place our faith in God Almighty!

# Finishing Exodus

## Wednesday, September 7: Read Numbers 14

Remember, we are investigating God's expectations for those whom He has redeemed. One of the first things we saw in the text of Exodus is that God wanted those He has redeemed to begin trusting Him—and not without reason. Consider how God showed His capability and power through the plagues and His complete sovereignty over circumstances by destroying Pharaoh's army at the Red Sea, and it didn't stop there. By the time we reach Numbers 14, God has been supplying the needs of the redeemed for almost a year—right down to food and water. God was teaching His redeemed that He was both able and trustworthy so that His redeemed should develop dependence upon Him.

In today's reading, we have a very important lesson. Notice in Verses 1-4 how upset the people are, even to the point of wanting to go back to Egypt! What could have caused this? If you read Chapter 13, you will find that those sent to spy out the land have brought back the report that the land is filled with "giants." This was a whole new problem. But is it too much for a God who brought on the plagues, defeated the most powerful monarch on earth, brought water out of a rock, and rain down food from heaven? Numbers 14:11-12 tells us exactly how God feels about the response of the people; specifically, their lack of faith. Let me sum up God's attitude with a quote:

*"How long will these people treat Me with contempt?"*

Do you see what we are doing when we fail to trust God—especially after all the reasons He has given us to trust Him? We are treating Him with contempt. Don't go there—stay clear of this affront to God—for discipline is sure to follow, just as it did with the Israelites. There is no sense spending our lives wandering in the wilderness—especially when we have such a capable and loving God!

# Finishing Exodus

**Thursday, September 8: Read Romans 1:17;  
Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38**

Why look at three separate verses of Scripture today, rather than read a single chapter? Because I want you to be absolutely sure of God's call to live by faith upon those who have been redeemed by the work of Jesus Christ! Furthermore, these three passages of Scripture in the New Testament are all a quotation from the Old Testament—Habakkuk 2:4. Again, it should be clear, it has always been God's intent for the redeemed that they live a life of dependence upon Him. That's why Hebrews 11:6 says:

*...without faith it is impossible to please God.*

This is one of the *big-picture* things we can learn from the book of Exodus and our scrutiny of the ups and downs of the Israelites. If we step back and look at the situation as a whole, here is what we see: the Israelites were a people supernaturally redeemed by the hand of God. As they saw His power, they trusted Him. But then the circumstances and challenges of this life repeatedly caused them to doubt. That doubt often led to sin, and sin to discipline. Time after time, God would get their attention, show them His power, rescue them from yet another difficulty—all so that they would learn to trust Him, for His **righteous ones shall live by faith!**

Do you see that this has direct application to us. For God has supernaturally redeemed us through the work of the cross and made us “new creatures” in Christ. We too are His righteous ones in that we have been justified—declared righteous in His sight because of the imputed righteousness of Christ. Just like the Israelites, we too are going to face difficulties and challenges in this life. What does God want us to do—as a first principle, as a first course of action? He wants us to depend upon Him—for His **righteous ones will live by faith!**

# Finishing Exodus

## Friday, September 9: Read Romans 10

One final thing to consider regarding the walk of faith that God desires for the redeemed. Hebrews 11:1 says:

*Now faith is being sure of what we hope for  
and certain of what we do not see.*

After spending time studying the Greek words in this passage, let me give you a slightly adjusted translation based upon the work of various Greek scholars: *Now faith is the 'title-deed' of our confidence and evidence of what we do not see.* You see our faith is like holding title to something. It is also evidence of things that we can't otherwise see. Those two ideas are helpful, but at the same time to define *belief* or *trust* as holding title and having evidence doesn't quite make sense. That is until I saw the connection to Romans 10:17:

*Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message,  
and the message is heard through the Word of Christ.*

Although, as human beings, our faith can be in many things, this passage is telling us that the faith that matters to God, the faith that is to be the legacy of His "righteous ones," is to have as its object the Word of God. Furthermore, it is the study of the Word of God that prompts our faith. Here is the connection, when our study of the Word of God brings us to the point of belief—trust—in a specific truth of the Word of God, it is as if we *hold title* to reality. Furthermore, it is the Word of God as a source that provides evidence of things we would have no other way of knowing, that is things not seen. God wants the redeemed to depend upon Him. Our dependence is stimulated by time spent in the Word. And, when we choose to depend upon what He has revealed and preserved for us, it is the same as holding title to reality. That's why if you will keep reading the devotionals, I'll keep writing them.

# Finishing Exodus

## Monday, September 12: Read Romans 6

We have been investigating the quality of life expected of the redeemed by studying post-Exodus Israel. Thus far we have seen that God intends to be with His redeemed—to keep and preserve. Secondly, we have learned that He expects the redeemed to live in dependence upon Him. Here is a third thing we can learn about the redeemed. From the moment a person is redeemed, the old master will try to get his slave back and will go through all kinds of machinations to do so.

The Israelites were hardly gone from Egypt when Exodus 14 reveals that Pharaoh once again changed His mind and decided to recover his slaves. Do you see what I am saying—the oppressor always tries to recapture those redeemed! It is so important for us to realize this, because it has spiritual application as well. For, from the very moment a child of God has been redeemed from the slave market of sin and transferred from the dominion of darkness into the kingdom of the Son (Colossians 1:13), the old master (which can be considered to be the world, the flesh, and the Devil) is trying to regain control. You can see this struggle from the first verse of Romans 6:

*Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?*

This is a hypothetical question raised by a saved (redeemed) person. Of course, Paul's answer is:

*God forbid! We died to sin how can we live in it any longer?*

Now hear me carefully at this point. I am not saying you can lose your salvation! I am saying you can choose to serve an old master. God forbid! That would be even worse than the Israelites voluntarily marching back to Egypt and once again taking up their old lives as slaves. Are there areas in your life where you have allowed yourself to be oppressed? We'll consider this further tomorrow.

# Finishing Exodus

## Tuesday, September 13: Read Colossians 2

We began a discussion yesterday on the truth that God expects His redeemed to dramatically break their relationship with their former oppressor. In the same way that Pharaoh went after his former slaves to recapture them, so too do the world, the flesh, and the Devil seek to regain control over each redeemed child of God. But what each one of us needs to know is that God broke the hold of Pharaoh as oppressor forever.

*The water flowed back and covered the chariots and horsemen—the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed the Israelites into the sea. Not one of them survived. But the Israelites went through on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left. That day the Lord saved Israel. . . And when the people saw the great power the Lord displayed. . . the people feared the Lord and put their trust in Him. . . Exodus 14:28-31*

For His redeemed today He has provided for us an equally dramatic spiritual deliverance.

*When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code. . . He took it away nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. Colossians 2:13-15*

In the same way that Pharaoh was completely defeated by the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, so too sin and the forces of evil that had dominion over us have been completely broken by the work of the cross. Not only that, but Jesus made a public spectacle of their total defeat through the work of the cross and resurrection to follow. We sing *Victory in Jesus* because there really is one—He is the author and perfecter of our faith. (Hebrews 12:1-2)

# Finishing Exodus

## Wednesday, September 14: Read Exodus 15

What then should be our response, as those who have been redeemed from the slave market of sin...

*with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. . .chosen before the creation of the world, but revealed in these last times for our sake?*

I Peter 1:19-20

We should sing the song of the redeemed, just like the Israelites did in Exodus 15! Much of this song has direct application to New Testament saints:

*I will sing to the Lord for He is highly exalted (Verse 1)*

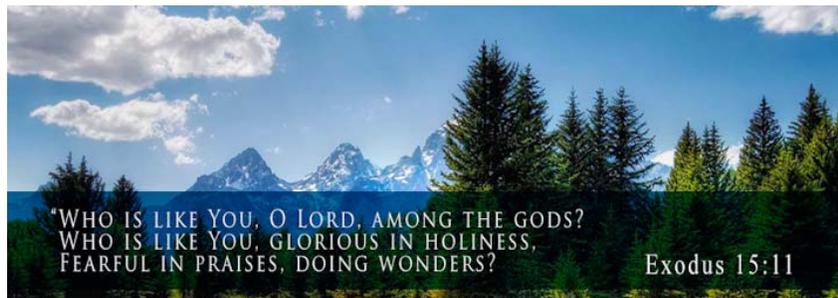
*...the Lord is my strength and my song;*

*He has become my salvation (Verse 2)*

*Your right hand, O Lord, was majestic in power. Your right hand, O Lord, shattered the enemy (Verse 6)*

*...in the greatness of Your power, You threw down those who opposed you (Verse 7)*

*Who among the gods is like you, O Lord? Who is like you—majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders? (Verse 11)*

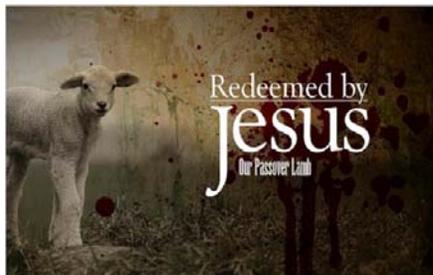


# Finishing Exodus

**Wednesday, September 14: Read Exodus 15**  
(Continued)

And, there is much more. Of course, the Israelites sang of the specifics of their day, the horse and rider thrown into the sea. So too we can sing regarding the specifics of our redemption: my sins have been washed away; the power of sin has been broken; God prepares a place for me that where He is I might be with Him.

No wonder various forms of the Song of the Redeemed have been sung since the beginning of the Church.



*Redeemed how I love to  
proclaim it!  
Redeemed by the blood  
of the lamb;  
Redeemed through his  
infinite mercy,  
His child, and forever,  
I am.*

Although the singing of the song is no guarantee that we will walk in obedience (as the Israelites failed to do shortly), it is a very good practice for us to regularly reflect on the many facets of the great redemption that is ours in Jesus Christ.

## Exodus is Finished

I hope you have been blessed by our time in the book of Exodus. Although it describes the physical and spiritual struggles of another people at another time, it lays a tremendous foundation for understanding the redemption that is ours in Jesus Christ, and is a source of much rich application. And all God's people said, "Amen!"

# I Corinthians Flashbacks

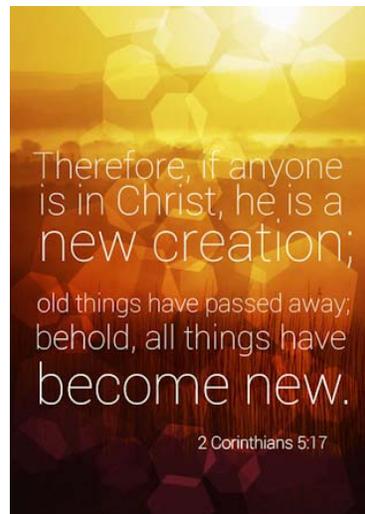
## Thursday, September 15: Read I Corinthians 1

*After spending parts of two years on our study of First Corinthians, it doesn't seem like we are giving it its due to move through it in just a few weeks in September and October. I recommend that you spend time meditating upon as much as you can recall or glean from the chapter prior to turning to my devotional comments. I hope you enjoy the flashbacks!*

I would like to draw your attention to two things regarding what occurs when we are saved. First, when a person places his or her faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ, the most extraordinary transformation occurs, a transformation with many facets:

- A spiritual birth occurs (I Corinthians 2:14-15)
- The one who believes becomes a “new creation” in Christ (II Corinthians 5:17)
- The believer gains an eternal inheritance (Ephesians 1:14).

For the purposes of today's reading, I want to draw your attention to the status or position that is the standing of every child of God. Verse 2 states that the saints in Corinth are sanctified in Christ. And, Verses 30-31 state that because every believer is “in Christ Jesus,” He has become their righteousness, holiness, and redemption.



# **I Corinthians Flashbacks**

**Thursday, September 15: Read I Corinthians 1**  
(Continued)

This standing is even more powerful because the book makes clear that the people who made up the Corinthian church had some very significant problems with respect to carnality in the church. Although our position should never excuse our carnality, this situation makes clear the secure foundation from which we can appropriate the provision of God to have victory over all aspects of sin that seek to contaminate our lives. Stated another way, don't let failure discourage you or cause you to pull back from fellowship. Understand who and what you are in Christ, confess your sin, and move forward to grow in grace and knowledge.

The second thing I would like to call to your attention is how we "gained" this extraordinary standing! It was through faith in the gospel. We gained our standing "in Christ" from hearing and believing the good news about Jesus Christ and what He accomplished for us on the cross. Verse 17 reminds us that it was not by human wisdom that we were saved, but through the message of the cross. The message of the cross may be foolishness to the world, but it has resulted in the most marvelous of transformations in our own lives.

Those transformations are our testimony, and we have to guard it, cherish it, and never give it away in order to be more palatable to the world around us. For the cross is the power of God for those of us who have been saved. But it is also the one message that needs to be heard by all those who are yet to be saved.

# I Corinthians Flashbacks

## Friday, September 16: Read I Corinthians 2

Verse 2 is one of the most arresting passages in Scripture:

*For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you  
except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.*

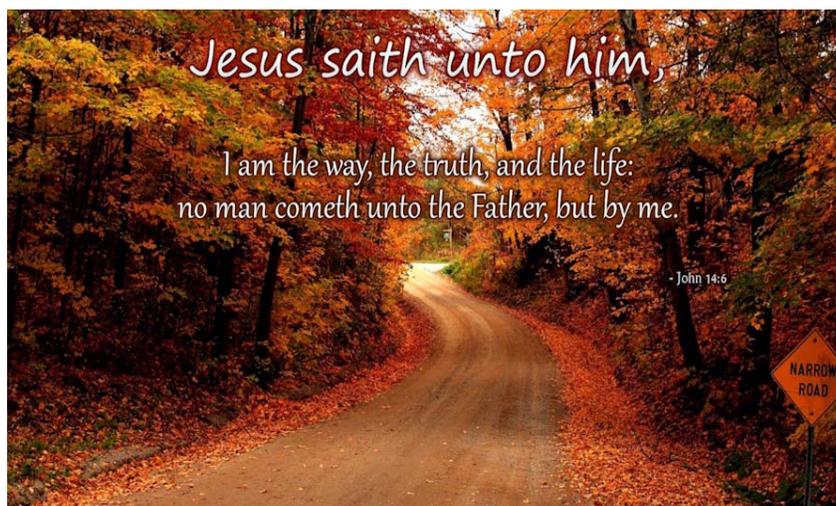
In short, Paul is saying that the focus of my interaction with you—and this was true everywhere he traveled—is going to center upon the person and work of our Savior!

Why would Paul do this? Surely, it made him sort of an oddball everywhere he went, dismissed or ridiculed as a religious zealot, not to be taken seriously. So again I ask, why would he do this (and why should we follow his example)? Let me give you two reasons

First, the Gospel is the...

*power of God unto the salvation of everyone who believes.*  
Romans 1:16

And, the focal point of this Gospel is Jesus Christ.



# I Corinthians Flashbacks

Friday, September 16: Read I Corinthians 2  
(Continued)

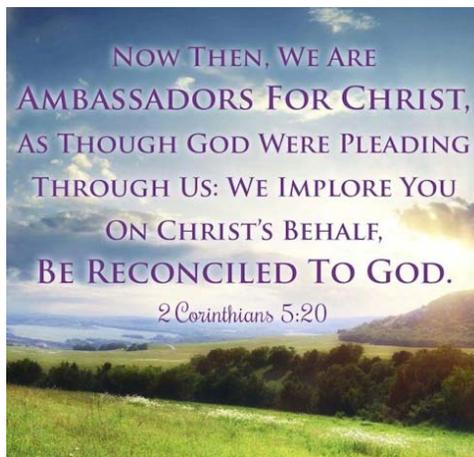
If you are going to spend time with people and build relationships with them, there is nothing more important that you can do than to introduce them to the one message that has the power to save. To do less is to not really love or care for them.

Second, God has given us the role of “ambassador” (II Corinthians 5:20) and called us to be His witnesses (Acts 1:8). So then, to what are we to bear witness, whom do we represent, and to what people have we been sent?

We are Christ's ambassadors, and we have been sent to lost mankind! And we are to bear witness to the one thing that takes precedence over all else—the so-great salvation that is available in Christ. We must be witnesses to forgiveness of sin, eternal life, and justification—all so that we might ensure that the lost are reconciled to our heavenly Father.

This is the one point of discussion that has eternal ramifications. When you think about it, the bulk of so much of our daily conversation is just drivel in comparison. That is why Paul says:

*Let your conversation always be full of salt (the Gospel),  
seasoned with grace (the message of salvation through faith  
alone in Christ alone) Colossians 4:6*



# I Corinthians Flashbacks

## Monday, September 19: Read Colossians 3:16 and I Corinthians 2:16

I couldn't even make it through Chapter 2 without spending a second day. That's because there is a concept of momentous import right at the end of the chapter that we should reinforce. Let me just remind you of one verse:

*But we have the mind of Christ.*

I believe that this is a reference to the Word of God. Not only does the context support that assertion, but that is why I also had you read Colossians 3:16—what do you suppose it is talking about when it gives believers the admonition to:

*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. . . ?*

Again, in context, it almost has to be a reference to the Word of God. Now as Christians, we know the importance of the Word of God, since it is God-breathed! And we are so often encouraged to spend time reading the Word—in fact the purpose of these devotionals is solely to prompt time in the Word remembering what we have learned.

But for today, I want to allow this passage to speak to us such that it gives us additional motivation to daily spend time in the Word. For, if it truly is the mind of Christ, then by spending time in the Word of God we can find out directly what our Savior is thinking—His thoughts, attitudes, and affections. He has revealed His mind to us, and He has preserved what He has revealed. What an absolutely remarkable gift from God we have when we hold a Bible in our hands. Why would we let anything keep us from daily coming to the font of living water and drinking? And by way of contrast, there is no way we can know our Savior, know what's on His mind, know what pleases Him, unless we do. Praise God for the way He has revealed Himself to us.

# I Corinthians Flashbacks

## Tuesday, September 20: Read John 5

In particular, I am wanting you to note Jesus' stinging indictment of the religious leaders of His day which follows His healing of the invalid on the Sabbath. Did you note when Jesus said:

*"You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life."*

Now I want you to connect this to what we have seen in I Corinthians 2—that in the Scriptures we have the "**mind of Christ**." Then note two things. First, nearly every religion has its collection of religious writings: Muslims have the Koran, Mormons the Book of Mormon, Hindus the Vedas. What makes the Bible completely different, and allows it to stand above all else, is that it is the mind of God revealed to man. This, by the way, is not our claim about the Bible; but rather, God's claim about the Bible to man.

Second, there are adherents to other religions that may know their *scriptures* better than we know ours (to our shame). Furthermore, it is even possible for the Christian to thoroughly know the Bible, but to do so in some sort of academic manner which reduces the text to facts, genre, and sterile text. John 5 reminds us, as does I Corinthians 2:16, that when the Bible is rightly understood, we are understanding God's thinking on a particular matter. Or stated another way, the Bible is not primarily meant to be a medium of scholarship, but instead a medium of fellowship between God above and His disciples here below. Therefore, it is always important to come to the Word with a humble and prepared heart that we might better know the "Living Word" who stands unabashedly behind a proper understanding of the written Word!

# I Corinthians Flashbacks

## Wednesday, September 21: Read I Corinthians 3

The way this chapter begins should really get our attention:

*Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual  
but as worldly—mere infants in Christ.*

Paul is leveling an indictment against his audience—calling them “worldly!” That might not seem like much of an indictment, but it is. Before looking further at the word Paul has chosen, I want it to be perfectly clear that Paul has clearly identified for us that his audience consists of believers.

How do we know that? First, he is writing to the Church in Corinth, as opposed to an evangelistic outreach. Second, he addresses them as “brothers”—a reference to fellow members of the Body of Christ. And the clincher, he acknowledges that they are “*mere infants in Christ.*” In other words, he is talking to *baby believers* in terms of maturity.

Now what is the nature of the charge Paul levels against the Corinthian believers? The Greek word is “sarkikos.” Literally, it means “pertaining to the flesh,” which is why it is often translated “carnal.” The idea is to be living dominated by the desires of the flesh (world), rather than in step with the desires of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, Paul documents the evidence of carnality present in the church of Corinth: jealousy, quarreling, and so on. We need to understand that whenever sin has a grip on Christians, they are a carnal Christians.

This fact lends itself to very simple application. Each morning, we should ask ourselves, “As I start the day, am I carnal or spiritual, under the control of the flesh or the Holy Spirit? If the answer is the flesh, then it is time to confess sin and regain the filling of the Spirit. It is also good to end the day asking, “As I finish the day, am I carnal or spiritual?” I dare say, we all need to daily check carnality in our lives. The problem with the Corinthians is that they had stopped checking and were living in unchecked carnality—something we need to avoid at all costs.

# I Corinthians Flashbacks

## Thursday, September 22: Read Romans 14

Once again, I can't bring myself to leave a chapter of our text without devoting a second day—so much truth, so little space to write! Yesterday's reading and discussion is directly related to the truth set down in Romans 14:10:

*For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. It is written: "As surely as I live" says the Lord, "every knee will bow before me; every tongue confess to God." So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.*

I Corinthians 3:11-15 provides further detail on the believer's time before the judgment seat of Christ. A few things to note:

- What is being evaluated is what has been built upon the foundation of Christ, in other words, the life lived by the child of God.
- Paul divides the life built by the Christian into two possible categories: that which is of value and that which is not; that which will not stand the test of fire and that which will not.
- Notice that what is at stake is not the believer's salvation, for that is a settled issue the moment a person places their faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Rather, what is at stake is the issue of reward.

Now I want to make sure that you connect this with yesterday's devotional. What kind of life do you suppose is built upon carnality? The answer, in the context, is one that is worthless in God's eyes, will not pass God's test, and will not receive reward! How about a life lived in the filling of the Spirit? Again, the answer is clear! That life has value in the sight of God, it will pass His scrutiny, and will merit His reward. The application is as simple as it can be: confess carnality, make every effort to walk in the Spirit by the light of God's Word. To do so has consequences in time and eternity!

# I Corinthians Flashbacks

## Friday, September 23: Read I Corinthians 4

Everything about this chapter calls loudly to us to contrast God's ways against man's ways—the Divine against the worldly. Let me show you. How do we treat the celebrities of our day? It doesn't matter if they are sports figures, politicians, movie stars, or even famous church pastors. Their gifting is elevated and they get a pass on all sorts of character and moral shortcomings.

Now consider the apostle Paul, the foremost church planter and missionary of his day. When you throw in author of Scripture, he pretty much stands as a one-of-a-kind! How then was he treated and how does he view himself? In Verse 2 he says he is a “*servant of Christ*.” The word translated servant is not the normal term for servant or slave, it is, instead, about as low as you can go. It is literally an “under-oarsmen” referring to the worst place on a slave-galley. Continuing the contrast with modern day celebrities, notice how no accolade in this life will ever distract Paul. For in Verse 4, he demonstrates how clear he is on who ultimately evaluates his life:

*...He who judges me is the Lord.*

As such a servant of God, would you expect Paul to have a cushy life? Look at Verse 9:

*For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like men condemned to die in the arena.*

If you continue to read the verse following Verse 9, you will get a feel for how difficult Paul's life really was. Wow! Certainly different than we treat celebrities from a worldly perspective. I have one more thing for you to consider today. Paul says in Verse 16:

*I urge you to imitate me.*

Think about this—more on Monday.

# I Corinthians Flashbacks

## Monday, September 26: Read Luke 17

We began a discussion Friday involving Paul's *celebrity status* as the premier church planter of his day. Recall that his view of himself is that of the lowest order of galley slave. I took you to Luke 17 today, because I wanted you to especially note Verses 7-10 to bring home the lesson to each one of us. Consider these words of Jesus:

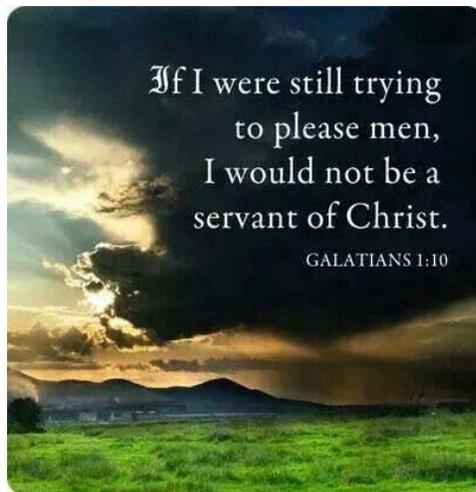
*"So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.'"*

I can remember reading those four verses of Scripture to a group of men at a Bible study. Before he could help himself, one of the men blurted out, "*That can't be right!*" So much of our teaching has focused on the blessings associated with Christianity that somewhere along the way we missed out on a very basic understanding of what it means for God to be the Creator and we the creation. We have lost the truth that He is the master and we are the slaves. Therefore, when we do happen to accomplish something in obedience to His will, we are simply doing

what we are obligated to do (and always have been).

Before you think I have a glum view of what it means to be a Christian, let me remind you that we are all going to be a slave of one of only two masters: a slave to Christ or a slave to our rebellious nature.

Continued on the next page.



# I Corinthians Flashbacks

Monday, September 26: Read Luke 17

(Continued)

And if we choose our rebellious nature, we will be slaves to the principles of this world and the one who stands behind those principles. Paul is forthright about whom he has chosen to serve, just as Joshua was (Joshua 24:15). Paul is so clear on the subject because he wants to prompt us to make the same choice! Why would we do so? Again—there are only two choices, and do we realize:

*There is no better role than that of servant in the Kingdom of God; no better place to be than in the household of faith! For there is no God like our God!*

For there are blessings in time and for all eternity for those who choose to faithfully serve the one true God, and nothing but mouths full of sawdust for those who seek to live in rebellion and serve self. Think it through carefully,

*...for better is one day in My courts than a thousand elsewhere. . .”Psalm 84:10*

The Bible has so much to say about the many, many blessings that God, in grace, has given to those who are “in Christ Jesus.” And I love to focus your attention upon those blessings. But for today, I am thinking it would be very helpful for all of us to choose whom we are going to serve—self or the Most High God?



# I Corinthians Flashbacks

## Tuesday, September 27: Read I Corinthians 5

Chapter 5 presents and illustrates this very important principle of church-life:

*Don't you know that a little leaven works through the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old leaven that you may be a new batch without leaven—as you really are.*

*For Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed.* I Corinthians 5:6-7

As a body of people who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, we are to keep the “leaven” (sin) of this world out of our fellowship! If we let it in, it will contaminate the fellowship. Even a small amount of sin, that is tolerated for some *greater good*, can contaminate the whole fellowship and inhibit the Spirit’s work among us. It can prevent us from accomplishing the divinely-enabled good that God desires. So then, we must be constantly on guard to keep sin from among us.

This principle was illustrated in negative fashion by the Corinthians when they tolerated the presence of a man in their midst who was openly involved in an incestuous relationship. (Verse 1) It may sound harsh, but it is for the good of the fellowship to not have fellowship with a one who says, “Oh, yes, I am a believer—and then openly parades sin.” (Verse 11) Paul is quick to add—don’t worry about the sin “out there,” for that is our mission field and we should expect it. But we must keep sin out of the Body, or in Paul’s words, we must “*judge those inside the church!*” (Verse 12) And one quick corollary to contrast the difference between God’s ways and man’s ways: the world is always after the church to be more tolerant (put up with sin), and then they despise those Christians who think differently than they do. Do you see that this is exactly the opposite of what God, in this chapter, has called us to do?

# I Corinthians Flashbacks

## Wednesday, September 28: Read I Corinthians 6

Have you caught the fact that Chapters 5 and 6 both raise the issue of judgment? In I Corinthians 5:12:

*Are you not to judge those inside? (the church).*

And then I Corinthians 6:1:

*If any of you have a dispute. . . dare he take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the saints?*

In both of these passages, it is clear that Paul expects judgment to occur—the issue is by whom and in what context. I started our lesson today with this issue, because if there is one thing the world has gotten really good at, it is



convincing Christians that they should never be judgmental. Do you see that the Scriptures clearly render this a false position? Let the Word speak for itself:

*Do not judge according to appearances, but judge with righteous judgment.*

This is Jesus speaking in John 7:24

Furthermore, Paul adds that one mark of spirituality is the ability to pass judgment:

*But he who is spiritual judges all things. . .*  
I Corinthians 2:15

As Christians, we have gotten so *gun-shy* on this issue that more often than not, we judge when we shouldn't and fail to judge when we should. In short, by listening to the world and ignoring the Word, we've gotten very confused.

# I Corinthians Flashbacks

Wednesday, September 28: Read I Corinthians 6  
(Continued)

Even though we have limited time and space, I think I can give you three steps that will help you *judge rightly*:

- We are accountable to **examine** the circumstances in which we find ourselves.
- We need to **discern right** based upon the authority of God's Word.
- We **act (judge)** when the context requires it and we have the authority to do so.

Now consider the following example by way of application: An individual who is openly living some kind of sinful life style wants to become a member of our church. (Not attend, but become a member.) What do we do? We are accountable to carefully examine the circumstances. As we do so, we need to discern the rightness/wrongness of the situation based upon the Word of God. If the Word judges the individual's lifestyle as sinful, then I Corinthians 5:11 seems pretty clear, along with 5:5-6. Church membership is under the purview of both church leadership and the congregation, and we have the authority to determine who will be accepted for membership and who will not. Pretty straightforward.

Now here is the part you must also understand—how about this same lifestyle when it is found in the world *out there*. We can still discern that it is wrong, but the church does not have the authority to act *out there*. So we do not attempt to do so. Guard the purity of the church and expect the lost to act as if they are—lost! (This is not to say that, as Christians, we do not do whatever we can, within the confines of our citizenship, to check the acceptance of sin.)

# I Corinthians Flashbacks

## Thursday, September 29: Read Ephesians 2

If you are a child-of-God by virtue of having placed your faith in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, then you need to know something that is clearly taught in both I Corinthians 6 and Ephesians 2. First, in I Corinthians 6:

*But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

Wow! Cleansed of sin, set apart unto God, and clothed with His righteousness—what an absolutely remarkable standing has the child of God in Jesus Christ. Paul hits it from another angle in Ephesians 2:

*. . . God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ. . . raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms. . . Ephesians 2:5-6*

Once again the amazing grace of what God has done for those who believe is on display. We are made alive, raised up and positionally seated with Christ in the heavenly realms. This is worthy of deep meditation on its own merits, but Paul has a point to make in I Corinthians 6 — how then should we view our relationship to sin?

*The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord. . . your bodies are members of Christ himself. . . your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. . . I Corinthians 6:13-19*

And then he sums everything up in Verse 20:

*You were bought at a price.  
Therefore honor God with your body.*

Are you following? We have this amazing and undeserved standing in Christ. We are meant to be a set-apart and spiritual people. And our spirituality includes what we do with our body. Body, soul, and spirit are to honor the Lord—and most important to remember—as we walk with the Lord, He will do it. (I Thessalonians 5:23-24)

# I Corinthians Flashbacks

Friday, September 30: Read II Chronicles 7  
(I Corinthians 6:19)

Chapter 6 has raised the issue of the Holy Spirit; specifically, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. See Verse 19:

*Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God.*

The believer's relationship to the Holy Spirit is so important, that we are going to spend several days digging deeper. So what is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit? Notice two things: 1) The believer's body is said to be a temple and 2) the Holy Spirit is said to be "in you." This should cause us to recall the way that God's presence was first in the Tabernacle and then in the Temple. In other words, in the same way that God dwelt in the midst of His people in the Old Testament, He now dwells, through His Spirit, within each New Testament believer.

Let's ask and answer two more questions. First, is this indwelling permanent? Take a close look at the context, Paul is dogmatically stating how wrong it is for a believer to engage in sexual immorality for the simple reason he drags the Holy Spirit along with him. This should lead us to understand that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the permanent possession of each believer.

Second, for what purpose are we indwelt? When a person responds in faith to the person and work of Jesus Christ, he or she is both a *new creature* in Christ and living in a body that still has a nature to sin. You can see the resultant conflict described beginning at Galatians Chapter 5:16. So God's solution is to provide His indwelling Spirit as the first means of countering the machinations of the flesh.

Let me summarize it this way: the indwelling of the Spirit is God's provision to establish a *beachhead* in the believer in order both to counter the flesh and from which the power of God can work within the believer. Much more to come.

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

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